



## D10.2 DISSEMINATION, COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT 1

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|-------------------------|---|
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|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>Abstract</b> | This document presents the status of EASIER's dissemination, communication and community engagement at half of the project lifetime (M18). |
| <b>Keywords</b> | Communication, dissemination, liaisons, events, KPIs   |



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| <b>CO</b>   | Confidential to EASIER project and Commission Services                    |    |

\* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable builds on deliverable D10.1 *Impact Creation Strategy and Plan*, submitted to the EC on April 30, 2021, and on the set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined and agreed on before the project launch.

The report summarizes the communication and dissemination activities carried out by the EASIER project partners during the first 18 months of the project, i.e., since the project kick-off in January 2021 up to the project mid-term in June 2022. More specifically, the document provides an overview of communication and dissemination tools and channels used by the consortium, including the project website, social media, newsletter, and events, among others. It also outlines the communication and dissemination activities planned for the remaining 18 months the project.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>EC</b>    | European Commission                    |
| <b>ELG</b>   | European Language Grid                 |
| <b>EU</b>    | European Union                         |
| <b>EURid</b> | European Registry for Internet Domains |
| <b>GDPR</b>  | General Data Protection Regulation     |
| <b>KPIs</b>  | Key Performance Indicators             |
| <b>M</b>     | Month                                  |
| <b>SL</b>    | Sign Language                          |
| <b>WP</b>    | Work Package                           |





## 1 COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION M1-M18

### 1.1 Communication and dissemination strategy

To ensure EASIER's wide visibility and maximize its impact, a comprehensive communication, dissemination, and community-building strategy (outlined in more detail in deliverable D10.1 *Impact Creation Strategy and Plan*) was developed at the beginning of the project. Among others, the strategy was developed to ensure that:

- EASIER has a distinctive and recognizable brand identity that supports all promotional and communication efforts.
- The project achieves broad visibility and raises awareness about communication barriers and concrete means to tackle them.
- The project reaches and engages a critical mass of relevant stakeholders (including the European Deaf communities, particularly those using the core project languages) to effectively showcase the EASIER results.
- Liaisons with relevant initiatives are established.

In addition to setting the overall project communication and dissemination framework, the strategy was developed to provide directions for individual members of the EASIER project consortium so that they could smoothly and effectively perform their own outreach activities. This strategy has been followed by the project partners since the beginning of the project. Specific tools and activities developed and used in the first 18 months of the project have been described in the below subsections.

### 1.2 Communication and dissemination tools and channels

#### 1.2.1 Visual identity

The work within WP10 started with the design of the EASIER brand identity. In that context, the following assets have been developed: color palette, logo and icon with different variations, typography, and templates for deliverables and presentations.



FIGURE 1: EASIER LOGO

A style manual has also been developed and shared with all the project partners to ensure that the developed visual identity is coherent and recognizable across all channels and materials used by the EASIER consortium to promote the project.



FIGURE 2: EASIER BRAND GUIDELINES

### 1.2.1.1 The EASIER name sign

To enrich the EASIER brand identity, the project consortium decided to give EASIER a name sign. The name sign has been decided by d/Deaf consortium members during one of the project meetings. It is a “closed palm that opens”. Since then, the name sign has been used across communication and dissemination channels, such as the project website.



FIGURE 3: THE EASIER AVATAR, PAULA, SIGNING THE NAME OF THE PROJECT



## 1.2.2 Website

The EASIER website, developed in the first months of the project, acts as an information hub, featuring the following content:

- General information about the EASIER project, its vision, and objectives,
- An introduction to the EASIER consortium,
- News items, including press-releases in the form of sign language videos,
- A library of resources, including public deliverables, scientific publications, videos, and presentations,
- Information on relevant events,
- Contact information,
- The acknowledgment and reference to the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Program funding.

The website was developed with the users' needs in mind. In addition to being multilingual, it features a light and responsive design characterized by high contrast. To further enhance user experience and website readability, a keyboard navigation bar and a dedicated accessibility plug-in facilitating accessibility for deaf, hard of hearing, and visually impaired persons has been integrated. The plug-in provides the following accessibility tools: resize font (increase/decrease text to make it readable on any device), readable font, grayscale, high contrast, negative contrast, light background, and links underline. The users can customize the toolbar by selecting the accessibility features that are most important to them.

