

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

State of subtitling access in EU

2011 Report

Subtitling in the European Union.

Easier done than said.....

Dear Reader,

Articles 11 and 14 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights confirm access to information and education as basic human rights. The EU has recently adhered to UN Convention on Right of People with Disabilities. Still over 50 million of deaf or hard of hearing European are deprived of basic human rights simply because they cannot hear programmes broadcasted on TV, they do not understand films in the cinema or plays in the theatre.

These reasons have pushed The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) to launch a pan European campaign in order promote subtitling in audiovisual media in all member states as the easiest solution to grant deaf and hard of hearing people full access to information society. During almost 10 years of our campaign we have gained valuable expertise on this issue which we would like to share with you by/ thanks to this information leaflet.

Our vision is the full inclusion of people with hearing loss in the society which will only be achieved by giving them full access to media and information. In our opinion 100% of programmes in public TV channels should be subtitled by 2020.

We are aware that today we are far from achieving this objective. According to our own research access to subtitles varies strongly/considerably between Member states. We have also found differences in the subtitling access via various teletext pages, which is very confusing to an average user. Sometimes, in order to enable teletext the hard of hearing people need to remember 5 different options depending on the TV teletext subtitling. Further on, you will find more details about these problems.

At the same time, we found that countries with good laws and enforcement have also very good level of subtitling, which is constantly rising with examples from UK, NL and France which are setting standards in EU with 100% subtitling provision on their main TV channels. We have example of channel TV5 in France which launched on 24 March 2011 Polish subtitles for the broadcast in Poland via cable and satellite. We have proofs that the subtitling is cost effective and benefits not only the 50 million of Hard of Hearing citizens of the European Union, but also people who are learning a second language and even hearing people, who can't discern clear speech with background noise and many more.

To sum up, during our campaign we have found out that the main challenge in introducing subtitles in European public TV is to overcome stereotypes about its costs, technical requirements, need etc.

Subtitling is in reality easier done than said and we believe that today, with the European Commission's Communication "EU Disability Strategy" and ratification by the EU of UN Convention on People with Disabilities, the time has come to ensure that European commitment for deaf and hard of hearing people is more than political declaration/empty words.

EFHOH is keen to work together with you for one of the most important Human Right that is to have access to information.

With special thanks to MEP Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg for continued support.

Yours, *Marcel Bobeldijk*

President EFHOH

Who are we?

EFHOH - European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People exists to represent hard of hearing people at European level in dialogue with the European Union, the Members of the European Parliament, and other European authorities.

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People consists of National Associations of/for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened People, Parents' Organisations and Professional Organisations. The Board members of the EFHOH carry out their work on an honorary basis. www.efhoh.org

What does “hard of hearing” mean?

Hard of hearing and deafness is a problem which concerns 50 million Europeans.

The term is used as a definition covering everybody with a hearing loss, ranging from light hearing loss to adult, profoundly deafened users. Unlike pre-lingual deaf people, hard of hearing people develop and use the spoken language (with or without supportive signs).

Hard of hearing and late deafened people are reliant on visual text to ensure access to information on equal basis with hearing people.

OUR VISION

Subtitling of 100% of programs in public TV all over the EU by 2020 with simple technical standards and consumer friendly rules.

More subtitles in the theatre and in the cinema.

What kind of help do we expect from the EU?

We are asking the European institutions to put in practice its actions presented in the European Disability Strategy. These include:

- "Ensure accessibility to goods, services including public services and assistance devices for people with disabilities"
- "Promote inclusive education and lifelong learning for pupils and students with disabilities"
- "Optimise use of EU funding instruments for accessibility and non-discrimination and increase visibility of disability-relevant funding possibilities in post-2013 programmes"

In respect to specific need of deaf and hard of hearing people for more subtitling, this would in practice mean:

- ensure availability of EU funding for public broadcasters to facilitate acquiring technical equipment necessary to introduce subtitling and training their staff
- Introduce EU-wide standards- based on recent research published by DTV4ALL and good practice of countries which already achieved very high standards.
- Asses the possibility of reviewing audiovisual and media services directive in order to introduce a legally binding obligation for member states to set up targets for subtitling of a certain part of their programmes, with ultimate target being subtitling of 100% programs in public TV.
- Alternatively, promote a stakeholders dialogue on this issue.

SUBTITLING – OUR DOOR TO INFORMATION SOCIETY

What are subtitles?

How they help us?

How they help others?

Visual translations of speech to text to enable people with hearing impairment understand the conversation.

Subtitles are open (imposed on screen for everyone to see) or closed (invisible, on demand by viewer). Subtitles are used on TV, DVD in cinemas and theatre.

- Benefit everyone with hearing loss including elderly people
- Improve children reading levels
- Helps deaf children to access spoken language
- Improve language understanding for speakers of foreign languages
- Helps those learning second language
- Benefit bilingual sign and spoken language users
- Remove social barriers

“Although same-language subtitles and captions are produced primarily with the deaf and hard-of-hearing in mind, many hearing film and television viewers choose to use them.

This is often done because the presence of closed captioning and subtitles ensures that not one word of dialogue will be missed.

In addition, captions may further reveal information that would be difficult to pick up on otherwise. Some examples of this would be the song lyrics; dialog spoken quietly or by those with accents unfamiliar to the intended audience; or supportive, minor dialog from background characters.

