



Deaf Journalism Europe

RECOMMENDATIONS
AND CORRESPONDING
ADVOCACY PLAN



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Overview

Deaf sign language users across Europe are increasingly aware of their right to access news and information in their national sign language and to form their own opinions based on this access. This document provides an overview of the key findings from previous academic research regarding news consumption, the comprehensibility of the news available in sign language, and the preferences of deaf signers. Based on the results of surveys distributed by the Deaf Journalism Europe project consortium in six participating European countries, a set of government recommendations was formulated. Furthermore, an accompanying lobbying plan was developed for various stakeholders. This document has been published digitally on our joint website: www.deafjournalism.eu.

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*“Sweets?
Surely you mean bread and water!”*

1. Introduction

The above quote comes from a deaf woman of approximately 65 years old, responding to a staff member of the Deaf Journalism Europe (DJE) project who informed her that the provision of news in her national sign language, made possible through the European project ‘Deaf Journalism Europe’ (DJE), might come to an end by late May 2025, as the project’s duration is limited to two years. The staff member acknowledged that the DJE consortium had initially offered the deaf communities involved in the project “sweets” (metaphorically speaking) and would subsequently take it away. For this deaf woman, however, access to daily news in her national sign language was not a luxury or an indulgence but an essential necessity, comparable to bread and water.

1.1. Access to news in sign language

Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals can obtain news and information through various means (Neves, 2007). Written language is available via news and informational websites, and subtitles are provided for audiovisual videos and broadcasts. In addition, there are news and informational videos made accessible in national sign languages through in-vision interpreters, meaning the interpreter is added to the screen during post-production. Furthermore, albeit limited, there are also news broadcasts in Europe that are produced with sign language as the primary language. According to the European Union of the Deaf (EUD)¹, deaf sign language users, due to their unique cultural and linguistic identity, often prefer full, barrier-free access to information in their national sign language. For clarity, this document uses the term "deaf" as an umbrella term encompassing varying degrees of hearing loss, including hard-of-hearing individuals, and those who use sign language as their first or primary language.

Various academic studies, the most relevant findings of which are presented in this document, reveal that deaf sign language users in Europe and even globally still face a lack of access to news and information in their national sign language. This is particularly striking given that many national governments and public broadcasters in European countries have already implemented measures to make their news offerings accessible to deaf sign language users. However, the studies indicate that these efforts have not had the desired impact on the deaf audience.

¹ <https://www.eud.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EUD-Position-Paper-Accessibility-of-Information-and-Communication.pdf>

1.2. The growing demand for sign language news

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, deaf sign language users in Europe have become increasingly aware of their right to obtain news and information in a comprehensible manner in their national sign language and to form their own opinions based on this access. This awareness also motivates the six deaf-led media companies active within the DJE consortium to ensure that news and information are appropriately made available to deaf communities in their respective countries. Their daily news services, produced in and presented directly in sign language by a deaf presenter (rather than by a sign language interpreter accompanying a spoken-language news broadcast), represent a novelty in some DJE-project countries, such as Flanders and Germany. In other countries, such news provision already exists, either on a voluntary basis (the Netherlands), through subscription models (France), or via public broadcasters (Sweden and Slovakia). In the latter cases, DJE partners in these countries have dedicated their news offerings, co-funded by the DJE project, entirely to deaf-related news items.

Although all sign language news services within the DJE project are co-financed by the European Union for a two-year period, with one of the key objectives being to support their development and economic viability, little to no funding is available for operational costs. Only the French DJE partner, Médiapi, operates on a subscription model; however, they continue to experience financial difficulties. Consequently, Médiapi is actively seeking public and private grants while diversifying its revenue streams—such as video sales and subscriptions for professionals, including libraries and schools—to ensure the sustainability of its production.

For this reason, the DJE project has allocated resources to investigate the extent to which deaf news consumers, as members of relatively small national markets, are willing to pay for the news services provided by DJE partners.

1.3. Expectations from deaf communities

The surveys conducted by the DJE consortium in six participating European countries (see deliverable 4.1 of the DJE project) provided greater insight into news consumption and the preferences of deaf communities. Like earlier academic studies, the survey results indicate that deaf sign language users strongly prefer a “dedicated” news offering, presented directly in their national sign language by a deaf presenter and tailored to their linguistic and informational needs, as an effective means of ensuring their right to accessible information.

In the graph below (figure 1), the results of the survey conducted with 877 respondents (including deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, and hearing individuals) across six different countries involved in the DJE project are presented. When asked about their preference for sign language presentation—whether they favored a deaf presenter delivering news directly in their national sign language, or the use of a deaf or hearing interpreter in a regular news broadcast—the preference for the first option was significantly higher.

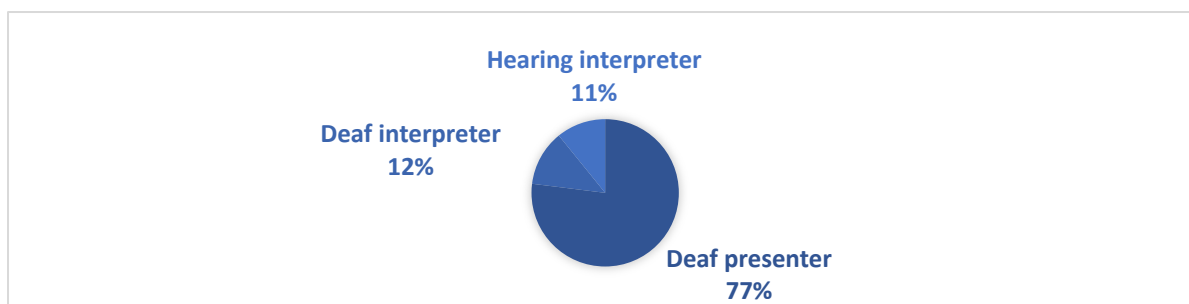


Figure 1 – Preferred type of sign language news presentation

At the same time, responses from deaf sign language users to the DJE surveys show that they expect these news and informational services to be provided free of charge by governments. The tables below provide an overview of various results from the DJE surveys. It is clear that there is no unanimous outcome regarding whether consumers are willing to pay for DJE news services (Table 1), but it is clear that respondents believe these services should be provided free of charge by governments (Table 2).

	Yes	No	Maybe	Total
Willingness to pay	154 (19,9%)	298 (38,4%)	323 (41,7%)	877

Table 1 – Willingness to pay for DJE news offerings

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
The government should not fund sign language news	430	149	185	47	66	877

Table 2 – Responses to three statements in DJE surveys

Given that most of the news services provided through the DJE project are set to conclude by late May 2025 due to a lack of further funding, this document² sets out government recommendations for ensuring the sustainability of these services, accompanied by a lobbying plan aimed at inspiring various stakeholders across Europe.

