

OFFICIAL LETTER OF THE
HELLENIC FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

Athens, 04 November 2014

To whom it may concern,

I would like to state that Hellenic Federation of the Deaf (HFD) fully supports the ENS proposal “Measures for the removal of barriers of communication, for the recognition of LIS, the LIS tactile and for the promotion of social inclusion of deaf people and deaf-blind”, which was submitted to the XII Social Affairs Commission.

HFD is based in Athens, Greece. It is a not-for-profit Greek non-governmental organisation (NGO) comprising Local Associations of the Deaf (LADs). It is the only national organisation representing Deaf and Hard of Hearing people at National level and is full member of the European Union of the Deaf and of the World Federation of the Deaf.

It is HFD’s aim to achieve equality in public and private life for Deaf people all over Greece to ensure they can become full citizens. Its main objectives are the recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language (the Greek Sign Language for Greece), empowerment through communication and information, and equality in education and employment.

Considering Italy has signed and ratified the groundbreaking UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on 3rd March 2009, HFD urges the Italian government to follow the request of the Italian Deaf Association (ENS) to recognise Italian Sign Language (LIS) in national legislation and to develop policies and services that enable deaf citizens to participate fully in public and private life, including employment and education. And HFD would like to point out that out of all 28 EU Member States, 25 have sign language recognised in the justice system and Italy is one of the last countries that still have not.

The Greek Sign Language has officially recognized as the official language in the education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people with the Law No 2817 - Year 2000.

HFD urges the representatives of the Italian Council to co-operate with ENS to ensure the ratification of LIS and also support their forthcoming protests in order to achieve equality for all Deaf citizens in Italy.

Yours sincerely,

Ioannis Yallouros
President of the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf