



Legal Seat – Helsinki, Finland

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

An International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and the Council of Europe

PO Box 65, 00401 Helsinki, FINLAND

FAX: +358 9 580 3572

<http://www.wfdeaf.org>

President

MARKKU JOKINEN

Email: wfd@kl-deaf.fi

WFD STATEMENT ON DEAF PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO DRIVE A CAR OR OTHER VEHICLES

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) stresses that deafness does not in any way limit a person's ability to drive a car or other vehicles. Consequently, a deaf driver does not constitute a risk for safe traffic.

There is no evidence that deaf drivers are involved in more car accidents, or are at any more risk on the road than those with normal hearing. According to studies made in Finland as well as in other countries, it is well known fact; deaf drivers have been involved in car accidents less than the average driver. Hearing is not a necessary sense for driving a car. For example, it is possible to check by sense of touch whether the car horn functions or not, also it is possible to use visual means during driving, and seeing the ambulance or police vehicles' lights flashing.

If deaf persons can not have driving licences, it will restrict the already limited employment prospects open to deaf people, and deprive them of the mobility that gives them access to essential services. Many deaf persons work as car technicians or mechanics or are employed by transport companies. As a practical example, deaf car mechanics can identify defects by sense of touch. Having a driving licence is a necessity for these jobs.

In the EU countries Deaf people are able to obtain driving licences while in other countries, such as in some parts of Asia, Arab region and Africa, Deaf people are not allowed drive at all.

Instead of introducing restrictive measures, the authorities and driving schools should make certain that deaf persons receive driving lessons in sign language, which is the language a deaf person uses as his or her first language.

Concerned about any restrictions in deaf people's right to drive a car or other vehicles, the WFD demands that no discrimination is included in legislation and directives against deaf persons' right to drive a car or other vehicles as a private person or as an employed driver.

WFD also refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) and its articles, especially on Article 5 – *Equality and non discrimination* and its paragraph 2:

“State Parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds.”

31 March 2009