² It is important to note that most quotes and studies referenced in this document originate from Flanders. This is not only because the principal author of this document is active in Flanders but also because media accessibility is high on the lobbying agenda of the deaf community and its stakeholders in that region. As a result, significant academic research on this topic has been conducted there.

“In the past, I didn’t really understand why I needed to vote. I simply followed my parents’ preference for a particular political party. Thanks to this news service in my sign language, I now have a better understanding of my role during elections. I have formed my own opinion.”

2. Legal framework

The testimony above comes from a deaf young man, aged 35, who follows the daily *VG7 nieuws* provided by the DJE project. This news offering in Flemish Sign Language is produced by Visual Box, which delivered additional informational videos during the federal and European elections of June 2024.

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**³, adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, forms a vital foundation for the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Article 19 explicitly states that this right includes the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers.

This right is further reinforced by the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**⁴, adopted by the United Nations on 13 December 2006. The CRPD is the first international treaty specifically focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities and mandates the recognition and protection of sign languages and sign language communities (Ball, 2011). Article 21 of the Convention, titled **“Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information,”** obliges States to make information intended for the general public available in accessible formats and technologies in a timely manner and at no additional cost. Moreover, mass media, including online providers of information, must ensure their services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

At the European level, the **Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD, 2010/13/EU)**⁵ includes provisions on the accessibility of audiovisual media for persons with disabilities in a broad sense. The **European Accessibility Act (EAA)**⁶, adopted in 2019, specifically states that

³ <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities>

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2010/13/oj/eng>

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019L0882>

audiovisual media services must be made accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, including through subtitles and sign language interpretation.

While these legal instruments highlight the importance of accessible media services for deaf individuals, sign language is often mentioned as one possible measure. However, the implementation and concretization of such measures are left to the Member States, which must establish appropriate solutions within their national legislation and policies to meet general accessibility requirements. This often creates challenges, as many national governments interpret their obligations to provide deaf citizens with access to information in their national sign language in varying ways within their media accessibility legislation or agreements with public broadcasters.

3. Types of sign language media

Before addressing the challenges surrounding existing news services in national sign languages in Europe, it is essential to first understand the distinction between two types of sign language media (Steiner, 1998).

On the one hand, a “regular” broadcast can be made accessible in a national sign language through a sign language interpreter. This entails a broadcast originally produced for a general audience that remains unchanged in content and structure, but with an interpreter added in-vision during post-production (or even live). This approach operates within a **‘hearing framework’**, as the programme is first produced in spoken language.



Figure 2 – Hearing framework

On the other hand, it is possible to produce a broadcast directly in sign language, operating within a **‘deaf framework’**. Such broadcasts are fully produced in sign language, often presented by a deaf signer, and made accessible to a wider, non-signing audience, for example, through voice-over or subtitles added during post-production.

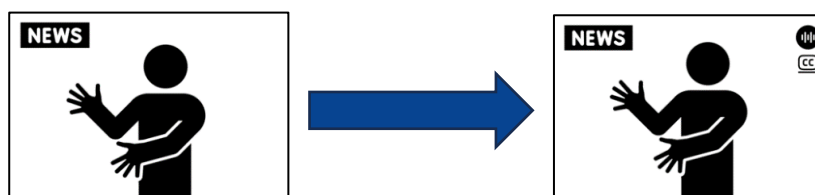


Figure 3 – Deaf framework

“When the quality of the translation is adequate, accessibility becomes an illusion rather than a reality. The illusion of inclusion should not be the goal of a public broadcaster.”

4. Illusion of inclusion

The above statement comes from a memorandum set up by various stakeholders within the Flemish deaf community, that expresses their concerns about the quality of interpreted news broadcasts provided by the public broadcaster in Flanders. Across Europe, making regular news broadcasts accessible through sign language interpreters is the most common method of providing news in sign language (Neves 2007; Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020). In most countries, the live interpretation of news broadcasts is carried out by hearing interpreters. While this is often considered the standard by governments and public broadcasters, the effectiveness of this approach is questioned within deaf communities. Various studies have demonstrated that this form of accessibility often poses barriers to the comprehensibility of news and information intended for deaf audiences.

4.1. Challenges in the accessibility concept

The challenges in understanding regular news broadcasts interpreted by (hearing) sign language interpreters can be divided into three categories: technical aspects, the interpreters themselves, and the deaf viewers (Wehrmeyer, 2015). These three categories are summarized below, based on findings from various academic studies, supplemented with quotes from the evaluation study on the provision of news in Flemish Sign Language on the public broadcaster VRT, conducted by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020).

4.1.1. Technical challenges

Research shows that deaf sign language users struggle with **the fast-paced speech of the source material**. This makes it difficult to simultaneously follow the sign language interpreter and the news footage, which are often essential for visually understanding the news content. Deaf viewers experience challenges in dividing their attention between multiple visual input sources: the sign language interpreter, the news footage, and textual input such as captions or name labels.

“I only have two eyes; I can’t make one look in one direction and the other in another.”

An eye-tracking study conducted among deaf viewers in South Africa revealed that they consistently focus on the sign language interpreter, regardless of whether they fully understand the translation, and rarely shift their attention to other visual inputs (Wehrmeyer, 2014).

Deaf sign language users also report frequent delays in the sign language interpretation compared to the spoken content (Dhoest & Rijckaert, 2020). **Synchronisation between the news footage and the interpretation** is often challenging to achieve, as a sign language interpreter can only begin translating once the auditory input of the broadcast has been processed.

4.1.2. Challenges faced by sign language interpreters

Various academic studies (Norwood, 1979; Steiner, 1998; Kyle, 2007; Xiao & Yu, 2009; Xiao & Li, 2013; Wehrmeyer, 2015; Dhoest & Rijckaert, 2020) indicate that the primary reason deaf respondents struggle to understand interpreted news content lies with the hearing interpreters themselves. In most cases, these interpreters **do not possess native-level proficiency in sign language**. Respondents report that interpreters often use an "artificial" form of sign language, characterised by an unnatural style, numerous lexical and grammatical errors, and a predominant influence of spoken language on their signing. Deaf viewers frequently point out that interpreted news broadcasts lack accurate and consistent delivery in sign language. It has even been observed that interpreters occasionally use signs unfamiliar to deaf viewers, leading them to suspect that these signs are being improvised on the spot.

*"Sometimes it feels like signs are simply strung together,
but it doesn't result in a proper translation."*

Deaf viewers emphasise the importance of a narrative style with clear and consistent explanations in interpreted news broadcasts. While they often understand individual signs produced by hearing interpreters, the overarching coherence of the content is what is crucial to fully follow the broadcasts.

Studies in Italy (Kellet Bidoli & Sala, 2011) and Flanders (De Keyzer & Primusz, 2013) have explored the perspective of news interpreters and the challenges they face, both behind the scenes and in the recording studio. Key challenges include the complexity of news content, lack of preparation time, limited equivalence of certain concepts in sign language, avoiding spoken-language influence on signs, and having to choose between regional variants coexisting within a national sign language. Interpreters also note that the fast pace of news broadcasts can be difficult to keep up with, often **necessitating omissions of information during live interpretation**.

