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### PRESS RELEASE

September 7, 2017 was a historic day for the community of the deaf and hard of hearing in Greece:  
**Recognition of the Greek Sign Language as Equal to the Greek Language**

Yesterday, Thursday, September 7, 2017, the bill of the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Social Solidarity was passed, with the title: «Public pensions and other insurance regulations, employee protection, rights of people with disabilities and other provisions». As the title of the enacted bill suggests, this provision incorporates provisions for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Specifically, Article 65 (2) states: «**Greek Sign Language is recognized as equal to the Greek language. The State is taking measures to promote it, and to meet all the communication needs of the deaf and hard of hearing citizens.**»

It is a great victory of the Greek Federation of the Deaf and the whole community of the deaf and hard of hearing people it represents, as our key demand for recognition of our natural language, the Greek Sign Language, as equal to the Greek Language was finally satisfied! This is the result of the long and fierce struggles we have been engaged in, with the active support of the National Confederation of the Disabled not only in the offices of the respective government but also in the streets that you, our members, always filled with your constant presence and your restless energy.

Of course, this does not imply that we are complacent now. Instead, new claims are put forward so that the official state law is always enforced and not defied. This means that we will strive to make the whole range of services and goods of the Greek State fully accessible through the sign language, subtitles, written texts, etc., just as they are accessible by our hearing fellow citizens now.

Yesterday was a milestone for the history of our community! We have celebrated a great victory! The fight continues and we want you, as always, on our side!

IOANNIS STOUFIS

HFD SECRETARY GENERAL

CONSTANTINOS SIMPSIS

HFD PRESIDENT