

# WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

## SIGNING CEREMEONY FOR THE MARRAKESH TREATY

30 APRIL, 2014, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

---

### PRELIMINARY

This is the transcript of the Signing Ceremony for the Marrakesh Treaty held at Geneva, Switzerland on 30 April, 2014. This includes statements by various country representatives and non-governmental organizations. The text in the following section is largely unedited, save for additions to indicate where text is missing (poor internet connectivity meant that access to transcription was often interrupted) and clearly identify the speakers.

### TRANSCRIPT

**CHAIR: (DIRECTOR GENERAL, FRANCIS GURRY):** Excellencelys ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon to you all. To access for published works for persons blind, visually impaired or print disabled. As you know, the signing of the Treaty is a public indication of a commitment on the part of the state or an intention on the part of the state or entity concerned to later ratify the Treaty. And a public indication of its commitment to the goals of the Treaty in this case, of course, the goal of ending the book famine by improving ac he says to published works and accessible formats of published works for the estimated 260 million persons in the world who are blind as well as those who suffer from other print disabilities.

Before we start the ceremony and before I call upon the respective representatives of those who will sign, let me refer to another Treaty recently concluded by the Member States, namely the Beijing Treaty on audio visual performances just to signal the news that we received during the standing committee in the course of this week that the national people's assembly in China has ratified, agreed to ratify the Beijing Treaty so we expect shortly the instrument of rat phiz indication on the part of China. Let's return to the Marakesh Treaty which was one of the great achievements of the Member States in this organization in the last two years and I'm very happy that four additional parties will sign the Treaty, namely France, Greece, India and the European Union. I would like to call in one by one on the representatives of each of those parties to say a few words before we formally commence the signing ceremony. Now, if I may speak French, I would like to invite the Ambassador from France am boss door anymore ave to take the floor.

**FRANCE:** I wish to say a few words by saying or expressing all of the pleasure that we have in signing this Treaty today. We took an active part in negotiations. My government attaches a particular importance objectives of this Treaty and France is today very proud to be able to sign this Treaty. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIR:** I would like to thank the Ambassador from France I turn to India. I acknowledge the presence of Ambassador Sinner but I will pass the floor to Madame Ish from the capital to say a few words, please.

**INDIA:** Director general WIPO, Ambassador and mission of India to U.N., distinguished Ambassadors of Greece, France, and the E.U., distinguished delegates of Member States, officials of the Secretariat and representatives of NGOs present here (India). It is my great pleasure to represent India to sign the Marrakesh Treaty. It's a matter of great pride to see this moment after four years of intense negotiations, India becoming the member of this Treaty.

India introduced copyright exceptions for physically disabled including visually impaired through the copyright amendment act 2012 which came into effect in June 2012. The provisions of the India copyright act are with the Marrakesh Treaty. By signing and ratifying this Treaty it was going to benefit visually impaired and print disabled persons in India. We would like to thank WIPO and the Secretariat for organizing this ceremony today to facilitate India to sign this Treaty. India will be ratifying this Treaty very soon. The task does not end here. We have to put in place appropriate mechanisms to implement the provisions of this Treaty in its true spirit with cooperation of all of the Member States and the International Bureau of WIPO. Once more, I think thank you all for giving me this opportunity. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I thank Madame Ish and I have the pleasure of passing the floor to Ambassador of Greece, Ambassador Alexanderios.