*“As a deaf person, I have the right to full information.
When the interpreter omits information, I wonder:
am I somehow worth less?”*

Deaf viewers further observe that interpreters tend to approach their task in a process-oriented manner (“How should I interpret this? What interpreting and translation strategies should I apply? What is the correct sign for this?”) rather than focusing on the audience’s understanding (“Does the deaf audience comprehend my interpretation?”).

4.1.3. Challenges faced by deaf viewers

Research conducted in Flanders (De Meulder & Heyerick 2013, Dhoest & Rijckaert 2020) reveals that deaf sign language users are not accustomed to receiving large amounts of information in Flemish Sign Language (Vlaamse Gebarentaal, VGT). This is a direct consequence of the systematic suppression of sign language, particularly in deaf education systems, which historically prioritised teaching hearing and speaking skills while banning the use of sign language. The study by Dhoest and Rijckaert even found that many deaf individuals are not sufficiently emancipated to recognise that they often do not fully understand the interpreted information. They tend to adopt an attitude of “better something than nothing”.

*“Although I do not understand all the signs from
the hearing news interpreters, I don’t want to criticize them.
I’m just happy that sign language is offered on television at all.”*

Many older deaf signers blame themselves for not fully understanding the signing of hearing interpreters. They attribute this to their limited proficiency in sign language, which they see as a consequence of the historical ban on sign language in education. At the same time, they argue that hearing interpreters should be more proficient in sign language than they are, as interpreters have had the privilege of formally learning their national sign language through recognised training programmes. Deaf individuals sometimes assume that the improvised and often incorrect signs used by hearing interpreters during news broadcasts are accurate, leading to the unintentional incorporation of these signs into their daily use of sign language.

Furthermore, the research highlights that deaf signers are often *information-poor*. In their daily lives, deaf individuals have less access to news and information than hearing people, who constantly utilise a wide range of news sources, including spoken and written media, as well as informal conversations in social and professional settings. Deaf signers, on the other hand, frequently rely on a single news source in their national sign language, which is typically provided by public broadcasters. When these broadcasts are interpreted by hearing interpreters, the accessibility and comprehensibility of the news are significantly limited for many deaf viewers.

4.2. Mechanism of control

The same Flemish studies (De Meulder & Heyerick, 2013; Dhoest & Rijckaert, 2020) reveal that deaf sign language users express concern about the role of hearing interpreters as language role models for their vulnerable minority language during news broadcasts. Deaf individuals note a lack of input and control over hearing interpreters, who often act as “gatekeepers” for public broadcasters, thereby implicitly influencing how deaf people access information in their sign language.

At the same time, deaf people are often reluctant to criticise hearing interpreters, partly due to their dependence on these interpreters for access to various domains of life. A troubling example emerged in the DJE surveys, where a deaf respondent expressed feeling “obliged” to watch the interpreted news broadcasts. She feared that if this format were replaced by news broadcasts presented directly in sign language by a deaf presenter (a format she personally preferred), hearing interpreters might lose motivation to continue working in other contexts. This fear is not unfounded, as many European countries face a severe shortage of sign language interpreters. The respondent hoped that hearing interpreters would continue to have opportunities for this interesting type of work on a national television platform, ensuring that the profession of “sign language interpreter” remains attractive.

This situation raises critical questions about power dynamics and responsibility. Hearing interpreters wield considerable influence over the linguistic minority group, leading to “silent” frustrations among deaf people, as they have little to no say in how their sign language is represented in the media and how they access information. Furthermore, deaf communities express critical concerns about their powerlessness within a system dominated by hearing non-signers. The fact that the government and/or public broadcasters, often without any knowledge or understanding of the deaf sign language community, decide how media accessibility in sign language is shaped, contradicts the principle of “nothing about us without us.”

*“Interpreting the news is an impossible task.
I don’t want to be negative about the interpreters themselves,
because they are certainly suitable for everyday assignments,
but a news broadcast is 40 minutes of intense, high-level interpreting.
However, the signing is sloppy—what value does that give to our language?
Imagine the news was presented in spoken language with
incorrect word order, pronunciation, or phrasing. Viewers wouldn’t accept that either.
When it comes to sign language, are we just supposed to accept it?
These news interpreters have received formal training; they know the value of sign language,
and yet they take on this task where they make many errors and omit information.”*

*“Previously, I used to watch
the interpreted news broadcasts in full.
But now I often fast-forward through them
because I can no longer follow their signs.
I thought it was my fault, that I was too stupid
to understand these news broadcasts.
With the new concept, I feel smarter!”*

5. The right to understand

This poignant statement comes from a 70-year-old deaf woman during an in-depth interview. The interview was part of the evaluation research by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020) on the interpreted news broadcasts in Flemish Sign Language (VGT) on the public broadcaster VRT. In the first phase of the research, the existing interpreted news broadcasts were evaluated. During the second phase, inspired by international study visits, researchers explored best practices for effective news broadcasts in sign language which led to the third phase: the development of an entirely new concept—news broadcasts presented directly in Flemish Sign Language by a deaf presenter. This concept was unique in Flanders at the time and was introduced prior to the launch of *VGT nieuws* through the DJE project. Test videos of this new format were shown to the same respondents from the first phase of the study.

The woman in question was deeply moved when she saw the test video. She shared that she had spent her entire life believing she was “stupid” because she could never fully understand the interpreted information on television. She grew up in a hearing family and thus never had full access to family conversations. At the deaf school she attended, she did not receive proper education because sign language was prohibited. As a result, she missed a tremendous amount of basic information. She had resigned herself to the idea that she would never be able to process such information. Even with the interpreted news broadcasts from the public broadcaster, she continued to feel stupid because she could not fully understand the interpreted information produced by hearing interpreters.

It was only when she saw the new concept of news broadcasts presented directly in Flemish Sign Language that a whole new world opened up for her. She realized that she was not the cause of the problem. For the first time in her life, she could fully understand the news. Despite her advanced age, she felt “smarter” for the first time in her life. This realisation had a profound impact on her, moving her to tears during the interview.

5.1. 'Own' news broadcasts as the solution

Derived from the aforementioned challenges and feedback from deaf viewers, it is often stated within European deaf communities that regular news broadcasts are 'impossible to interpret. According to the research conducted by Dhoest & Rijckaert (2020), the focus should not be on identifying specific obstacles to the comprehension of interpreted news broadcasts by deaf viewers, but rather on the accessibility concept itself. In brief, the format of the interpreted news broadcasts is the primary cause of the previously mentioned issues.