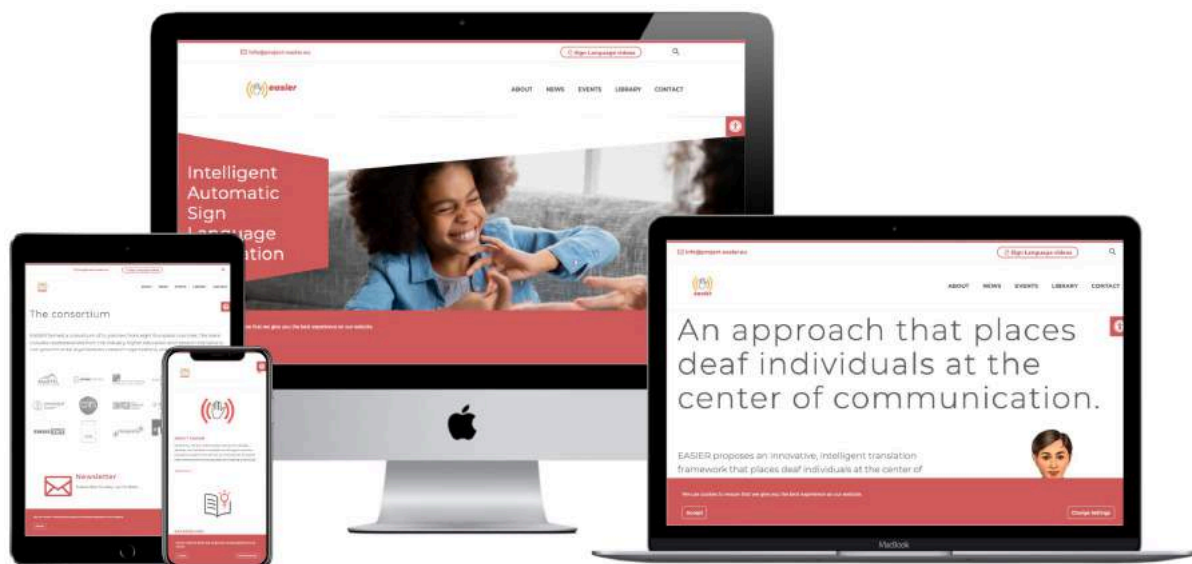


FIGURE 4: PROJECT WEBSITE

In the first half of the project (Jan 21 - Jun 22), the website counted 4.011 unique visitors, who generated 5,172 page views, as shown in Figure 5.

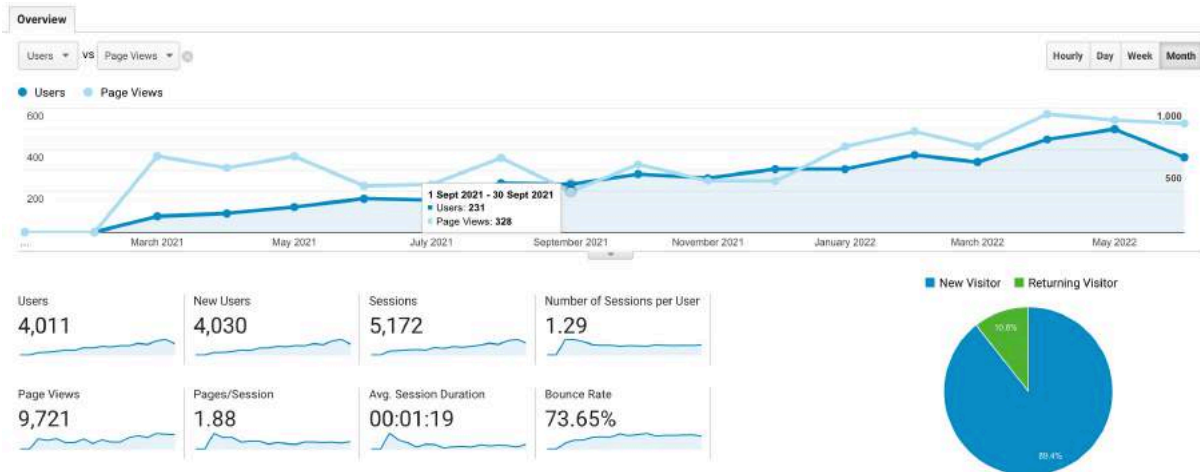


FIGURE 5: EASIER WEBSITE - TRAFFIC OVERVIEW AND VISIT DURATION

All the information and e-mails collected within the framework of EASIER are protected under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). EASIER only contacts people who have submitted their inquiries and it sends newsletters only to those who have explicitly requested to receive them. Any person who has subscribed is allowed to remove their e-mail address from the list upon request. The website provides information on the stored data and how they are used in alignment with the GDPR under the Privacy policy link (footer of the webpage).