**GREECE:** Good afternoon, I will be speaking on behalf of European Union and Greece. Your Excellency, Director general of WIPO. Your Excellencies of WIPO Member States, distinguished members and delegates, dear friends. All of us that were in beautiful Marrakesh last summer cherish the memory of the good time we had there but also remember the efforts of WIPO Member States to achieve a Treaty that could accommodate the needs of blind, visually impaired and people with print disabilities. It was not an easy task. E.U. Member States as well as all other states have played an important role in drafting and agreeing this Treaty. It was thanks to the work and efforts of all that we actually achieved the final result, which during the first days of the negotiations seemed to be rather unachievable. The appreciation to the Council of the European Union has put lights and paths to have the signing of the Marrakesh Treaty by the E.U. adopted as soon as possible and we have succeeded in this goal. Greece is here today to sign this important Treaty both for Greece and the European Union. We want to convey a strong message that we want this Treaty to work and serve its original purpose. That is to accommodate the needs of blind and print disabled when it comes to access to books and to other print material. We consider the aim of the Treaty unique in many respects, exceptional in many aspects, and, therefore, not comparable to any other type of exception or limitation. Before proceeding with the signatures, we would like to thank the WIPO Secretariat and Director general Francis Gary personally for all of the efforts regarding the Treaty as well as facilitating this

event.

We would like to thank the European Commission, and all Member States for conducting the negotiations on the spot and contributing to the conclusion of the procedures for the signing of the Treaty. We want to thank the blind unions and associations of authors and publishers for having trusted that WIPO Member States would reach the aimed result in a balanced and competent manner. We would like to thank the Chairs, Vice Chairs, facilitators and all of those people linked or not linked to organisations, associations, unions, states or other that contributed to the final achievements in any manner whatsoever, be it political, practical or technical.

We thank you all. The Ambassador of Greece to the United Nations in Geneva, His Excellency will be signing the Treaty on behalf of the European Union and Greece. Thank you.

**CHAIR:** I thank Madame stamatutty who is the Director general of the Hellenic copyright organization in the Hellenic ministry for culture and sports.. Thank you very much and thank you very much for the efforts of the Greek presidency in this regard. I have much pleasure in passing the floor to the Ambassador for the European Union, Ambassador Zapia. You have the floor.

**E.U.:** Good afternoon to all and sorry if the European Union speaks twice but this is part of our complexity and also of our strength and the signature for of this Treaty today also show that the common effort of Member States and the European Union institution as such. So it's my pleasure also to take the floor after the Greek presidency. Facilitating access to books is indispensable to make progress oardz equal opportunities for print disabled persons in society and the Marakesh Treaty will contribute to the process worldwide. The negotiation in the World Intellectual Property Organization were complex, but they resulted in a Treaty that is targeted and balanced. It meets the needs of print disabled persons and those of the organization, but does not limit the rights of authors and publishers beyond what is necessary to achieve its purposes. This is a clear success. The fruit of tireless work of many, of course, experts, delegates, the Secretariat, but also we are very grateful for the cooperation of the World Blind Union, and of the International Publishers Association, were always ready to respond to all of our queries during the negotiation. I'm really proud of the work of the E.U. and its Member States accomplished during the negotiation of this agreement. We enter the negotiation determined to do the utmost to reach both a meaningful Treaty for all beneficiaries and balanced one for the right holders, authors and publishers. All delegations showed commitment, flexibility and creativity in order to achieve our common objective. This Treaty will make a difference for many people around the world, and, therefore, we should all make our best efforts towards its rapid ratification and entry into force. Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. I now have pleasure of recognizing the executive Director of the European blind union.

**EBU:** Your Excellency, Mr. Director general of I'm poo, excellencies -- WIPO, excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen, as a totally blind person, I feel really privileged to part of this signature ceremony. For a Treaty which when ratified will open up huge new opportunities for in terms of access to information and culture for over 30 million blind and partially sighted people who live in Europe and also for the many people with other print disabilities.

This official signature ceremony is a major step in our on going struggle to end the book famine in which just a few percent of books are available in accessible formats like Braille, audio, large print. The WIPO Secretariat, the WIPO Director general, and the Greece presidency of the European Union are to be praised for their efficiency in pushing this through and in making this ceremony a reality. While this is a major symbolic leap forward, it does not mean though that this is the end of the road and that our campaign is over. The next step, the next crucial step now is to insure the speedy ratification of this Treaty. As you know, to become effective, the Treaty must be ratified by at least 20 individual WIPO Member States. And to be really effective, it's ratification must be as widespread as possible because only organisations in countries which will sign or will ratify, sorry, the Treaty will be able to exchange books under the terms of this Treaty.

