



WRITTEN STATEMENT ON STUTTERING AND THE INTERNATIONAL STUTTERING AWARENESS DAY (ISAD)

This Statement is to mark 22nd October as International Stuttering Awareness Day (ISAD), raise public understanding about stuttering and to reduce negative stereotypes and discrimination which people who stutter face daily.

International Stuttering Awareness Day

International Stuttering Awareness Day recognises the growing alliance between people who stutter, speech-language professionals and other clinicians who are now, more than ever, learning from each other and working together to share, give support, and educate one another and the general public on the impact that stuttering has on individuals' lives.

Stuttering

More than 4.5 million persons in the enlarged European Union are affected by the speech impediment of stuttering. It is widely accepted that 5% of children under the age of five will go through a phase of stuttering. Without pre-school intervention up to 20% of these children are at serious risk of developing chronic stuttering which may persist into adulthood. In children under five years, twice as many boys stutter as girls but in adulthood four times as many men as women stutter;

Stuttering still remains a relatively unknown, misunderstood and misinterpreted disorder to the detriment of those afflicted by it. Research and the provision of information on stuttering still have low priority Europe-wide. This can result in social exclusion, bullying and lack of full access to the labour market. Yet all research indicates that the stuttering and non-stuttering populations are identical in terms of intelligence, mental state and behaviour;

Today's Europe is marked by growing unification and co-operation. This must therefore be reflected in an adequate, unified representation of the interests of people who stutter throughout Europe and their respective national associations;

People who stutter have the right to be informed fully about therapy programs and technical aids including estimates of the likelihood of success, failure or relapse;

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People who stutter have the right to receive therapy, appropriate for one's unique needs, concerns, and characteristics, from professionals adequately trained to treat stuttering and its related problems;

People who stutter have the right to choose whether or not to participate in therapy or to change therapy or clinician without prejudice or penalty;

People who stutter have the right to stutter, or to be fluent to the extent one is able, and have the right to communicate and be listened to;

People who stutter should be accorded all rights mandated by laws or regulations for all citizens regardless of one's degree of stuttering, and have a right to the redress of grievances for documented evidence of failure to be treated fairly and lawfully.

ELSA, with the support of the Disability Intergroup, calls on the European Parliament, the European Commission and Council to:

Ensure that people who stutter have the right to be treated with dignity and respect by individuals, groups, institutions and the media regardless of one's degree of stuttering;

Ensure increased resources for the early screening, detection and diagnosis of stuttering in children;

Ensure better access to, and information dissemination of, different speech therapy options and communication aids across the EU for children and adults who stutter;

That research in the field of stuttering and other speech impairments are recognized and supported by the EU's 7th Research programme;

Strengthen disability non-discrimination legislation through a specific EU Disability Directive and for people who stutter to be recognised as discriminated persons under the terms of such legislation;

Recognise the International Stuttering Awareness Day - 22nd October

This Statement was presented on 25 October 2005 by the European League of Stuttering Associations (ELSA) with the support of Fundación Española de la Tartamudez - (TTM-España) and the European Disability Forum (EDF)



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Written Statement on Stuttering and the International Stuttering Awareness Day

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