

# **WRITTEN DECLARATION ON STUTTERING AND THE INTERNATIONAL STUTTERING AWARENESS DAY (ISAD)**

This declaration is to mark 22<sup>nd</sup> of October as International Stuttering Awareness Day (ISAD), to raise public awareness about stuttering and to reduce negative stereotypes and discrimination that people who stutter face daily; and

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 5 will go through a phase of stuttering, and up to 20% of these children are at serious risk of developing chronic stuttering which may persist into adulthood without intervention during the pre-school years. For children under five years old, twice as many boys stutter as girls. Four times as many men stutter for every woman who stutters; and

All research indicates that the stuttering and non-stuttering populations are identical in terms of intelligence, mental state, behaviour and in all other aspects. People who stutter may become more dysfluent by environmental factors such as linguistic, physical and psychological factors; and

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 and can result in social exclusion, bullying and lack of full access to the labour market; and

Today's Europe is marked by growing unification and cooperation; there must be adequate representation of the interests of people who stutter in Europe and their respective national associations; and

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; and

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; and

People who stutter have the right to choose and participate in therapy, to choose not to do so, or to change therapy or clinician without prejudice or penalty; and

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

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; and

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 the right to redress of grievances for documented evidence of failure to be treated fairly and lawfully; and

International Stuttering Awareness Day recognises the growing alliance between people who stutter as consumers and speech-language professionals, who are 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.

***Therefore the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament are called upon to:***

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

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

Ensure that the EU's 7th Research programme makes stuttering one of its priorities under the first main proposed theme of "Health" recognising all speech impairments as a disorder; and

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 22 October