



## **UNIT 2. EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE (E2U)**

### **ELEMENT 2. LEGISLATION, STANDARDS, AND GUIDELINES**

#### **LEGISLATION (INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE)**

##### **Video Lecture Transcript**

### **Slide 1**

This is Unit 2, Easy-to-understand language, in short E2U, Element 2, Legislation, standards, and guidelines. Video lecture: Legislation (international perspective). My name is Christiane Maaß from the University of Hildesheim.

### **Slide 2**

In this short video, I will talk about the legislation in the field of easy-to-understand language with an international and European perspective. The legal situation of easy-to-understand language will be different in every country with regard to the national legislation. Within this unit, we have also a video lecture about the situation of easy-to-understand language in the countries of the EASIT project partners.



### **Slide 3**

Access to communication and information for people with disabilities has become a relevant topic in the international legal and political discourse. Through the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, short UN CRPD, this issue became more relevant in the countries that signed and ratified this Convention between 2007 and 2009.

### **Slide 4**

All members of the European Union were part of the 80 countries that signed the UN CRPD on the very first day. As of spring 2020, 163 countries have signed and 181 countries have ratified the UN CRPD. With these numbers, the UN CRPD is one of the most influential conventions in the history of the United Nations.

### **Slide 5**

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities deeply changed the paradigm of envisioning disability in society. Before the UN CRPD, Persons with disabilities were often seen as needing assistance and the aim was to integrate them into the society as it is. The UN CRPD demands that societies have to change in a way that persons with diverse needs can be included, that they can be empowered and can be active in society.

To achieve such change, inclusion of people with diverse needs has to be put on the agenda in the different fields of society. One important pillar is legislation: Through legislation, the society can change in the way that is necessary to make inclusion happen.



## Slide 6

The UN CRPD states that accessibility to information and communication is crucial to ensure the fundamental freedoms and all human rights of persons with disabilities. This document names Plain Language as a means of communication to achieve accessibility and inclusion. Article 2 of the UN CRPD states and I quote:

## Slide 7

“Communication” includes language, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, large print, accessible multimedia as well as written, audio, **plain-language**, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including accessible formation and communication technology”. (UN CRPD Article 2)

Through this article, the UN CRPD defines easy-to-understand language as a way to make communication accessible.

## Slide 8

The implementation of the convention has been somewhat different for every country. In Germany for instance, Plain Language has indeed become part of the law. But additionally, taking up impulses from the empowerment movement of people with cognitive disabilities, Easy Language is now part of the German law of equality on the people with disabilities.



## Slide 9

In 2019, the European Accessibility Act was passed. The full name of the document is "Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the council of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements of products and services". In Unit 1 "Media Accessibility", element 2 "Accessibility", video lecture "Accessible legislation", you can find more information about this EU directive.

## Slide 10

In this Directive, Easy and Plain Language are not explicitly named, but easy-to-understand language does come into place as a means of accessibility. In this document, it is recommended to use "language which can be easily understood" by the end users, authorities and all actors involved in providing products and services that are listed in this directive. It is not clear which language variety the directive refers to, but it shows clearly that easy-to-understand language is considered an important means for accessible purposes.

## Slide 11

In this presentation we focused on the legal situation of easy-to-understand language with an international and European perspective. Treaties, conventions and regulations are the frameworks for legislation in the different countries. The concrete legislation is of course different for every single country. These differences are not covered in this short video lecture. In this Unit, we also provide video lectures about easy-to-understand language in different European countries, and specifically in the countries of the EASIT consortium. We recommend that you look into



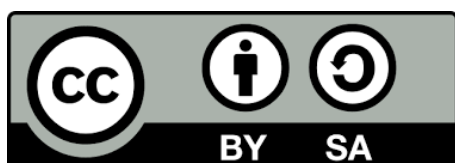
these lectures and into the legislation of your own countries for a perspective on your national context.

## **Slide 12**

This video lecture has been prepared by Sergio Hernández and Christiane Maaß from the University of Hildesheim. You can reach us at [easit@uni-hildesheim.de](mailto:easit@uni-hildesheim.de).

**Copyright and disclaimer:** The project EASIT has received funding from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education programme, grant agreement 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

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