



ÖSTERREICHISCHER
GEHÖRLOSENBUND

öglb



SGB-FSS
Schweizerischer Gehörlosenbund
Fédération Suisse des Sourds
Federazione Svizzera dei Sordi

Resolution

1st International Symposium "Education Through Sign Language"
26th – 28th August 2010 in Saarbrücken

Sign language is the key to education

- 1. Language for all**
- 2. Education for all**
- 3. Information for all**
- 4. Implementation of existing laws and guidelines**

Together we will achieve the legal right to education in sign language

Education through sign language

The German Deaf Association (DGB), the Austrian Deaf Association (ÖGLB), and the Swiss Deaf Association (SGB-FSS) gathered at the first international symposium "Education Through Sign Language".

The governments of Germany, Austria and Switzerland as well as all regional and community governments and administrations are hereby requested to initiate and promote an educational system that takes into consideration deaf citizens on an equal basis with hearing citizens. Deaf people must have the opportunity to access education and Lifelong Learning facilities on an equal basis with others. The three National Associations of the Deaf demand the immediate implementation of the following items so all Deaf citizens can exercise the existing right to equivalent educational opportunities and thus secure the preconditions for active and accessible participation in public and private life.

1. Language for all

German, as the majority language, is indispensable also for the Deaf but the visual sign language is their natural means of communication and their instrument of thinking. Thus, comprehensive bilingual education must be ensured and sign language has to become an inherent and obligatory part of the curriculum. Teaching staff's sign language competence must be tested and monitored by means of standardised certification.

The national sign languages (German Sign Language – DGS, Austrian Sign Language – ÖGS, Swiss German Sign Language – SDGS) must be recognised as full and equal languages. Their learning must be promoted and facilitated. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities this also includes the promotion of the linguistic and cultural identity of the Deaf and Sign Language Communities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

To protect and promote sign languages and Deaf culture in the three German-speaking countries an institute, similar to the Goethe Institute should be established.

2. Education for all

Every Deaf person must have the right to benefit from education of any form and to choose the educational offers freely. This does not only apply to an educational path that leads to a first professional qualification but also to a range of educational offers, which might be chosen to complete, intensify, or continue one's education. The government must support Deaf people in their educational efforts. Examples include early intervention, school, apprenticeships, university studies and continuous vocational training, as well as Lifelong Learning (LLL) through all stages of life.

There is a high need of Deaf and hearing sign language interpreters in the educational domain. Ensuring their funding must be a priority. The subtitling of educational films and the use of visual teaching materials must also be ensured.

Inclusive education should only be considered after individual assessments and recommendations depending on the child. Deaf experts must be consulted in such individual assessments. Deaf and hard of hearing children should by all means be encouraged to have contact with other Deaf children and adults and their access to sign language must be ensured.

The experience and the technical competence of Deaf experts should be taken into account when designing and assuring the quality of all educational measures for deaf children, young people, and adults. Education for us must not be planned without us.

Inclusion is not a one-way street. Sign language should be introduced in educational institutions as a given foreign language and be made accessible for hearing parents and children, young people and adults.

3. Information for all

All information that is socially relevant must be fully accessible for Deaf people without barriers. This concerns general information from the media as well as specific information about educational opportunities and particular rights of the Deaf. Deaf people must have unlimited access to all political information. This is the only way for them to become actively involved at a political level and exercise their right to participate fully in political life.

Information about the potentials of sign languages have to be conveyed to politicians, journalists, as well as to wider society, and particularly also to hearing parents of Deaf children in a neutral way.

Research and education in the academic domain "Deaf Studies" has to be widened because it is an important factor in contribution to the empowerment of the Deaf and the Sign Language Community.

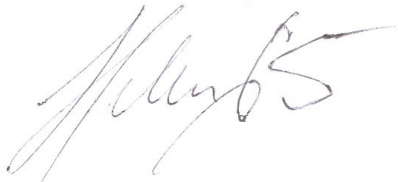
4. Implementation of existing laws and directives

The implementation of all existing laws and directives, which strengthen the position of Deaf people, their languages, and their communities, should be promoted. Examples include the EU charter, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as other relevant national and local legislation, regulations and directives.

Resolution "Sign language is the key to education"

30th August 2010

Signatures:



Rudolf Sailer
President

Mag. a Helene Jarmer
President

Roland Hermann
President

German Deaf
Association

Austrian Deaf
Association

Swiss Deaf
Association