Myths about subtitles:

Expensive :

- Un-expensive, (no copyright)
- It is common misconception; they are costing less than 1% of production cost.

Difficult in practice:

- The software is much easier to use especially as Latest developments are in respeaking as a way of producing live text using voice recognition.
- simple, quick (real time text)
- we are here to support broadcasters with guidance on standards in provision of subtitles

Dubbing is cheaper;

- very expensive (copyright) and high actors fees
- has long delay (voice in the film)

Subtitling in EU-current state of play.....

Accessibility to information is vital to deaf and hard of hearing people and to everybody through technical solutions proposed by the television networks, such as captioning.

This theme has been well tackled in North-America and the UK, Holland, France and Nordic countries.

It has to be improved in countries where the media are still only partially accessible to everyone in Europe.

Subtitling in TV

Hard of hearing and deafened people are able to access the television via remote control by choosing the teletext page or in case of digital TV by choosing “*subtitles*” option.

This form of access is simple and inexpensive. All Media providers should ensure that people with hearing impairment and those who provide television in public places have clear instruction on how to access subtitling.

Subtitling provides an important link to news, entertainment, and information for such individuals who are learning a second language, children who are learning to read, and people who watch television in public places such as waiting rooms, airports, bars, or gyms.

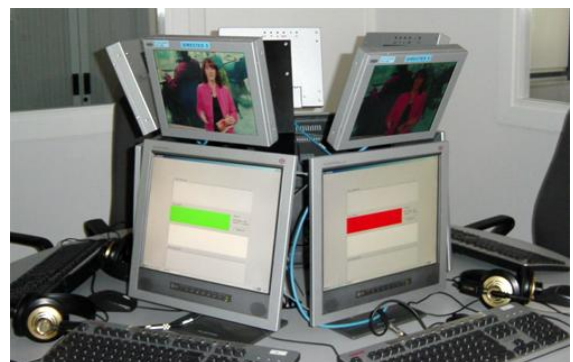
When commercials are not subtitled the audio information—including potentially your advertising message—does not reach its maximum potential.

In addition, the advertiser may be unintentionally sending a message to viewers who are deaf or hard of hearing that their business is not valued.

With subtitling technology improving all the time the cost is no longer an economic argument.

Subtitling cost is getting cheaper with new technology; currently it stands at less than 1% of production cost against more expensive costs of providing dubbing for example.

Latest developments are in respeaking as a way of producing live text using voice recognition software with University of Roehampton leading in this field.



Subtitling in theatre

This form of access started in USA and was introduced in the UK in 2000.

STAGETEXT in UK provides open captioning in the theatre. It is a form of universal access, enabling deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people to enjoy theatre on an equal basis with their hearing peers.

The captions are delivered on the LED screens easily accessible to everyone in the theatre. In a captioned performance, the full text of the play or musical appears on the caption unit at sound effects, offstage noises and musical descriptions are also shown so that the deaf audience get as full an experience as everyone.

The captions are prepared in advance so as to mirror the way the actors deliver their lines.

The evidence in UK shows that captions at the theatre are accessible to all people with hearing loss including those who use sign language.

Sign language users are increasingly bilingual and also demand access to captions.

Another UK example shows that many regular theatre goers who would not think of themselves as having a hearing loss suddenly find they can hear more than they could before thanks to open captioning.

Recently, at the New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich, every patron attending the captioned shows during the course of one season was asked to return a small card to the ushers if they “found the captioning useful”. While only 4% of the audience had declared to be caption users when booking their tickets, 29% of audience members returned the cards to say that they had found the captioning useful. This demonstrates that the universal access nature of open captioning means that many more people benefit from being able to read the text than would declare themselves to be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.



Again this is proving that visual information has universal access to all who may need to use them. We believe in urgent need of educating theatres on the benefits open captioning brings to all theatre goers including financial argument, as more people than before can access theatre.



Pictures, courtesy of STAGETEXT

Subtitling in Cinema and DVD

Similar principle as shown earlier should apply to access to cinema and DVD's.

DVD's should have clear indications of subtitles included in the disc, the access needs of hard of hearing people should be protected by EU legislation.



At the moment there are limited provisions of subtitles in cinemas, hard of hearing people have restricted access to times and days when they can watch the new releases launched by movie companies.

The same remains with the theatre captioning, hard of hearing people are limited to 2-4 captioned performances a year comparable with all year productions.

Communication access in text

The needs of hard of hearing people to gain access to information are not only restricted to TV, DVD, Cinema and Theatre. They also need access to communication in education and to be able fully participate in public life. Speech to text interpreters are helping hard of hearing people, who find following conversation difficult even with the provision of inductive loops.

This form of access is most inclusive to all as it benefits everybody who is taking part in Conferences, public consultation meetings.

Speech to text interpreters are training through court reporting or specialist course specifically designed for this specific communication support. Their number is very small in comparison to sign language interpreters and many hard of hearing and deaf people are constantly denied access to this form of support either due to lack of speech to text interpreters or lack of awareness of its existence.

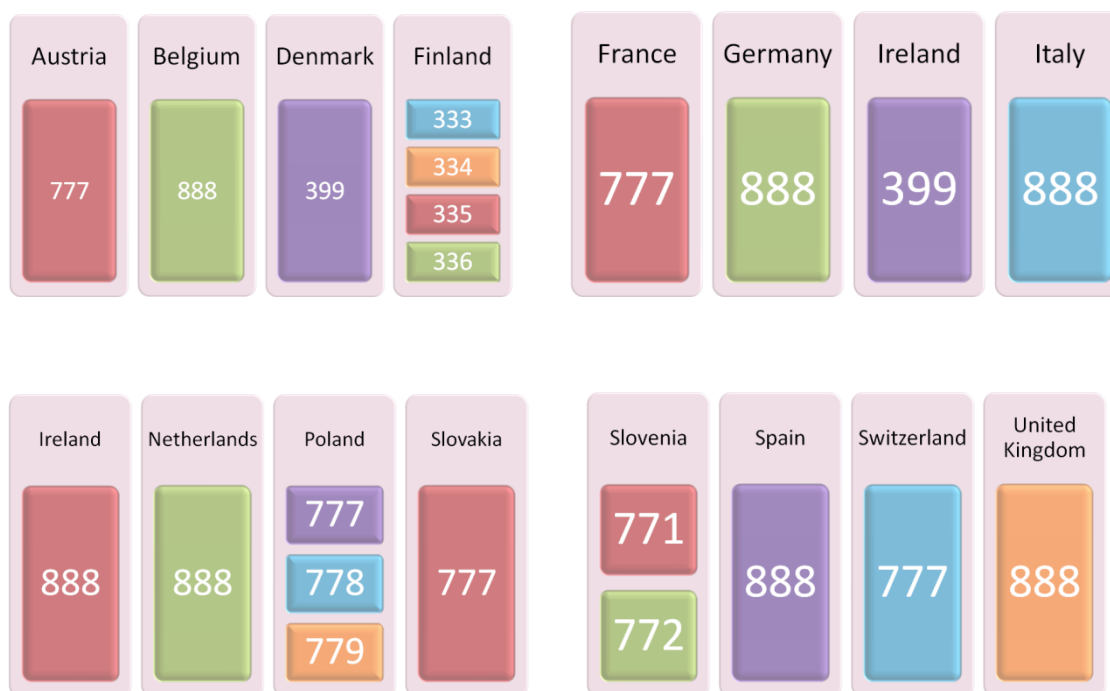
For EFHOH vision of increased subtitling to be realised we need comprehensive training programme of speech to text interpreters through qualified training centres and awareness raising programme through mentoring.

These interpreters will find work in TV, film industry, theatres, museums and public organisations. They will be supporting young people in the educational settings and social activities.

Access to speech to text reporter is vital for the EU commitment to UNCRPD and proposed Single Accessibility Act in 2012 and to ensure that hard of hearing and deaf people are not excluded from full participation in the society. With the advances in speech recognition software and use of respeaking as another form of interpreting it will add to more choice.

Access to SUBTITLES in TV

We have found evidence of differences in access to subtitling via various teletext pages, which is very confusing to an average user. Sometimes, the hard of hearing people need to remember 5 different options depending on the TV channel. Some of the examples are shown below:



