



knowledge without boundaries

## Why a WIPO Treaty for Persons with Print Disabilities can change lives

### ELVIS is the answer in Lithuania

EIFL supports the conclusion of an effective treaty for the benefit of print disabled people at the Diplomatic Conference in Marrakesh, 17-28 June 2013. By ‘effective’ we mean an international copyright framework that will make a real difference to the lives of blind, visually impaired and print disabled people around the world.

The Lithuanian Library for the Blind (LAB) is a state-designated library with a mandate to ensure that blind and visually impaired people have equal rights to access information, participate in social life and learn about Lithuanian culture. LAB is the only producer of talking books – about 200 titles annually - in Lithuania. In 2010 a Virtual Library for the Blind (known as ELVIS), co-funded by the



European Regional Development Fund, was established to provide materials in DAISY and other digital formats to end-users. Since then, approx. 205 registered users (who are blind, low sighted or have a print disability) can download or stream about 7,000 digital audio publications that has helped to empower readers who can use library materials independently, at any time from the comfort of home, and in high quality.

Special format material is available in the Lithuanian language only. “However, there are national minorities in our country who need literature in other languages”, said Rasa Januseviciene, Director, Lithuanian Library for the Blind. “We would love to cooperate with libraries that have materials in Russian and Polish, because books in these languages are in demand among our senior readers (who constitute the greater part of the LAB readership). At a recent conference in Crimea, we established contacts with libraries for the blind in Moscow and St Petersburg, but exchanging material may be difficult because of copyright law”.

In addition, Lithuanians with a visual disability who are living in other countries would like to get reading material via ELVIS in their own language. “We have been contacted in a couple of cases by emigrants from



Lithuania living in Ireland, Norway and Germany. As the service develops, we can envisage increased demand from qualified users living abroad. We are very happy to witness international treaty negotiations to improve access for people with print disabilities no matter what country they live in, or what language they speak”, said Rasa.

Supported by the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium (LMBA)

Read more at EIFL in action: [www.eifl.net/news/wipo-diplomatic-conference-vips](http://www.eifl.net/news/wipo-diplomatic-conference-vips)