The project website is being periodically updated according to the evolution of the project.

### 1.2.3 Communication campaigns, news items, and press releases

The first EASIER social media campaign was launched on April 13, 2021, and focused on introducing the EASIER project partners via weekly posts on Twitter and LinkedIn. The second communication campaign, *DidYouKnowThat* was launched on July 21, 2021, with the aim of bringing the subject of deafness, sign languages, and Deaf culture closer to the hearing community. All articles published within this campaign are being sent to the EUD for revision and input. To maximize the reach of the campaign and the project overall, the EASIER consortium decided to create an additional communication and dissemination channel, namely the project account on Facebook.



FIGURE 6: #DIDYOUKNOWTHAT SOCIAL MEDIA CARD



### 1.2.4 Newsletter

The newsletter is published every quarter and provides updates on project activities and results. The design of each newsletter is aligned with the EASIER brand identity and fully responsive to ensure its full readability on any device. All the consortium members provide relevant information to ensure that the content of the newsletter is engaging, accurate, and timely. All issued newsletters are uploaded on the EASIER website.

A mailing list based on subscription was created, giving the possibility to share the newsletter via a mass mailing functionality. Interested parties can subscribe to the newsletter directly on the project website. Messages with invitations to relevant workshops and webinars, consultations, and any other information that cannot wait for the newsletter publication is sent to the same database used for the newsletter in a form of a newsflash.

The latest (5<sup>th</sup>) edition of the newsletter, presented in Figure 7, was published in April 2022 and featured an article asking the community for information on under-documented sign languages, as well as a video about EASIER produced by EURid, among other items. The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the EASIER newsletter has been planned for July 2022.