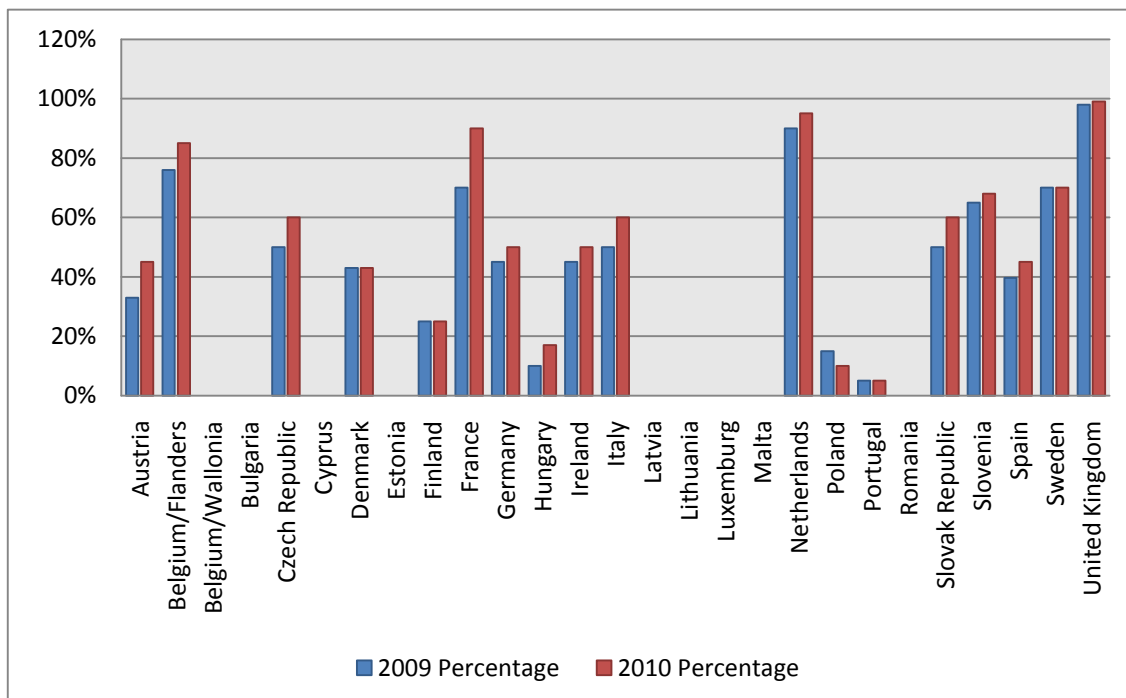
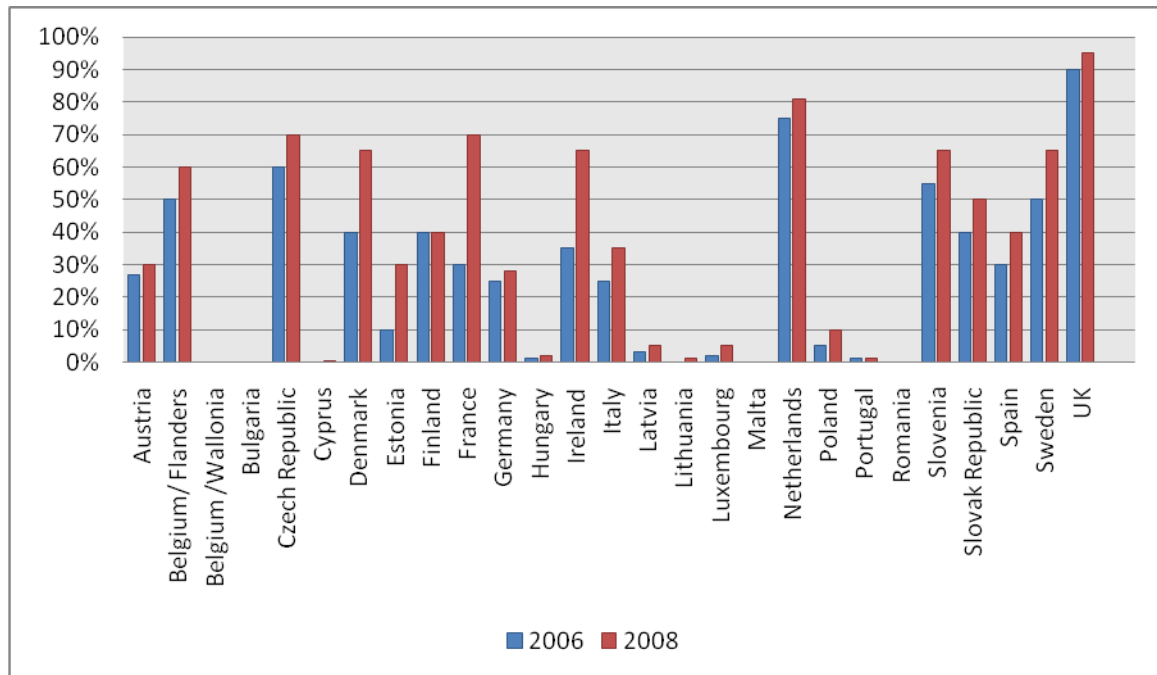
Based on the evidence shown there are clear needs for introduction of technical standards and/or guidelines for TV equipment to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have easy, comprehensive access to subtitling. The prevailing common number for subtitling page is 888.

With the use of digital TV, it should be much easier for our members to have easy access to subtitling.

- Removes confusion created by different teletext pages which carry subtitles with instant access to subtitling on TV set.
- Is universal, easy to use, and accessible, provides one standard across all Europe

All Media providers should ensure that people with hearing impairment and those who provide television in public places have clear instruction on how to access subtitling.

SUBTITLING DATA FROM EU MEMBER STATES



The percentages are for illustration purposes only.

How have we collected data?

Many TV companies provide the percentages against varied settings in some countries. Sometimes only specific programs are subtitled; no sport or children programs are included in the statistics. Not all Member States were able to provide information on statistics due to lack of mechanism of gathering this sort of data or simply because there is no subtitling available at all.

Our data on previous page comes from broadcasters and from EUB members.

For example UK provides captioning in the 24-hour period every day, when in another in country for instance 90% of programming is subtitled, but only from 6 am to midnight. Again, this creates problems in setting correct data.

Below are the examples of different way of gathering information:

Hungary

Subtitling of all the news and public utility, sport is between 6 am - 12 pm

Movies and other programmes in 2010 were subtitled in minimum of 2 hours day. Encouraging news is that in Hungary the percentages are rising;

2011: 4 hours/day

2012: 6 hours/day

2013: 8 hours/day

2014: 10 hours/day

2015: all programs.

Greece

Subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing is only available on one digital terrestrial channel at ERT, Prisma+. (ERT at the moment has 3 analogue channels and 3 digital terrestrial channels).

We believe the reasons for such discrepancies in percentages of subtitling lie with a lack of Communication Acts, incorporating access to subtitling. We are finding that countries with good laws and enforcement have also very good level of subtitling, which is constantly rising.

An example from the Netherlands:

The NPO the Dutch Public Broadcaster published the research at how many people watch TV every day with subtitling with the very surprising results: In NL population of 16 million people and 1.6 million HOH and Deaf people 4 million people watch TV with the subtitling on.

Please note it is 3 xs more than registered people with hearing loss.

EUROPEAN SUBTITLING CAMPAIGNS

In 2003 we sent a submission in response to the European Commission's public consultation on the review of the TVWF directive and produced a campaign leaflet. We also had the opportunity to deliver a presentation to the TVWF contact committee made up of member state civil servants responsible for the directive.

EFHOH and its partners are seeking;

- Increased quantity of subtitling on television throughout Europe through the future review of the AVMS Directive.
- introduction of technical standards for TV equipment to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have easy, comprehensive access to subtitling and sign language services through the implementation of the recommendations in Gerry Stallard's 'TV for All' report for CENELEC, the latest introduction of "DTV4ALL" and the D-book produced by UK DTG, which is setting the digital standards.

Promotion of subtitling access

As well as the low quantity of access services on television in Europe, there are limited European standards and initiatives to ensure comprehensive delivery of, and access to, assistive services on television for disabled people and promotion and awareness of these services.

The 9 "Access to subtitles" shows that those who need to use subtitles to access information often are discouraged by the variety of access codes. (Annex 1)

This has become even more of an issue in the context of digital switchover and the multi platform, multi channel television age.

The European Commission's eAccessibility communication explores the possibility of increasing access to technology for disabled people through public procurement, certification and legislation. We hope that all these tools will be used to ensure that manufacturers and broadcasters adopt the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) recommendations. EBU is the umbrella organisation for Europe's public broadcasters and has recently produced a report for its members on delivery of access services, including subtitling. See the link; **Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)** http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/avms/index_en.htm

Latest research in standardisation of delivery of subtitles has been published by the project DTV4ALL, partly financed by European Commission; <http://www.psp-dtv4all.org/>

EFHOH subtitling campaign encouraged good practice based on successful national campaigns

Very successful subtitling campaigns have been run in countries like UK, Holland, Belgium, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Governments and broadcasters have increased subtitling on public broadcasting channels in response to these campaigns.

UK

In the UK the 2003 Communications Act sets new targets for subtitling for 70 TV channels. This follows a long, concerted campaign by RNID involving a **postcard campaign** in 2000 during which RNID members and supporters sent over 30,000 postcards to MPs calling for more subtitling on TV.

RNID also **campaigned to ensure that the Communications Bill was strengthened, to ensure as much television as possible is subtitled with limited exemptions for channels, as it went through Parliament.** They successfully called for 5 as well as final 10 year targets for subtitling.

Netherlands

In April 2004 the Dutch subtitling campaign SOAP! organised a **public debate** to press for more subtitling on television. At the debate Culture Secretary, Medy van der Laan, announced the Government's intention to ensure 100% subtitling on terrestrial television by 2010.

This follows a concerted campaign by SOAP! Which is a **campaign coalition made up of a range of organisations** for deaf and hard of hearing people and other stakeholders.

Ireland

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland is currently consulting on its draft Access Rules which set targets for subtitling and signing for the terrestrial TV channels. You can read the code at www.bci.ie

This code follows a very successful campaign by the Irish Hard of Hearing Association. **After lobbying Ireland's political parties prior to the European elections,** the Association secured commitments from all the major parties to campaign for increases in subtitling at a European level in their European election manifestos in 2004.

Belgium

The VRT is the only Flemish broadcasting company that subtitles programmes for deaf and hard of hearing people. In the coming years the share of Flemish subtitled programmes on the VRT channels will increase from 35% to 50%.

The **Board of Directors of VRT Television had a meeting with a delegation of FEVLADO, the Federation of Flemish Deaf Organisations.**

Sweden

HRF, the Swedish Association for the Hard of Hearing held **meeting with MPs** who made a commitment to increase subtitling on television.

The HRF also ran a high profile **poster campaign to raise awareness** of the campaign. The poster highlighted the fact that most television programmes are not subtitled and that this excludes 600,000 deaf and hard of hearing people in Sweden.

Switzerland

The Swiss subtitling campaign submitted a **public petition to the Government** calling for more subtitles on television signed by 10,000 people.

France

The organisations there successfully lobbied their law maker and as of 2011 France enjoys near 100% subtitling.

Finland

The Finnish Parliament recently passed legislation concerning accessibility services (subtitling, spoken subtitles), effective from 1st July 2011 and applicable to all the major Finnish broadcasters. As a result, the Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE, is required to achieve 100% subtitling of all its domestic Finnish- or Swedish- language programmes (with the exceptions of children's programmes, musical performances and sports programmes) in the appropriate language by the year 2016.

Future prospects

Our campaign resulted in major improvement of quality of life experiences by many deaf and hard of hearing people however we recognize that there are many countries with poor subtitling in EU.

The situation will not be resolved to our satisfaction unless European Parliament enforces the **Declaration from 2007 pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure** by MEP Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg on the subtitling of all public-service television programmes in the EU. (See Annex 2).

Most recent response to the **Question for written answer E-000266/2011 to the Commission - rule 117 - Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (S&D)** (Annex 3) has not provided any promise of the enforcement in place and how effective the enforcement can be.

Summary

"Information, democratic dialogue and cultural and social values. These words reveal the important role of broadcasting in our societies. It is not simply an industry like any other."

VIVIANE REDING in 2003

- Access to television is a fundamental right in the democratic society.
- If the essence of democracy is choice, then the essence of choice is knowledge and information.
- People with hearing loss who use speech, text or sign language face limitations in the access to knowledge.
- Their needs are not properly addressed at the moment

The EU subtitling campaign targeted at the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament will continue.

We are concerned that many new "on-demand" services are not well provided for and are often not subtitled, without a strong statutory requirement to do so.

We welcome the declaration of **"European Disability Strategy 2010 -2020"** as the right step forward and would like to receive reassurance that subtitling will be given the top priority of the first half of this period as set out in the Declaration on **Accessibility and Participation in the society 2.1** with emphasis on strong statutory enforcement on provision of subtitles.