In the evaluation of Flemish Sign Language (VGT) on the VRT (2020), the researchers were inspired by the Swedish model *Nyhetstecken* (translated as "The news in signs"). This news broadcast is currently aired every weekday evening on a channel of the national broadcaster Sveriges Television AB (SVT). In a ten-minute broadcast, a deaf news anchor presents a summary of selected news items in *Svenskt teckenspråk* (TSP), Swedish Sign Language, from their own studio. The broadcast is supported by a hearing newsreader, who stands beside the deaf presenter in the studio. The hearing newsreader appears only at the beginning and end of the broadcast, while their voice continuously serves as a voice-over during the deaf newsreader's presentation in sign language. This format ensures that the news broadcast is also accessible to a broader non-signing audience.

For the Flemish study, the researchers created a test video inspired by this Swedish model. The video was presented to the deaf respondents. The results indicated that the information given in this 'own' news broadcast was much better understood. The coherence was greater, enabling viewers to better comprehend, retain, and communicate the content of the news. This concept also takes into account the modalities of sign language and the specific viewing needs of deaf people.

Moreover, the survey results from the Deaf Journalism Europe (DJE) project (see deliverable 4.1) demonstrate that deaf viewers watch interpreted news broadcasts significantly less frequently. They prefer **news broadcasts presented directly in their national sign language by a deaf presenter, tailored to their linguistic and informational needs.**

A respondent from the research report by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020) succinctly summarised this sentiment:

*"I feel that this format moves more towards equality,
because they know what deaf people need."*

5.2. Illusion from a different perspective

As established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the right to access news and information is a fundamental right that should be afforded to every citizen. This principle lies at the heart of inclusion: ensuring that deaf individuals are on equal footing with hearing individuals in their ability to access information and form their own opinions. The diagram below illustrates that access to news is the first step, followed by comprehension, which then enables the formation of independent opinions. Only when these conditions are met can one speak of the full inclusion of deaf citizens in the domain of accessible news and information.

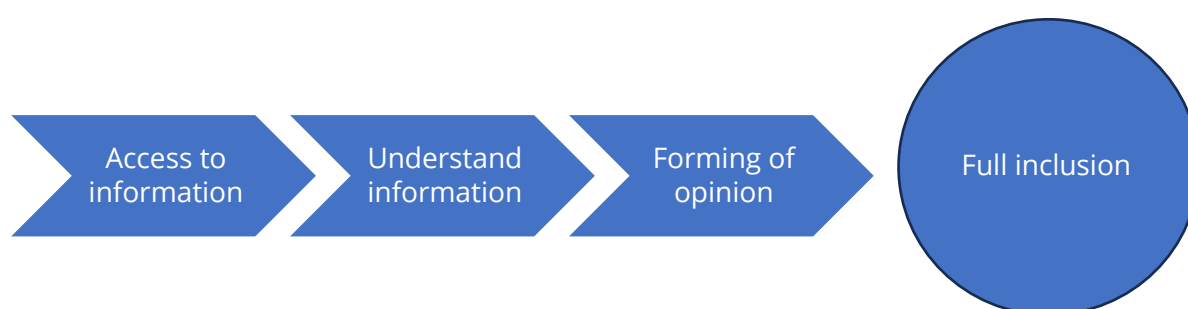


Figure 4 - Meaning of full inclusion

Consider the scenario where a deaf individual is provided with only a limited selection of news items, curated by the public broadcaster in a single interpreted news bulletin, for instance, in the evening (see section 5.6. of this document). This individual would not have access to the full range of available information. Furthermore, if the information provided is not adequately understood—particularly when interpreted by a hearing interpreter—it becomes nearly impossible for the individual to form their own opinions. In such a case, the notion of full inclusion becomes illusory, amounting instead to an "illusion of inclusion".

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rijckaert and Gebruers (2022) conducted a small-scale study in Flanders examining how deaf sign language users made informed decisions, for instance, regarding vaccination. The study revealed that, for the first time, deaf sign language users did not rely on the opinions of others, such as hearing family members. Instead, they based their decisions on information provided through live press conferences featuring deaf interpreters and informative videos presented by deaf presenters, produced by a media company run by deaf individuals. They expressed distrust towards news broadcasts interpreted by hearing interpreters—not only because they often found the information difficult to comprehend, but also due to a lack of cultural identification with hearing interpreters.

Furthermore, the research report by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020) demonstrates that deaf respondents feel uncomfortable accessing news through intermediaries such as hearing

interpreters. This reliance on interpreters to access information reinforces the sense of "disability" among deaf individuals rather than alleviating it. They perceive this process as paternalistic, wherein they depend on hearing interpreters to exercise their right to access news and information in sign language. One respondent from the report articulated this sentiment as follows:

*"It feels as though deaf people need a second person
just to be able to watch television."*

Inclusion, from the perspective of deaf viewers, is about achieving independence in accessing and understanding news in their own sign language. Inclusion does not necessarily mean that deaf individuals should be offered exactly the same news content as hearing individuals, such as regular news broadcasts with a hearing interpreter, but rather that they should achieve the same outcome: access to an equivalent quantity of news, which they can comprehend and use to form their own opinions. A CODA (Child of Deaf Adults) even shared with one of the staff members of the DJE consortium that her deaf parents are now able to follow "their own" news broadcasts independently:

*"My parents used to call me often after watching an interpreted news broadcast.
They didn't understand much and would frequently ask me for clarification.
I would explain the news to them in sign language.
It turned out that they had misunderstood a lot,
and they would even argue with each other about what the news was about.
Now, with your news provision, they don't call me anymore.
They feel reassured because they can understand it themselves without my help."*

5.3. Primary target group

According to the research by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020), it is essential to first consider the specific needs of the deaf community within one's own country, rather than simply emulating the practices of public broadcasters in other nations. The development of deaf communities and national sign languages varies significantly across European countries; some nations are more advanced in this regard than others. For example, the BBC in the United Kingdom is often cited as an example, as it offers news broadcasts featuring both deaf and hearing interpreters. This appears to align well with the needs of deaf sign language users in that country. However, it must be noted that deaf individuals in the United Kingdom generally have had better educational opportunities and that programming in British Sign Language (BSL) has existed for decades. These factors have contributed to the viewing experience and media consumption of BSL users, enabling them to better understand and process news in BSL.