So this is why I would like on behalf of the European blind union to call upon the European Union and its Member States to speedily convert the important symbolism of this signature into the tangible, tangible act of ratification. As you will know, the possibility to access information is what we need, we, the blind and partially sighted, is what we need to make our decisions, to make our choices in all aspects of life, and this is why, again, I should like to urge all E.U. Member States to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible and in particular would like to call upon the forth coming Italian presidency to help us achieve this. Again, I would like on behalf of my organization to thank WIPO Secretariat, pipe WIPO Director general the European Union for making this day a reality. E.B.U. is proud to be part of it because it symbolizes the progress we made together through collaborative work and through mutual efforts, but, again, this is not the end of the road. Our mission will be fulfilled only when the ratification of the Treaty is widespread and when a final end is put to the book famine. Thank you for your attention.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Mr. Busied. I now have the Secretary General of the International Publishers Association to add a brief comment, please.

**IPA:** Thank you very much, Director general, Your Excellencies, the delegates. I have indeed very little to add to what the honorable speaker on behalf of the European blind union has already said. I would like to congratulate the signatory states and the European Union for being so fast in coming forward with their signatures. This is a humanitarian Treaty, and

humanitarian Treaties do not allow for delay. They require instant action just as we were going over differences and it was more important at Marakesh to get the Treaty done, it you now more important to get it signed and ratified and have it put into place. I would particularly like to congratulate India for having implemented even before the Marakesh Treaty an excellent law to promote access and to use copyright in that particular way. We will now see in the European Union 27 or 28 new examples, diversity, diverse examples of implementation of the Marakesh Treaty and they will all in their special ways help solve the problem of providing access, equal access for all. And finally, I would like to echo what previous speakers have said. This not only the signatory is just a first step, the ratification, the implementation, they are all only first steps towards providing equal access. The power of equal access can only be achieved through collaboration. Collaboration between organisations representing the visually impaired and rights holders who want their works to be available to everybody at the same time, the same place, in whatever format they choose. And I had the great privilege yesterday evening to sit together over dinner with organisations, with people representing Indian publishers and Indian organisations supporting the visually impaired and to see how the actual collaboration and the actual dialogue can work in developed and develop countries. And I wish to us all that we take that with us and understand to solve this humanitarian problem we need to work together, all. Thank you very much.

**CHAIR:** I thank you very much. And I should like to hand the floor to the legal counsel who will conduct the signature

**LEGAL COUNSEL:** Thank you Director general. Good afternoon excellencies, distinguished delegations. As the Director general mentioned, we have for the formal signature process four delegations that have provided the requisite full powers empowering them to sign the Marakesh Treaty on behalf of their countries or on behalf of the intergovernmental organization. So we will call each of those four delegations one by one. They will be escorted to the podium when they are called and please feel free to come up to the podium with any members of your delegation for photo opportunities if so wished. I would like to take the opportunity to first call on the Delegation of France.

France has signed the Marakesh Treaty.  
**(Applause).**

I would like to call on the Delegation of Greece, please. Greece.  
Greece has signed the Marakesh Treaty.  
**(Applause).**

I would like to call on the Delegation of India, please. India.  
India has signed the Marakesh Treaty

**(Applause).**

The grand finale, the European Union., please.  
Can I please invite the other Ambassadors to join for the signing ceremony.  
The European Union has signed the Marakesh Treaty. Distinguished Delegates this brings to

a conclusion the formal signing ceremony for the Marrakesh Treaty. Thank you very much for  
your attention.

**(Applause).**

Just one last piece of information, this brings to 64 the number of signatures so far of the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled, 64 signatures to date. Thank you.