*Optimise use of EU funding instruments for accessibility and non-discrimination and increase visibility of disability-relevant funding possibilities in post-2013 programmes.
(Structural Funds).*

Following the development with United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities we hope that we will see much stronger commitment from EU towards full accessibility for people with hearing loss.

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities together with European Disability Strategy 2010- 2020 provide unique opportunity to ensure that our work will result in a comprehensive framework, where the rights of people with hearing loss to receive subtitles are protected by European-wide enforcement.

We do recognise that some countries may want to provide the subtitling access but are prevented to do so with the lack of funding.

We would like to see a framework established where Member States may seek EU funding designated for improving accessibility to Arts, Media and communications as indicated in Disability Strategy 2010- 2020 as indicated in the **Financial support** section 2.2.2

EU conclusion of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities provides strong foundations for improving lives of disabled people in Europe and for strengthening Members States' obligations towards their citizens.

EFHOH calls on the European Parliament and the EU President to ensure that all European citizens with hearing loss are fully included in the society. We have a moral duty to many people with hearing loss to ensure they are enjoying full rights as EU citizens regardless of their disability.

- EFHOH seek the introduction of technical standards and/or guidelines for TV equipment to ensure that hard of hearing people have easy, comprehensive access to subtitling services. With the use of digital TV, it should be much easier for our members to have easy access to subtitling in EU.
- To this effect we have set up Subtitling Expert Group to provide platform for better cooperation and exchange of good practise between providers, researchers and the users of subtitles.
- We want to monitor the quality of live subtitles and to push for technical improvements over time (e.g. working in collaboration with University of Roehampton.)
- We also recognise that other countries lack strong subtitling lobby due to lack of democratic mechanisms and lack of recognition of hard of hearing organisations. EFHOH is willing to help those countries but can't do so without financial support from EU.

To ensure that our vision of 100% subtitling access by 2020, effective **Social Funds** are needed to be available towards information and promotion activities as set out in **Awareness Raising** section of the Declaration 2.2.

Raise society's awareness of disability issues and foster greater knowledge among people with disabilities of their rights and how to exercise them.

The needs of 51 million people in EU with hearing loss can't be ignored as it is ignoring their fundamental Human Rights

Marcel Bobeldijk (NL)	President
Knut Magne Ellisen (Norway)	Vice- President
Jan Lamby (Sweden)	General Secretary
Ritva Schaeding (Germany)	Treasurer
Lidia Best- Smolarek (UK)	Board Member

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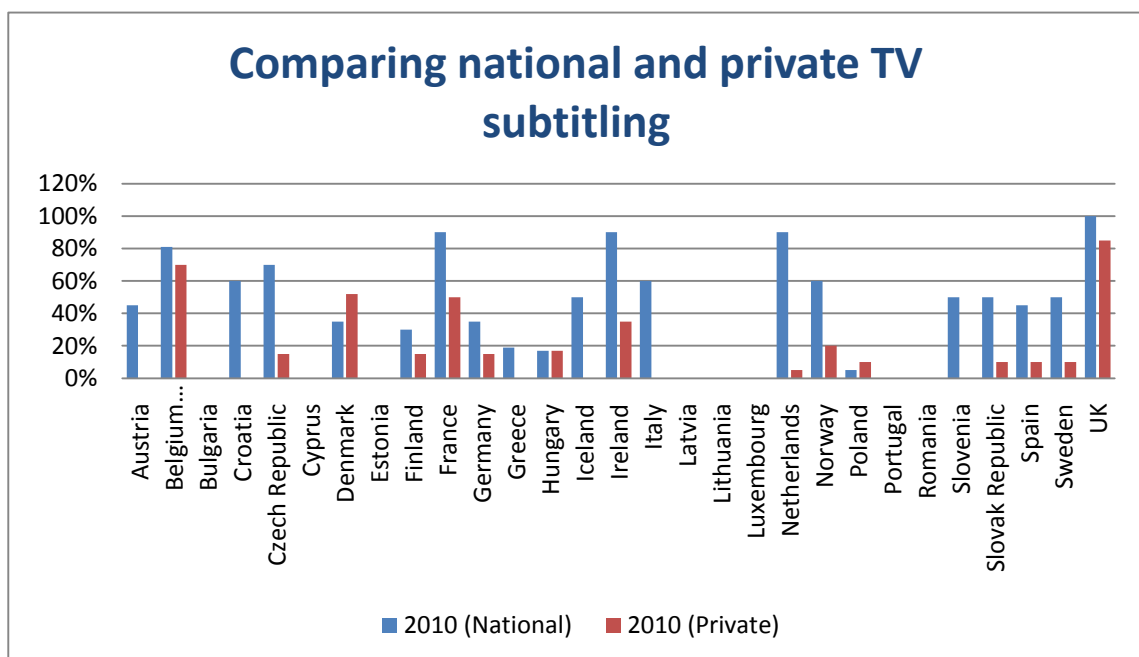
ANNEX 1

SUBTITLING IN EU via TELETEXT PAGES:

AUSTRIA	777
BELGIUM (FLANDERS)	888
BULGARIA	NONE
CROATIA	888
CZECH REPUBLIC	888
CYPRUS	NONE
DENMARK	399
FINLAND	YLE1 333 YLE1 News 335 YLE2 334 YLE Theme 336
FRANCE	888
GERMANY	777 ARD Das Erste 150 BR (Bayern) 150 Kabel 1 149 Pro7 149 SWR 150 WDR 150 ZDF 777 MDR 150 NDR 150 HR 150 RBB 150 3SAT 777 BR-Alpha 150 Arte 160 Kika 150
GREECE	888
HUNGARY	TV 2 888 RTL Klub 199 M1 334 Duna TV 444
ICELAND	NONE
IRELAND	888

If you watch digital television you can set up the tv so that subtitles are always on no matter what channel you watch.	
ITALY	RAI1 777 RAI2 777 RAI3 777 LA7 777 Canale5 777 RETE4 775 Italia1 776
LITHIANIA	NONE
NETHERLANDS	888
POLAND	TVP1 and TVP2: 777 Canal Plus HBO: 777 Canal Plus HBO 2: 778 Canal Plus I HBO Comedy: 779
PORTUGAL	888
ROMANIA	NONE
SLOVAKIA	777
SLOVENIA	SLO1 771 SLO2 772
SPAIN	888
SWEDEN	SVT1 199 SVT2 299 SVT24 793 SVT world 795 Kunsk 794 TV3 199 TV4 890 Kanal 3&5 199

SWITZERLAND	777
UNITED KINGDOM With the DTV all you need to do is to set the "subtitles on" while setting up the digital TV set and they are automatic working straight away as soon as you switch your TV on.	888



Please note that this list is not finished but provide an example of how hard of hearing people are receiving subtitles in the EU

ANNEX 2

WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure by Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg on the subtitling of all public-service television programmes in the EU

0099/2007

Written declaration on the subtitling of all public-service television programmes in the EU

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 3, 13, 149 and 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community,
- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas the European Union should ensure that citizens have equal access to information, education and culture,
 - B. whereas partial or complete loss of hearing is a condition that affects more than 83 million people in the European Union; whereas, given the ageing of the European population, this problem will continue to grow,
 - C. having regard to universal access to television in Europe and to the fact that public-service television has a public-service mission consisting, among other things, in informing and educating viewers,
 - D. whereas today's technology enables television programmes (including live programmes) to be subtitled as they go out, one example of this being the BBC, which has undertaken to subtitle all of its programmes from April 2008,
- 1. Considers subtitling of all public-service television programmes in the EU to be essential with a view to ensuring that all viewers, including deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, have full access to them; takes the view that this would also help with foreign-language learning;
- 2. Calls on the Commission to put forward a legislative proposal requiring public-service television broadcasters in the EU to subtitle all of their programmes;
- 3. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to all the governments of the Member States and to the Commission and Council.

ANNEX 3

Source: European Parliament Register

Subject: Answer to written question on Steps to improve the availability of subtitles for television programmes in the EU

Date published: March 15 2011

Question for written answer E-000266/2011 to the Commission - rule 117 - Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (S&D)

Subject: Steps to improve the availability of subtitles for television programmes in the EU

In its communication on the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, the Commission draws attention to the problems that disabled people have in accessing information and culture. The Commission states that there are still only a few television stations in Europe that provide subtitles for the programmes they broadcast. Subtitling would make it much easier for deaf people to access information.

The European Parliament has already raised this problem: during the last parliamentary term, it adopted my written declaration 099/2007 on the subtitling of all public-service television programmes in the EU.

I am glad that the Commission has acknowledged that there is not enough subtitling of television programmes, and I agree that there is a need to secure sufficient funding from the EU to finance the infrastructure needed to provide subtitling and to train staff working in television. Will the Commission be taking this issue into account when it proposes the financial perspective for 2014-2020?

I believe, however, that in order for EU policy in this area to be effective, it is essential that an independent report be drawn up that examines issues such as the reasons behind the dearth of subtitling for television programmes in all the Member States, and assesses the costs of introducing subtitling, as well as the effect that improved availability of subtitles will have as regards access to culture, to foreign language learning and to the job market. Is the Commission prepared to draw up such a report?

I would be most willing to support any such action taken by the Commission, for example by helping it to establish cooperation with the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, an NGO that has been lobbying for the introduction of subtitles throughout the EU for many years now.

Answer given by Mrs Kroes on behalf of the Commission

The European Commission disposes of two kinds of measures aimed at ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities to television programmes.

Firstly, Article 7 of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (Directive 2010/13/EU[1]) states that Member States shall encourage media service providers under their jurisdiction to ensure that their services are gradually made accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability. This covers *inter alia* the provision by media service providers of such services as subtitling for deaf and hearing-impaired people, audio-description and translation into sign language. This issue of access to audiovisual media services by disabled people was discussed with Member States (e.g. during the Contact Committee on 20 October 2010 and also during the Regulators' meeting, organised on 21 November 2009).

Additionally, the European Commission develops e-Accessibility measures that are aimed at achieving accessible Digital TV across Europe. Those measures include regulatory provisions[2] and voluntary cooperation between European ICT industry association DIGITALEUROPE and disability organisations (European Disability Forum and others). They are complemented by the DTV4ALL project[3] funded under the Competitiveness and Innovation ICT Policy Support Programme. The project contributes a broadcasting perspective (European Broadcasters Union is associated to the project) as well as practical examples of successful access services implementations. Such multi-stakeholder cooperation enables relevant stakeholders along value chain to discuss and prioritise on both political and technical levels practical ways for industry (broadcasters, content providers and equipment manufacturers) to better respond to user needs in their service implementations across Europe.