It is therefore **necessary to conduct (academic) research into the needs of the deaf community in the country in question to ensure its members can access news and information in their national sign language in an efficient and comprehensible manner.**

5.4. Linguistic needs of deaf sign language users

Due to the systematic suppression of sign languages in various European countries, most national sign languages—despite recent recognition—are still developing slowly. Compared to institutionally established spoken languages, these languages remain in their infancy. Additionally, the lack of a one-to-one relationship between spoken and sign languages presents a significant linguistic challenge, particularly when live news broadcasts in high-register language must be translated into sign language. Rendering a newscast—often delivered at a rapid speech rate—into sign language risks allowing the dominant spoken language to exert a negative influence on the development of the minority language. This issue is particularly acute in live broadcasts, where complex terms and concepts from current events may not have immediate equivalents in sign language. Spoken and sign languages inherently differ in their modality and structure. A respondent from the aforementioned evaluation by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020) emphasised the importance of safeguarding the linguistic quality of sign language:

*"For me personally, it is important that people can watch
the news – everyone has that right –
but the content in sign language must be linguistically accurate.
This implies no half measures."*

5.5. Quality of sign language

In interpreted news broadcasts, sign language is typically produced during the final stages of the production process. A sign language interpreter often receives only limited preparatory materials to review and practice in advance. Due to the nature of live news broadcasts, many segments are prepared last minute or delivered entirely live without preparation. This means that, in most cases, the sign language interpretation is produced live by the interpreter during the broadcast. Such a workflow significantly impacts the linguistic quality of the sign language interpretation and reduces its comprehensibility for deaf viewers.

The earlier sign language is integrated into the production process, the higher the quality of the final product's sign language. In news broadcasts presented directly in sign language by a deaf presenter, sign language is incorporated from the very beginning of the editorial process. This occurs within a "deaf framework", where sign language remains central throughout the entire production process, culminating in the final on-screen result. This approach ensures optimal sign language quality and greater accessibility for deaf viewers.

5.6. Information needs of deaf sign language users

In the production of news broadcasts in sign language, it is essential to explicitly consider the specific information needs of deaf sign language users. This group primarily comprises individuals who do not have the spoken language as their first language or do not have sufficient proficiency in it. As a result, they have less access to news and information compared to hearing individuals, who can stay continuously informed through various news sources and channels.

The fact that a news broadcast is interpreted does not necessarily guarantee that deaf people have access to all relevant information. For instance, consider a country where only one evening news broadcast per day is provided with an interpreter. If a significant event occurs in the morning, such as the resignation of the prime minister, and this is discussed exclusively in the morning and afternoon news broadcasts without an interpreter, deaf individuals will miss this information. Although the news may also be available through news apps and websites, it is often presented solely in written language. Should another significant event, such as a terrorist attack, occur later in the day, the evening news might be entirely devoted to that topic. Consequently, deaf sign language users would not have had access to news about the prime minister's resignation in their national sign language.

To address these challenges, it is recommended to adopt a "deaf framework", where the selection of news explicitly considers the information needs of deaf sign language users.

5.7. Deaf presenters

Across European countries, various approaches are employed for sign language news broadcasts presented by deaf presenters. On the one hand, news selection and editorial responsibility for the content are carried out internally by (deaf or hearing) journalists, often through a public service broadcaster (e.g., *Nyhetstecken* in Sweden). On the other hand, deaf translators rely on pre-written news texts available on public broadcasters' news websites (e.g., *DR Lige til* in Denmark). A shared feature of these approaches is that the involvement of a deaf presenter or interpreter/translator is essential for presenting news in the national sign language. This point was affirmed by a respondent in the research report by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020):

*"I understand deaf interpreters much better.
They are often in contact with other deaf people and know our language.
They are also quicker to adopt newly developed signs.
Hearing interpreters only learn the signs taught in their training.
I definitely prefer deaf interpreters."*

Stone (2007) observed that it has long been customary for bilingual deaf individuals to translate written language—such as letters or news from newspapers—into sign language for semi- and monolingual deaf individuals. Stone (2005) referred to this as the 'Deaf Translation Norm'. According to this norm, deaf interpreters/translators⁷ are linguistically and culturally more proficient in sign language than hearing interpreters, as sign language is their native language. Their sign language presentations also reflect the identity of the deaf community. Additionally, they produce fluent sign language by incorporating more coherence and refinement into their delivery. Deaf interpreters employ the language of the audience and convey messages in a manner that does not appear translated. This reduces the cognitive effort required by deaf viewers to understand the content, making them prefer a deaf presenter or interpreter over a hearing one.

"Deaf interpreters inherently possess the native fluency of sign language from a young age. I can understand them instantly."

De Meulder and Heyerick (2013) argued that the role of sign language news presenters is best entrusted to deaf individuals. In their article, they identified nine dimensions that explain why deaf individuals with the right skills and mindset are ideally suited to present the news (although the article primarily discusses interpreting, its findings can be applied more broadly to sign language presentations).

In addition to the **linguistic dimension**, as outlined above, there is the **practical dimension**: deaf individuals can perform this role with relatively simple adjustments, such as access to written news texts and video materials, as well as a recording studio equipped with an autocue. Deaf presenters rely on written texts, which Stone (2005) considers an opportunity to minimise the influence of the source language (spoken language) on the target language (sign language). This approach leads to a presentation that is more of a translation of content than an interpretation. Stone refers to this as the **process or modality dimension** (see also section 5.5 of this document).

Given the high demand within the deaf community for interpreting services in other sectors (e.g. education and healthcare), where hearing interpreters often work more frequently than deaf interpreters or translators, this also introduces a **political dimension**. Deaf presenters can serve as role models for other deaf individuals and their communities by demonstrating that deaf people can work in television—a role traditionally reserved for hearing interpreters. This constitutes the **empowerment dimension**. Furthermore, it is a responsibility of the deaf community to represent their own language on television, as the development of sign language is inherently their collective responsibility. This embodies the **language ownership dimension**.

⁷ DJE surveys indicate that there is sometimes confusion regarding terms such as 'deaf presenter' and 'deaf interpreters' or 'deaf translators', as most of DJE's news services employ deaf presenters who are also usually active and/or recognised or trained as interpreters or translators.

Cultural identification with the presenter is a key factor in understanding news content. Deaf presenters, being members of the deaf community themselves, share the same lived experiences as their audience and understand their visual perspective on the world. This relates to the **cultural dimension**. Additionally, deaf presenters are acutely aware, through their own experience, of what it means to depend on a third party for accessing information. This pertains to the **responsibility dimension**. Deaf presenters, as members of a minority group, possess a distinct awareness of their responsibilities, in contrast to hearing interpreters, who may not fully comprehend the consequences of their interpreting performance.

Finally, there is the **motivation dimension**: although generalisations are difficult, experience in Flanders suggests that the motivations of most hearing interpreters working for public broadcasters differ from those of deaf presenters. Hearing interpreters often view their role as one of helping deaf individuals gain equal access to information (see also section 5.2 of this document). Deaf presenters, by contrast, are more likely to be motivated by an empowering and linguistic perspective. Among other things, they aim to serve as role models for other deaf individuals and to work in their native language.

5.8. Deaf news

In Sweden and Slovakia, public broadcasters already provide dedicated news broadcasts in their national sign language, with the two partners from these countries in the DJE consortium fully focusing their news offerings on "deaf news". This includes a variety of news items about deaf individuals, deaf communities within their region, across Europe, and globally, as well as news related to sign languages. According to results from DJE surveys, a large majority of deaf respondents expressed a strong preference for the availability of deaf-related news, as it allows them to identify with the content and reflect on their own experiences.

This preference may stem primarily from the lack of attention to these topics in regular news broadcasts by public broadcasters. For instance, events such as the Deaflympics do not receive the same level of coverage as the Olympic or Paralympic Games. Additionally, it would be relevant to more regularly include interviews with deaf individuals in the news programmes, similar to street interviews. This would promote more equitable representation.

The research report by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020) further revealed that deaf respondents expressed frustration when news broadcasts interpreted into sign language include items about musical artists and festivals, which are often far removed from their interests. Instead, they preferred replacing such topics with "deaf news", which is feasible during dedicated news broadcasts.

5.9. Cost-efficiency

In some countries, public broadcasters already offer two types of news services: interpreted news broadcasts and news broadcasts directly in sign language. However, in many other countries, only one of those options is available. National broadcasters often choose the simplest and cheapest solution: employing hearing interpreters in post-production for regular news broadcasts. At the same time, national broadcasters sometimes present the deaf community with a choice between two types of sign language news services, without this necessarily implying the implementation of the selected option.

According to the DJE surveys, deaf sign language users have a strong preference for news broadcasts presented directly in sign language. This aligns with the findings of various studies which revealed that all respondents preferred dedicated news broadcasts over interpreted versions:

"I prefer the interpreted news broadcasts to be discontinued, as I don't watch them. I find them a pointless offering. It feels like a wasted investment by the government. They would be better off investing in a high-quality service that allows deaf people to fully understand the information."

Governments and public broadcasters often express concerns about the financial costs associated with producing dedicated news broadcasts in sign language. On the surface, employing a hearing interpreter in post-production seems much cheaper. However, to date, no concrete studies or cost comparisons have been conducted within the DJE consortium to substantiate this claim. The final costs depend on how a dedicated news broadcast in sign language is produced. Several factors come into play: How many news items are included in the broadcast? Is there a limit on airtime? What is the process for content selection and editorial work? Are written news texts already available to serve as a basis? Will voice-overs, subtitles, or transcripts in written language be used?

In the latter case, where the news broadcast in sign language is accompanied in post-production by spoken language (voice-over) and/or written language (subtitles or transcripts), it can appeal to a wider audience. This includes individuals with lower language proficiency, non-native speakers or newcomers, people with intellectual disabilities, and others who benefit from simplified language and clear explanations. While sign language is a full-fledged and rich language, its visual modality may offer advantages for effectively structuring and delivering content (referred to as "sign language gain"). However, it is important to ensure that a news broadcast in sign language is not derived from input already produced in simplified language ("hearing framework"). Instead, the content should first be produced in sign language before being made accessible in spoken or written language ("deaf framework").

The discussion of which type of sign language news service is the least expensive should shift to the question of which type is the most cost-efficient. The research report by Dhoest and

Rijckaert (2020) includes interviews with staff from the deaf-led production company Døvefilm, responsible for news broadcasts in Danish Sign Language for the Danish broadcaster DR. These interviews contain an insightful metaphor to illustrate which type of news service is the most cost-efficient, based on how information is "digested" by deaf sign language users:

"It's all about what the audience wants. You can choose between a hamburger from a fast food restaurant or a hamburger from a quality restaurant. Both are hamburgers, but they are prepared in different ways. A service offering only live interpretation, where most interpreters do not have native-level proficiency in sign language, is comparable to a hamburger from a fast food restaurant. A system with a deaf presenter who is fluent in sign language at a native level is comparable to a hamburger from a quality restaurant, but that option is more expensive. If the national broadcaster chooses the fast food restaurant option because it's cheaper, instead of prioritizing quality, it must be aware of the level of quality it is delivering."

To clarify this metaphor further: a fast food hamburger is quickly prepared and does not take into account the consumer's specific preferences or allergies. In a quality restaurant, however, the customer can carefully choose a hamburger and inform the chef of any allergies, ensuring the dish is fully tailored to their needs. The preparation process considers their requirements for a proper and enjoyable meal.

"With dedicated news broadcasts, deaf viewers better absorb the conveyed information. With interpreted news broadcasts, the pace is too fast for viewers to thoroughly process the information. It's comparable to eating a meal too quickly, making you less aware of what you are consuming and preventing proper digestion."

“The news for deaf people should be produced by themselves because they are familiar with what is happening in the deaf community and know what is important to deaf individuals. Public broadcasters are more likely to impose their own agenda and pursue their own interests.”

6. The separation of powers

This statement from a respondent in the research by Dhoest and Rijckaert (2020) reflects the distrust that has emerged within the Flemish deaf community towards the public broadcaster, after the VRT repeatedly ignored the wishes and concerns of this group. Across Europe, disagreements persist between deaf viewers on the one hand and national broadcasters and policymakers on the other, largely due to a lack of understanding of each other's needs (Neves, 2007). This divergence has resulted in both parties prioritising their own interests instead of working collaboratively towards solutions. As Neves (2007) highlights, accessibility is often perceived by national broadcasters as a burden rather than an opportunity.

6.1. The need for more deaf perspectives

The DJE surveys reveal that deaf sign language users prefer news in sign language to be directly funded by the government (or through an alternative taxation system) and produced by both the national broadcaster and a deaf-led media company. This suggests a model in which news broadcasts are produced by an external media company with the necessary expertise and subsequently distributed by the national broadcaster. International examples, such as those in Denmark and the United Kingdom, demonstrate that involving external production houses can provide multiple benefits. This approach fosters competition, enhances the quality of media accessibility, and better aligns with the needs of the deaf community (Dhoest & Rijckaert, 2020).

At the same time, the principle of "nothing about us without us" plays a vital role. There is significant frustration within deaf communities over the fact that governments or national broadcasters unilaterally decide how deaf sign language users receive information in their own language. This often leads to situations in which the target audience has minimal input or influence over how their access to information is structured. A considerable risk also arises when national broadcasters overly rely on the perspectives of hearing interpreters, who are often—wrongly or unintentionally—seen as a "bridge" between the deaf community and the broader society. When hearing interpreters justify their presence on television for personal motivations, their priorities may sometimes conflict with those of the deaf community.

6.2. Addressing inequalities

To reduce these structural inequalities and strengthen the autonomy of the deaf community, the introduction of a "separation of powers" is proposed. This model consists of three key stakeholders:

- **Responsible Authorities:** The government holds the responsibility for guaranteeing the rights of deaf sign language users to access news and information in their national sign language. The implementation of this responsibility is assigned to the national broadcaster, which is funded by government grants or a taxation system to fulfil this accessibility mandate.
- **Advocacy Organisations:** These organisations represent the interests of deaf sign language users and the preservation of sign languages. In most European countries, this role is fulfilled by National Associations of the Deaf (NAD). They act as representatives of the deaf community, advising on how news and information in sign language should be delivered, as well as on the appropriate formats for doing so.
- **Deaf Ecosystem:** This term refers to a network of businesses established by, led by, or specifically catering to deaf individuals. Such companies or freelance deaf interpreters and translators can be engaged to produce news broadcasts in sign language. International examples, such as those in Denmark and the United Kingdom, show that this approach is effective (Dhoest & Rijckaert, 2020). As these companies are closely connected to the deaf community, they are better equipped to meet the needs and preferences of their target audience.



Figure 5 - The separation of powers

In this model (figure 5), hearing interpreters do not have a role in shaping the provision of news in sign language. Furthermore, unequal power structures can be prevented by avoiding the following situations:

- **Government-imposed solutions:** When the government unilaterally determines how deaf sign language users access news, without consulting advocacy organisations or considering their linguistic and informational needs. This approach violates the principle of “nothing about us without us”.
- **Unilateral decisions by national broadcasters:** When national broadcasters independently decide how sign language news provision is organised, utilising government funding. In such cases, the preferences of the deaf community are often disregarded, with broadcasters opting for the simplest solutions, such as employing hearing interpreters. However, this approach has proven to be inefficient for deaf sign language users, who frequently struggle to fully understand interpreted information.
- **Self-serving interests within the deaf ecosystem:** When companies and professionals within the deaf ecosystem prioritise their own (financial) interests over those of the community and become involved in discussions about the organisation of sign language news provision. While these companies belong to the linguistic minority group, they do not automatically represent the entire deaf community.

6.3. Advantages of the separation of powers

The proposed separation of powers encourages self-reflection and helps prevent inequalities within power structures. Additionally, this model fosters better collaboration among stakeholders to benefit the deaf community and uphold their right to access information in sign language. The advantages are as follows:

- **For the government:** A more inclusive society, enabling full participation of deaf citizens.
- **For the national broadcaster:** Reduced workload through the outsourcing of tasks and restored trust from deaf sign language viewers.
- **For the deaf community:** Greater empowerment and a stronger voice in decision-making, in alignment with the principle of “nothing about us without us”.
- **For the deaf ecosystem:** Increased employment opportunities for deaf professionals.

“Why must we always focus on the news provided by the public broadcaster? We also want to receive other perspectives in sign language.”

7. Diverse news sources

A deaf follower responded to a member of the DJE consortium who explained that the future of an independent news service in their national sign language, made possible through the DJE project, could depend on the willingness of the government and the national broadcaster to continue investing in it. This follower found it unacceptable that deaf sign language users are consistently reliant on a single news provider, namely the public broadcaster. Although human rights frameworks emphasise the right to form one's own opinion as a fundamental principle, it is essential that the deaf community has access to diverse news sources in their sign language.

While governments or tax systems typically fund public broadcasters to make news content accessible in sign language, it is desirable for other news providers, such as partners within the DJE consortium, to also contribute to this effort. However, the structural provision of an independent news service in sign language faces financial challenges. DJE surveys indicate that not all deaf individuals are willing to pay for a subscription to news services in their national sign language. The primary reason cited is the belief that news in sign language should be freely available (see section 1.3). In France, Médiapi's news service in French Sign Language (LSF) operates on a self-sustaining subscription model. Although this deaf media company relies solely on subscribers, it faces financial challenges. Therefore, it has developed a business model that generates multiple revenue streams to ensure the continued provision of its LSF news content. However, the question remains whether such a subscription model would be feasible in other, particularly smaller, countries with limited target audiences.

Deaf-led media organisations must therefore first analyse the media landscape regarding news and information provision in their national sign language and determine how they can position themselves within it. It is important for these organisations to tailor their news offerings, including content from a deaf perspective and covering deaf-related topics, to the needs of their audience while exploring viable revenue models. Furthermore, it is crucial to increase the availability of subsidies, both from the European Commission and local governments, to support these Deaf-led media organisations in their professional development. Given the historical systemic oppression of deaf individuals and sign languages, as well as the limited educational opportunities available to deaf people, it is vital to invest in their skill development, such as training in journalism.

8. Executive summary

Due to their unique cultural and linguistic identity, deaf sign language users often prefer full, barrier-free access to information in their national sign language. As demonstrated by previous academic studies, the DJE survey results indicate that deaf sign language users strongly prefer a 'dedicated' news service, presented directly in their national sign language by a deaf presenter and tailored to their linguistic and informational needs. This approach ('deaf framework') is seen as an effective way to uphold their right to accessible information. At the same time, responses from the DJE surveys show that deaf sign language users expect these news and informational services to be provided free of charge by governments.

However, in most European countries, national governments or public broadcasters opt to make regular news broadcasts accessible by providing an in-vision hearing sign language interpreter ('hearing framework'). Various studies indicate that many deaf sign language users struggle to understand these in-vision interpreters for several reasons, including technical challenges (such as the high speech rate of news broadcasts), hearing interpreters who may not have full native-level fluency in sign language, and the fact that deaf viewers may find it difficult to identify with hearing interpreters on a linguistic and cultural level. Furthermore, due to systemic oppression of deaf identity and sign languages, many deaf viewers are not accustomed to processing large amounts of interpreted information.

The issue lies primarily in the concept of accessibility itself: news broadcasts are often perceived as 'uninterpretable', and many deaf viewers do not feel comfortable following the news through an intermediary such as an interpreter. In order to achieve full inclusion, deaf people must not only have access to different news sources in their national sign language, but they must also be able to fully understand the information presented, enabling them to form their own opinions. Additionally, there is a strong demand for 'deaf news' and greater representation of deaf sign language users in the news, allowing them to identify with the content and reflect on their own experiences.

However, the challenge remains to ensure the financial sustainability of such news services within a 'deaf framework'. While deaf sign language users expect news and information in their national sign language to be provided free of charge by the government, public broadcasters in Europe often choose a 'cheaper' solution by employing hearing interpreters in regular news broadcasts. Therefore, increased consultation is needed between various stakeholders, including government authorities, national broadcasters, and the deaf community, to better understand each other's needs and possibilities. This dialogue is essential in order to enhance the true inclusion of deaf citizens by guaranteeing their right to access information in a manner they can fully understand.

9. Recommendations

From the report containing the results and conclusions of the DJE surveys (see deliverable 4.1), the following recommendations for the governments and public broadcasters were outlined as a summary of this document:

Gaining better insight into inclusion: Governments and public broadcasters should learn from the perspectives of deaf sign language users on inclusion and view their accessibility services not as a burden, but as an opportunity. They must recognise that the use of sign language interpreters in mainstream news broadcasts does not necessarily meet the language and informational needs of deaf sign language users. To avoid the “illusion of inclusion”, it is essential to understand that true inclusion is not simply about providing the same news offerings to deaf and hearing individuals—this is, in fact, unfeasible as hearing people have greater access to a variety of news sources. Inclusion focuses on the ultimate objective: ensuring that deaf individuals receive information on par with their hearing counterparts, in a manner that they find effective.

