Resolution on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, based on petitions received, notably Petition 924/2011

2016/2542(RSP) - 03/02/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution tabled by the Committee on Petitions on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, based on petitions received, notably Petition 924/2011

In its resolution, Parliament referred to the petitions from EU citizens with disabilities with regard to reading print, and particularly **Petition 924/2011** by Dan Pescod (British), on behalf of the European Blind Union (EBU)/Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), on **access by blind people to books and other printed products.**

Members recalled the EU and Member States are parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They signed the Marrakesh Treaty in April 2014 and have thus entered into a political commitment to ratify it; the Marrakesh Treaty aims to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise print disabled.

The Commission has presented a proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Union, of the Marrakesh Treaty.

Members recalled that Articles 24 and 30 of the UN CRPD emphasised the right of persons with disabilities to education, without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, while ensuring that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials.

Accordingly, Parliament noted with profound indignation that **seven EU Member States** have formed a minority block that is impeding the process of ratifying the Treaty. It called on the Council and the Member States to **accelerate the ratification process, without making ratification conditional upon revision of the EU legal framework or the decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union.**

The World Health Organisation estimated in 2010 that across Europe there are 2 550 000 blind people and 23 800 000 partially sighted people, giving a total of **26 350 000** visually impaired individuals. However, only 5 % of all published books in the developed countries and less than 1 % in the developing countries are ever produced in accessible formats.