



EUROPEAN UNION OF THE DEAF

A European Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with
European Parliament, European Commission and the Council of Europe

Brussels, 26 August 2024

Mr. Mladen Vršič
President
National Association of the Deaf, Slovenia

RE: Endorsement of the European Union of the Deaf for the Establishment of the International Sign Language Institution Umbrella Organisation

On behalf of the European Union of the Deaf (EUD), I am writing to express our full support for establishing the International Sign Language Institutions (ISLI) umbrella organisation during your Conference in Ljubljana in November 2024. This initiative aligns with our mission of safeguarding the human rights of deaf people in Europe while promoting the use of National Sign Languages in all areas of society.

With more than 200 national sign languages worldwide and 29 national sign languages in the European Union (EU), they are the natural and preferred languages of deaf people.

The establishment of the International Sign Language Institutions umbrella organisation responds to a critical structural need. It will enable further research, teaching, development and standardisation of national sign languages. In the long term, the ISLI has the potential to contribute to mainstreaming national sign languages as full languages and, focusing on the EU, as official EU languages.

For this reason, we are presenting our full endorsement of your initiative and are looking forward to contributing to its success.

Please feel free to publish this letter on your conference website and other related communication channels. We are excited about the potential of the ISLI and are eager to support its journey towards becoming a spotlight for the deaf community and national sign languages users in Europe and worldwide.

We wish you the utmost success in your preparations for the conference and the formation of the ISLI.

Sincerely yours,

Sofia Isari
President
European Union of the Deaf