Quality standards for sign language news: Governments and public broadcasters must become more aware of the rights of deaf sign language users, not only to access publicly available information in their national sign language but also to comprehend it effectively. Higher quality standards should be established for the delivery of news in sign language to uphold the right of deaf people to understand news and information in their national language.

Promoting employment for deaf signers: Governments and public broadcasters should consider outsourcing the production of news in national sign language to deaf-led media companies or, at the very least, employing deaf individuals. This approach would not only enhance the quality of news delivery in sign language for the deaf community but also align with policies promoting inclusion and diversity within the media landscape.

Addressing structural inequities: Governments should address any systemic biases that grant hearing interpreters more privileges at the expense of the needs of deaf people. To adhere to the principle of 'nothing about us without us', personal (financial) interests must be set aside, and the wishes of the representatives of the deaf community must be listened to first and foremost.

Multiple sources of sign language news: To mitigate over-reliance on a single source, the government should support a diversity of sign language news offerings. This includes both public and deaf-led sources to ensure that deaf individuals have access to a variety of comprehensive news content.

10. Advocacy plan

The following advocacy plan has been developed as an inspiration for other European countries to ensure that the deaf community has access to news and information in their national sign language. This should be in accordance with their language and informational needs and in a format that aligns with a 'deaf framework'. The actions outlined here are accompanied by proposed timelines, success indicators, and milestones (not limited to the list below). The chronological order of implementation is not essential, as these actions can be carried out concurrently.

10.1. Research into news consumption

It is crucial to conduct research into the news consumption habits of deaf individuals in each respective country to serve as a foundation for further lobbying efforts. The needs of the deaf community vary significantly from country to country. Government funding should be allocated for this research, which should be outsourced to an independent academic institution.

Timeline: 18 months

- Months 1-2: Develop a research proposal outlining the key questions that assess how deaf viewers experience news provisions in their national sign language provided by public broadcasters (evaluation research). The focus should not be on subjective assessments of interpreters or deaf presenters but rather on measuring the comprehensibility of news broadcasts for deaf viewers.
- Months 3-6: The government issues a call for academic institutions to apply and submit proposals to conduct this research. A key requirement is that the research methodology includes qualitative interviews due to the linguistic needs of deaf viewers and that deaf researchers are involved throughout the entire research process.
- Months 7-18: Conduct and complete the research, ensuring that the findings are also made accessible to the deaf community.

Success Indicators:

- A minimum of 20 respondents participate in the research.
- The research yields clear insights into the news consumption and preferences of deaf sign language users.
- The report is approved by both the research institution and representatives of the deaf community.

Milestones:

- The government has made a call for a research proposal (Month 2).

- An academic institution with the necessary (deaf) expertise is selected to conduct the research (Month 6).
- The final report with concrete recommendations has been presented and is also available in the national sign language (Month 18).

10.2. Structured dialogue between key stakeholders

A structured dialogue is needed between relevant government agencies, the national broadcaster, and representatives of the deaf community (e.g. the NAD). This dialogue should foster a deeper understanding of all parties' needs and constraints involved. While compromises may be necessary, they must not undermine the right of deaf people to fully comprehend information.

Timeline: Ongoing

- Months 1-2: Identify key stakeholders, including government agencies, the national broadcaster, and deaf community representatives. Any stakeholder may initiate this process to establish a structured dialogue.
- Months 3-6: Organise initial dialogue meetings to address key issues, ensure transparent communication, and identify inequalities in power structures. Topics may include commissioning independent evaluation research and outlining possible solutions.
- Months 7 and onwards: Regular follow-up meetings to maintain the dialogue and work towards a consensus that enhances the comprehensibility of news broadcasts for deaf sign language users.

Success Indicators:

- A minimum of two meetings are held annually.
- Active participation from government, public broadcasters, and the deaf community.
- Concrete compromises or joint objectives are established following each dialogue round.

Milestones:

- The first meeting has been organised (Month 6).
- A consensus between all parties for the benefit of deaf news consumers has been reached (as soon as possible).

10.3. Experimentation with news offerings

A government-funded experimental project should be initiated within the deaf community, particularly among deaf-led media companies, to develop a tailored news service that meets

the linguistic and informational needs of deaf people. This project should be iterative, incorporating feedback from the deaf community to refine the offering and lay the groundwork for sustainable development.

Timeline: 30 months

- Months 1-6: Develop a project proposal detailing the objectives, co-creation process with the deaf community, integration of research findings, budget, and long-term sustainability. This can be carried out by a deaf-led media company.
- Months 7-30: Launch the experimental project following government funding approval. Conduct interim evaluations with deaf viewers to refine the offering (co-creation).
- Months 24-30: Evaluate project outcomes, present findings to stakeholders and the deaf community, and explore long-term funding options.

Success Indicators:

- A pilot news service is developed based on co-creation with the deaf community.
- At least 80% of participating deaf viewers report satisfaction with the news service.

Milestones:

- The experimental project has been approved by the national or European authority, and the budget for this has been allocated (Month 6).
- The final report with the evaluation of the new concept and the recommendations has been published (Month 30).

10.4. Professional development in journalism and translation

Opportunities must be created for deaf individuals to professionalise in journalism and interpreting/translation. This is essential for the production of high-quality news offerings in sign language that meet both linguistic and professional standards.

Timeline: 36 months

- Months 1-12: Identify opportunities for specialised training in journalism and interpreting/translation for deaf sign language users, in collaboration with academic institutions or as a government-funded project.
- Months 13-18: Develop a training programme in collaboration with educational institutions.
- Months 19-36: Launch the training programme for journalists and translators.

Success Indicators:

- A dedicated training programme for deaf journalists and interpreters/translators is established.
- A minimum of 15 students have enrolled.
- At least 10 trained and/or certified deaf professionals enter the industry to support sign language news provision.

Milestones:

- Approval and budget for the training programme by the ministry or an academic institution have been obtained (Month 12).
- The training programme has been developed (Month 18).
- The first students begin the training (Month 19).
- The professionalisation of deaf journalists and interpreters/translators has been enhanced (Month 36).

10.5. Training and awareness-raising

A range of training and awareness-raising initiatives should be implemented to inform deaf individuals about their right to access and understand news and information, and to educate government bodies, broadcasters, and hearing interpreters on the needs of deaf sign language users. The latter groups should act as allies rather than gatekeepers.

Timeline: 18 months

- Months 1-6: Develop training and awareness materials by deaf experts, NADs, or interpreter organisations.
- Months 6-18: Roll out awareness campaigns and training sessions.

Success Indicators:

- Increased awareness among deaf individuals regarding their right to accessible news.
- Enhanced collaboration between deaf experts and interpreter organisations.
- Greater awareness among hearing interpreters about their role in sign language media.
- Improved understanding within government agencies and national broadcasters.

Milestones:

- The initial training and awareness materials is completed (Month 6).
- Heightened awareness among all relevant parties (Month 18).

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