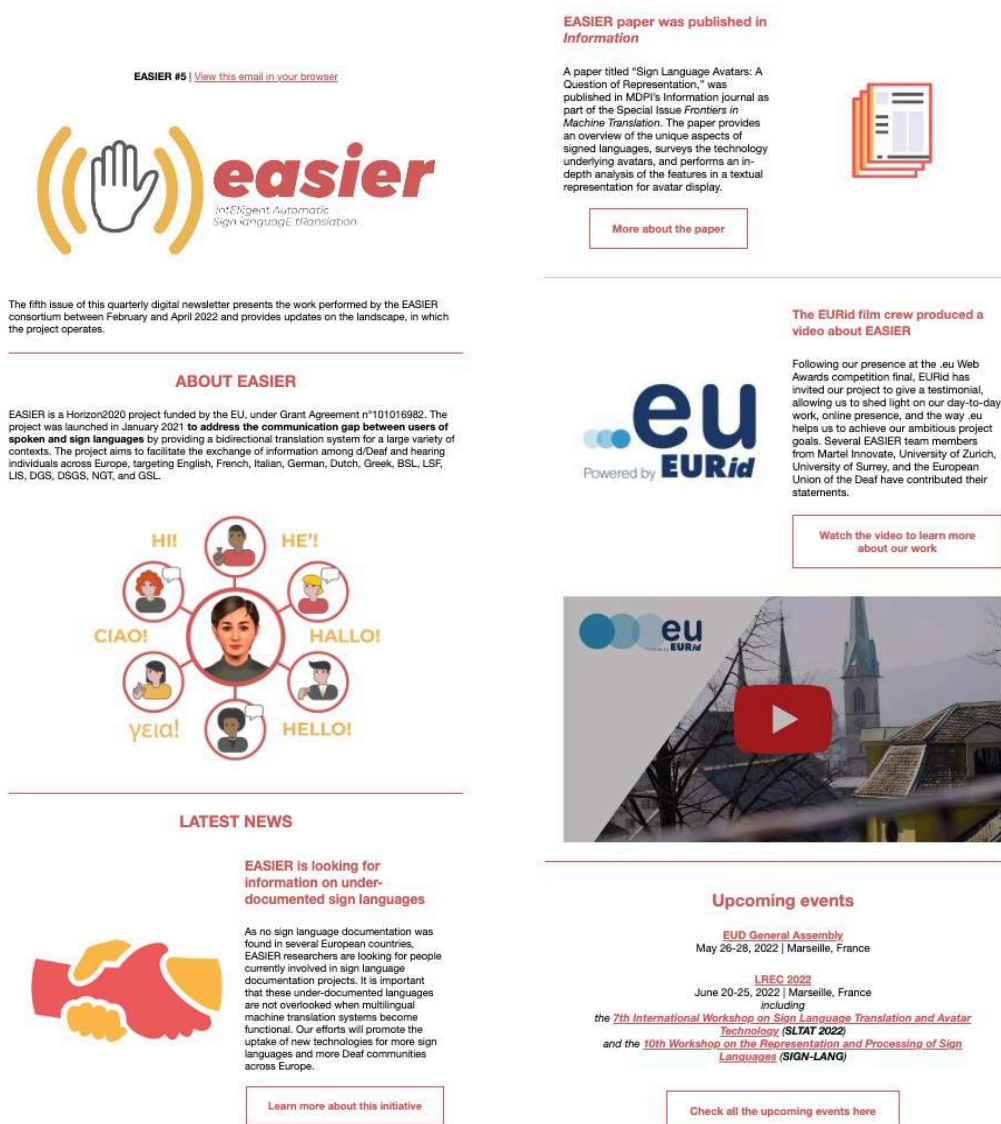


FIGURE 7: EASIER NEWSLETTER



## 1.2.5 Social media channels

Accounts on several social networks have been created as marketing tools. All are linked to the project website. Their goal is to promote the activities and outputs of the project and build a network around the project's work while encouraging a discussion on inclusive communication, technological developments, and other related topics. Below is an overview of all EASIER social media channels.

### 1.2.5.1 Twitter

The EASIER Twitter account <sup>1</sup> has been used since November 2020 to promote the project and share relevant news and events. It helps us to establish meaningful connections with an active and relevant audience, including academics, policymakers, interpreters, and the general public. By following relevant users, EASIER gains access to relevant content and updates and acquires more followers. At the time of writing, the project has 190 followers.



FIGURE 8: EASIER TWITTER ACCOUNT

### 1.2.5.2 LinkedIn

EASIER established its LinkedIn company page<sup>2</sup> in November 2020 to supplement the website and drive traffic to it. The profile allows us to promote the project to a broader audience, including businesses, universities, and research centers. To create positive visibility exchanges, the EASIER project partners' LinkedIn pages are mentioned and tagged when appropriate. At the time of writing, the project has 118 followers.

<sup>1</sup> <https://twitter.com/EASIERproject>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/easierproject/>

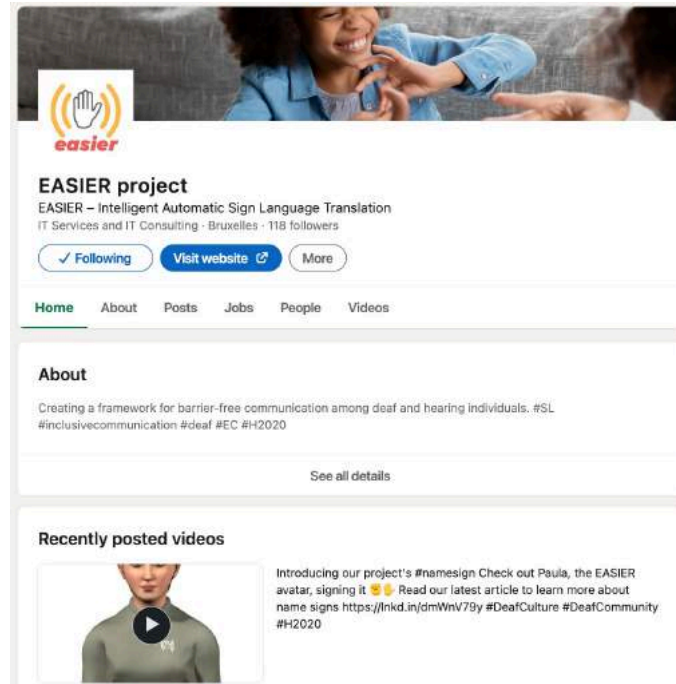


FIGURE 9: EASIER LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE

### 1.2.5.3 Facebook

To reach a wider community, the EASIER consortium decided to create a project page<sup>3</sup> on Facebook. The profile has been active since the beginning of June 2021 and is used mainly to promote project activities and achievements, targeting the general public. At the time of writing, the project has 168 followers.

