



## European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblindness

OPEN LETTER TO THE EU INSTITUTIONS:  
**WE DEMAND ACCESSIBLE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2019**  
**#BreakCommunicationBarriers #EUElections2019**

The European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness has been formed to enhance, strengthen and cultivate a robust and enduring collaboration between the organisations representing deafness, hard of hearing and deafblindness, regardless of the language, the communication system or the audiological treatment and hearing technologies they use.

We call on the EU political leaders to ensure that persons with disabilities can meaningfully enjoy their right to vote and to stand for election, through the following actions:

- Ensuring that election campaign facilities and materials, political debates, political party programmes and websites are accessible and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind persons.
- Ensuring that EU campaigns encourage Europeans to participate in the European elections and that they must be accessible to all, not like in 2014, when the video produced by the European Commission encouraging people to participate was not accessible for persons with disabilities.
- Ensuring fulfilment of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 29 – Participation in political and public life. All political parties and election candidates must ensure that materials related to electoral process, such as broadcasts and videos, are accessible to our members with subtitling and sign language or in combination of both. Public meetings, public political debates and rallies must be made accessible by providing hearing loops, sign language interpretation and speech to text on screens. Live streaming of such events must be subtitled and sign language interpretation must be available.

Accessibility for deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind is ensured by providing **subtitles, sign language interpretation, deafblind interpreters and interveners, real time captioning, as well as loops. We cannot exercise the right to vote without being fully informed. Without accessibility, we**

cannot follow the news, the televised debates, political meetings or campaign videos on the political websites. Nowadays, due to advanced technology, it is not difficult to ensure accessibility to communication.

It is our right and it should not be a demand.

Candidates running for the election to be elected or re-elected as Members of the European Parliament should see accessibility as an opportunity and not a burden to reach out to their potential voters and **differentiate themselves from the competition.**

**We demand that the 2019 European Elections open a way for an accessible debate where no one, including deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind people, are left behind.**

**Support:**

**#EUElections2019**  
**#BreakCommunicationBarriers**  
**#ThisTimeImVoting for #Accessibility**

[www.epdhdb.eu](http://www.epdhdb.eu)