Furthermore, the Commission has already done an independent study in 2007 on dubbing and subtitling[4] . This study provides recommendations on measures to be implemented at Union level to enable linguistic diversity, while lowering the barriers to the circulation of European audiovisual works on the international market. .



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

Subtitling data

2009-2010-2011

Subtitling in the European Union States:

Dear members and EFHOH friends,

With this EFHOH overview of subtitling you will find the percentages in the European Union States and the some non EU countries.

The data was provided by our members and the TV broadcasters.

You can contact us by email efhoh@hrf.se with new up to date percentages in your country and TV channels.

Thanks for your continued support,

Marcel Bobeldijk

Lidia BestEFHOH president
Leader of EFHOH subtitling expert workgroup

NR.	Country:	Channel:	2009:	2010:	2011:
1.	Austria	ORF 1 & 2	33%	45%	53%
2.	Belgium Flanders	<i>Public:</i> VRT Total of all program in the Dutch language <i>Een</i> Ketnet/Canvas <i>Commercial:</i> VTM 2BE VT4 VIJFTV	76,62%	81% 88% 74% 76% 85% 95% 95%	90% 90% 90% 80% 90% 95% 95%
2a.	Belgium Wallonia		?	?	
3.	Bulgaria		No subtitling	No subtitling	No Subtitling
4.	CZ Republic	CT 1 CT 2	?	70% 70%	70% 70%

		CT 4		70%	70%
		CT 24		70%	70%
		TV NOVA		15%	15%
		TV Nova Cinema		15%	15%
		TV Barrandov			
		TV Prima		15%	15%
		TV Prima cool		15%	15%
				15%	15%
5.	Cyprus		No subtitling	No subtitling	No Subtitling
6.	Denmark	TV 2	31,7%		
		TV 3	0%		
		DR	52,4%		
7.	Estonia		?	?	?
8.	Finland	YLE 1	25%	25%	50%
		YLE 2	25%	25%	50%
		MTV 3	15%	15%	15%
		Nelonen	15%	15%	15%
		SEBTV	15%	15%	?
9.	France	France 2	50%	70%	90%
		France 3	50%	70%	90%
		France 5	50%	70%	90%
		TF 1			
		M 6			
		ARTE	37%	39%	40%
10.	Germany	ARD	33%	37%	
		ZDF	30,6%	34,7%	34,7%
		BR	18,6%	35%	35%
		WDR	50,6%		
		MDR	11,2%		
		3SAT	8,3%		
		NDR	16,6%		
		SWR BW	14%		
		RBB	14,3%	20%	25%
		BR-Alpha	5,5%	10%	10%
		Phoenix	1,8%		
		HR	12,9%		
		ARTE	5,1%	6%	7%
		KIKA	0,8%		
		Kabel	1,5%		
		PRO 7	2,9%		
11.	Greece	All Public Channels	26,64%	19,4%	35,84%
12.	Hungary	all channels = TV2	10%	17%	33%

		RTL klub M1 Duna TV			
13.	Ireland	RTE 1 RTE 2 TV 3 TG 4	76% 46% 35% 35%	76% 46% 35% 35%	80% 50% 35% 35%
14.	Italy	RAI 1 RAI 2 RAI 3	60% 60% 60%	60% 60% 60%	70% 70% 70%
15.	Latvia		No Subtitling	No Subtitling	No Subtitling
16.	Lithuania		No Subtitling	No Subtitling	No Subtitling
17.	Luxemburg		?	?	?
18.	Malta		?	?	?
19.	Netherlands	NL 1 NL 2 NL 3 RTL 4 RTL 5 RTL 8 SBS 6 NET 5	85% 85% 85%	93% 93% 93%	95% 95% 95%
20.	Poland	TVP 1 TVP 2	10% 10%	5% 5%	? ?
21.	Portugal		?	?	?
22.	Romania		?	?	?
23.	Slovak Republic	S 1 S 2 TVJOJ TVJOJ Plus DOMA TA 3 TV Markiza		50% 50% 10% 10% 10% 10% 10%	50% 50% 10% 10% 10% 10% 10%
24.	Slovenia	SLOVENIA 1 SLOVENIA 2	62% 33%	67% 36%	
25.	Spain	RTVE Channels (Public)	39,6%	45%	50%
26.	Sweden	SVT 1 SVT 2 TV 3 TV 4 TV 5	70% 70% 0% 30% Some programs'	50% 50% Some programs' 30% Some programs' Some programs'	60% 60%

		Kanal 9	Some programs'		
27.	United Kingdom	BBC 1	99,25%	99,25%	99,25%
		BBC 2	99,25%	99,25%	99,25%
		BBC 3	97,50%	97,50%	97,50%
		BBC 4	97,50%	97,50%	97,50%
		CBBC	97,50%	97,50%	97,50%
		CBeebies	97,50%	97,50%	97,50%
		BBC News	97,50%	97,50%	97,50%
		ITV 1	88%	88%	88%
		Channel 4	88%	88%	88%
		Channel 5	80%	80%	80%
		S4C	70%	70%	70%

Please note that the list is not complete as we found difficulties with obtaining data due to lack of monitoring mechanisms in some countries

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