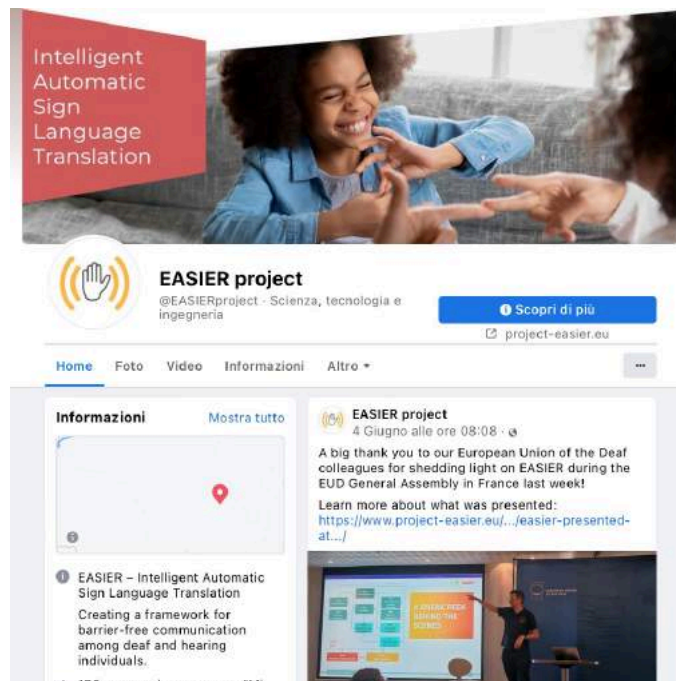


FIGURE 10: EASIER FACEBOOK PAGE

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/EASIERproject>

### 1.2.5.4 YouTube

EASIER created its YouTube channel<sup>4</sup> at the beginning of the project to host the press releases in the form of SL videos. The channel is now used to also disseminate the project vision, concepts, and objectives, and provide visibility to partners and other engaged stakeholders. All project-related videos can be found on the channel.

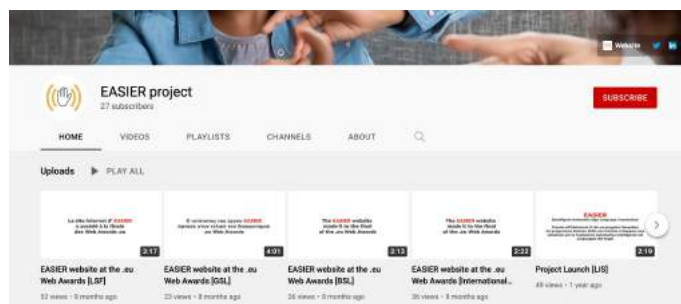


FIGURE 11: EASIER YOUTUBE CHANNEL

### 1.2.6 Promotional materials

The first project flyer in the form of a postcard was developed and printed before the .eu Web Awards. The postcard provides general information about the project, its vision, mission, and objectives. In addition, a project give-away in the form of a sticker was developed in June 2022, before the LREC conference. The design of a second, more comprehensive project brochure will be initiated in July 2022.



FIGURE 12: PROJECT POSTCARD – FRONT AND BACK

For the 10th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages: Multilingual Sign Language Resources (LREC 2022) held on June 25, 2022, we produced some promotional stickers.



FIGURE 13: EASIER STICKERS

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOVQGqSzmz42l6ln\\_zBFugg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOVQGqSzmz42l6ln_zBFugg)



### 1.2.7 Scientific publications

The EASIER consortium is committed to bringing research results closer to the public and adheres to the Open Access guidelines set by the H2020 work program. In line with these guidelines, all of the scientific publications emerging from the EASIER project are freely available to interested parties.

To date, 18 papers developed as part of the EASIER project have been published. Several others, mentioned in section 2.1.2, are awaiting publication. A list of all published papers is also available on the [EASIER website](#).

