Press release | 27.06.2013

Treaty for the blind and visually impaired

Big success in Marrakesh

Over the last two weeks, World Intellectual Property Organization delegates have been meeting at a diplomatic conference to conclude a treaty to facilitate access to published works by visually impaired people. After years of discussion, an agreement has finally been reached.

Commenting on the agreement, Green MEP **Eva Lichtenberger** said:

"This treaty represents an historical step in access to published works by blind and visually impaired people around the world. Over 95% of published books are not available in formats accessible to visually impaired and print-disabled people in Europe. In the rest of the world, over 99% of reading material is unavailable to tens of millions of visually impaired people.

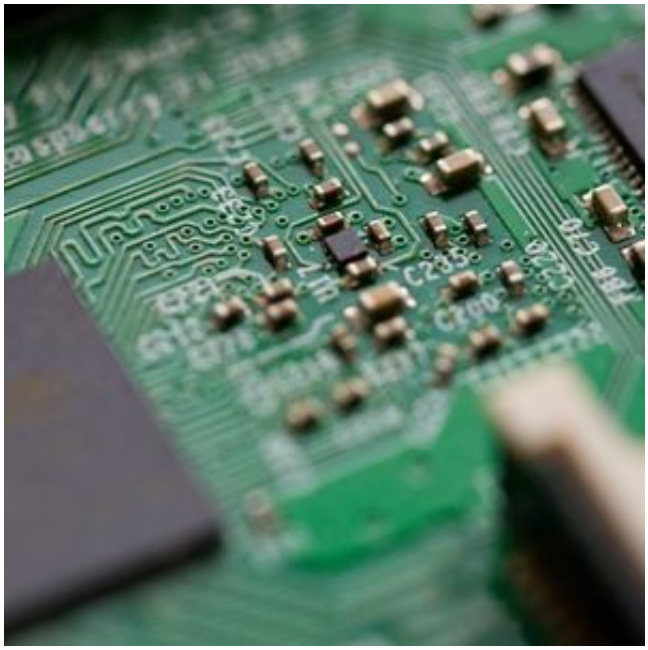
"During the negotiations and until recently, unnecessary red tape threatened to make this treaty unworkable. Under the pressure of corporate lobbies, some countries, including some EU Member States, refused to allow basic flexibilities to be written into the treaty, provisions that many EU countries already protect in law. This week, unnecessary requirements were finally removed from the draft treaty. The Greens regret that it took so long for such a clear-cut issue to be solved.

"In 2009, the World Blind Union, Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay together proposed a WIPO treaty to help increase availability of books in formats accessible to visually impaired and print-disabled people. Members of the European Parliament followed this process closely and have on many occasions expressed their support for organisations working for the rights of blind and visually impaired people. I welcome this long-awaited treaty. It will change the life of blind people, in particular. I'm proud that the European parliament, after several resolutions, oral questions and public statements, helped to strengthen the European Blind Union's position in the WIPO-negotiations. We welcome the fact that these positions finally prevailed at the WIPO."

Recommended

Press release

chris-ried



Digital Fairness Act falls short on addictive design

11.11.2026

Press release

Redek Kozak



[Czech public media under attack - with Markéta Gregoro…]

11.11.2026

Press release

Sebastian P



[Commission must overhaul EU Democracy Shield]

15.09.2026

Press release

hosnysalah



[Israel: Greens/EFA urge EU response to death penalty l…]

01.04.2026

Please share

- E-Mail