- ***“The Myth of Signing Avatars”*** by J.C. McDonald, R. Wolfe, E. Efthimiou, E. Fotinea, F. Picron, D. Van Landuyt, T. Sioen, A. Braffort, M. Filhol, S. Ebling, T. Hanke, V. Krausneker. MT Summit, **August 2021**.
- ***“Leveraging Semantic Scene Characteristics and Multi-Stream Convolutional Architectures in a Contextual Approach for Video-Based Visual Emotion Recognition in the Wild”*** by I. Pikoulis, P. P. Filntisis and P. Maragos. 16th IEEE International Conference on Automatic Face and Gesture Recognition, **December 2021**.
- ***“Exploiting Emotional Dependencies with Graph Convolutional Networks for Facial Expression Recognition”*** by P. Antoniadis, P. P. Filntisis and P. Maragos. 16th IEEE International Conference on Automatic Face and Gesture Recognition, **December 2021**.
- ***“Sign Language Avatars: A Question of Representation”*** by R. Wolfe, J.C. McDonald, T. Hanke, S. Ebling, D. Van Landuyt, F. Picron, V. Krausneker, E. Efthimiou, E. Fotinea, A. Braffort. MDPI Information Journal, Volume 13, Issue 4 – Special Issue Frontiers in Machine Translation, **April 2022**.
- ***“Signing Avatar Performance Evaluation within the EASIER Project”*** by A. Dimou, V. Papavassiliou, J. McDonald, T. Goulas, K. Vasilaki, A. Vacalopoulou, S-E Fontinea, E. Efthimiou, R. Wolfe. *Seventh International Workshop on Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT)*, **June 2022**.
- ***“Supporting Mouthing in Sign Languages: New Innovations and a Proposal for Future Corpus Building”*** by R. Wolfe, J. McDonald, R. Johnson, B. Stuff, S. Klinghoffer, A. Bonzani, A. Alexander, N. Barnekow. *Seventh International Workshop on Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT)*, **June 2022**.
- ***“A software toolkit for pre-processing sign language video streams”*** by F. Nunnari. *Seventh International Workshop on Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT)*, **June 2022**.
- ***“Fine-tuning of convolutional neural networks for the recognition of facial expressions in sign language video samples”*** by N. Deshpande, F. Nunnari & E. Avramidis. *Seventh International Workshop on Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT)*, **June 2022**.
- ***“Introducing Sign Languages to a Multilingual Wordnet: Bootstrapping Corpora and Lexical Resources of Greek Sign Language and German Sign Language”*** by S. Bigeard, M. Schulder, M. Kopf, T. Hanke, K. Vasilaki, A. Vacalopoulou, T. Goulas, A.-L. Dimou, S.-E. Fotinea, E. Efthimiou. *Proceedings of the 10th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages (sign-lang@LREC)*, **June 2022**.
- ***“Representation and Synthesis of Geometric Relocations”*** by M. Filhol, J. McDonald. *Proceedings of the 10th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages (sign-lang@LREC)*, **June 2022**.
- ***“The Sign Language Dataset Compendium: Creating an Overview of Digital Linguistic Resources”*** by M. Kopf, M. Schulder, T. Hanke. *Proceedings of the 10th*

*Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages (sign-lang@LREC), June 2022.*

- **“Facilitating the Spread of New Sign Language Technologies across Europe”** by H. E. Morgan, O. Crasborn, M. Kopf, M. Schulder, T. Hanke. *Proceedings of the 10th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages (sign-lang@LREC), June 2022.*
- **“Skeletal Graph Self-Attention: Embedding a Skeleton Inductive Bias into Sign Language Production”** by Saunders B, Camgoz NC, Bowden R. *Proceedings of Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT2022), June 2022.*
- **“Changing the Representation: Examining Language Representation for Neural Sign Language Production”** by Walsh H, Saunders B, Bowden R. *Proceedings of Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT2022), June 2022.*
- **“Signing at Scale: Learning to Co-Articulate Signs for Large-Scale Photo-Realistic Sign Language Production”** by Saunders B, Camgoz N C, Bowden R, *Proceedings of IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR2022), June 2022.*
- **“Syntact: A synthesized database of basic emotions”** by F. Burkhardt, F. Eyben and B. Schuller, *Proceedings of the Dataset Creation for Lower-Resourced Languages (DCLRL) workshop in conjunction with LREC 2022, June 2022.*
- **“Nkululeko: A Tool For Rapid Speaker Characteristics Detection”** by F. Burkhardt, J. Wagner, H. Wierstorf, F. Eyben and B. Schuller, *Proceedings of LREC, June 2022.*
- **“A Comparative Cross Language View On Acted Databases Portraying Basic Emotions Utilising Machine Learning”** by F. Burkhardt, A. Hacker, U. Reichel, H. Wierstorf, F. Eyben and B. Schuller, *Proceedings of LREC, June 2022.*

## 1.2.8 Events

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### 1.2.8.1 AT4SSL2021

On August 20, 2021, EASIER was presented at the International Workshop on Automatic Translation for Sign and Verbal Languages (AT4SSL2021), collocated with the 18th Biennial Machine Translation Summit 2021 (MT Summit 2021). Several EASIER representatives attended the event, among others: Sarah Ebling (UZH), Thomas Hanke (UHH), Mark Wheatley (EUD), and Rosalee Wolfe (ATHENA). As part of the proceedings of the MT Summit 2021, a paper, entitled “The myth of signing avatars” has been published. The paper is available on the project website.

### 1.2.8.2 Online events and discussions

In addition to exploring possibilities to attend and present the project at relevant events, EASIER team follows relevant online events and discussions, such as Representation Matters! Deaf Members on the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

### 1.2.8.3 .eu Web Awards ceremony

On August 9, 2021, we were informed that the EASIER website had been selected as one of the three finalists of the .eu Web Awards competition organized by the European Registry for Internet Domains (EURid). The EASIER website was nominated within the Laurels category established for educational institutions, charitable organizations, and ongoing pan-European projects. The organizers invited two EASIER representatives to the .eu Web Awards ceremony held in Taormina, Sicily on 14 October 2021, where the winners had been announced. The project was represented by MARTEL’s Klaudia dos Santos (WP10 leader) and Margherita Facca.

#### 1.2.8.4 LREC 2022

The 10th Workshop on the Representation and Processing of Sign Languages: Multilingual Sign Language Resources (LREC 2022) held on June 25, 2022, saw large participation and involvement of the EASIER partners, also in the events organizing committee. The EASIER members of the organizing committee included ATHENA's Eleni Efthimiou and Evita Fotinea and UHH's Thomas Hanke. Out of 35 accepted submissions, five relate to the activities performed by EASIER. This full-date, hybrid event held as part of the Language Resources and Evaluation Conference 2022 enjoyed high interest and participation. The event gathered 77 participants from around the world. (On-site attendees from across Europe, Israel, Korea, Australia, the US and Canada, remote participants also from South America and Iran.) EASIER representatives from ATHENA, UHH, CNRS, DFKI, RU, UZH, UniS and UCL attended the event.



The 7th Workshop on Sign Language Translation and Avatar Technology (SLTAT): The Junction of the Visual & the Textual was held on June 24, 2022 as part of the Language Resources and Evaluation Conference 2022. This half-day, hybrid event was jointly organized by EASIER and SignON. The EASIER members in the organizing committee included ATHENA's Eleni Efthimiou, Evita Fotinea, and Rosalee Wolfe, UHH's Thomas Hanke, and CNRS' John C. McDonald. Among nineteen submissions accepted, nine have authors associated with the EASIER project. The workshop was a big success, having gathered over 72 participants.

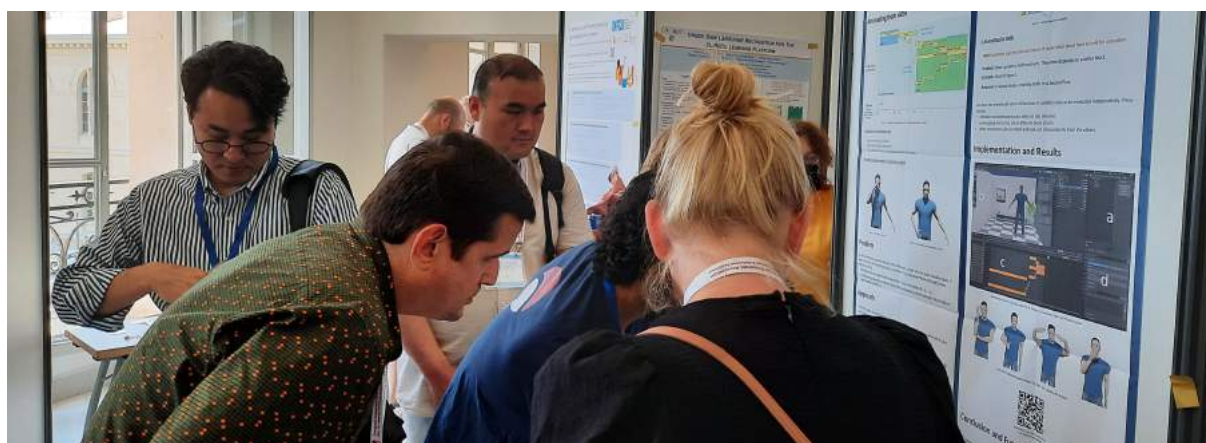




FIGURE 14: PHOTOS FROM LREC 2022

#### 1.2.8.5 Expert conferences and committees in Switzerland

- EASIER was presented at the eAccessibility experts conference on November 4, 2021 by STXT, which was part of the organizing committee. The conference initiated by the Swiss Confederation gathered over 800 participants from across Europe. The presentation delivered by EASIER was part of the accessible communication slot with SILAS as basic communication tool and the future outlook in automation.
- Accessibility Round Table Switzerland is a long-established expert group that meets twice a year to exchange about new possibilities, projects, and offers in the field of accessibility. Members of this expert group are representatives of public institutions, government, and government-tied companies. During the past meetings, Michaela Nachtrab from STXT represented EASIER and provided an insight into the latest developments of SILAS and its future extensions that are planned as part of the EASIER project.
- In addition, SILAS and EASIER were presented to different companies and public institutions, which have the need of providing accessible communication. The presentations were successful: many institutions will integrate the tool on their websites or already did, namely Swiss Post, SRG SSR (mother institution of Swiss broadcast), SRF (Swiss German Broadcaster), SatAccess (institution to ensure broadcast perception for TV, radio and internet in Switzerland).

#### 1.2.8.6 Workshop on SL diagramming

Related to Task 5.3 is the research on a graphical representation of SL, to be proposed as a way to provide substitute content when post-editing SL, instead of typing text. To work toward the task and to disseminate the past research, on February 21, 2022, LISN organized a one-day workshop on SL diagramming at LISN in the Paris region. The program was prepared for the participants to:

- discover the work done so far through several presentations,
- produce diagrams, observe collected ones, discuss their distinct/common features and graphical strategies on concrete examples,
- share any personal practice (Deaf community and translators often have things to share),
- debate the purpose of such representations.

The workshop ended with a demonstration of the features already implemented of the editor prototype to be delivered. Participants ranged from interpreters and translators to researchers and students, and comprised of deaf and hearing language users. Project partners took part either remotely (UHH) or in person (EUD).

## 1.2.9 Videos

### 1.2.9.1 Video by EuRID

Following EASIER's presence at the .eu Web Awards competition final, EURid has invited our project to give a testimonial, allowing us to shed light on our day-to-day work, online presence, and the way .eu helps us to achieve our project goals. Several consortium members from Martel, University of Zurich, University of Surrey, and the European Union of the Deaf have contributed their statements. The video is available on the EASIER project YouTube channel.

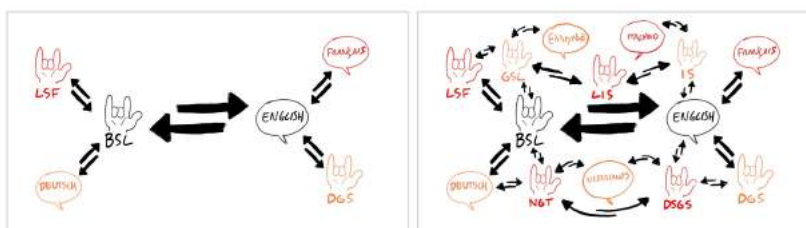
### 1.2.9.2 Introductory project video

In an effort to bring the project goals and activities closer to the general public, EASIER is currently producing an animated video explaining its vision and objectives. The video begins with the introduction of the wider context, shedding light on the daily communication struggles caused by the lack of broadly available services in sign languages. It then introduces EASIER as a potential response to existing technological challenges. The second part of the video focuses on the project mission and the way EASIER intends to advance the current translation technology to support equal participation of native signers in a broad range of everyday-life activities. The final part of the video introduces the consortium members and provides an acknowledgment of the EU funding. The video will be released in July and it will be available on the project YouTube channel<sup>5</sup>.



"With such a multitude of languages in the EU, communication outside of our communities is not always easy,"

Slowly zooming in on Europe map and names of different languages popping up, cluttering screen



"to facilitate interactions between users of different spoken and sign languages across Europe."

Context icons disappear and spoken+sign languages appear, connected by bi-directional arrows - all languages covered by the project gradually appear

FIGURE 15: SCREENSHOTS FROM THE STORYBOARD

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOVQGqSzmz42I6In\\_zBFugg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOVQGqSzmz42I6In_zBFugg)

### 1.3 Internal communication

In addition to regular consortium meetings, several tools have been implemented to ensure effective internal communication and smooth and efficient information flow among project partners.

- **Repository** – EASIER has a private, password-protected area on Google Drive. This repository facilitates the transfer of information between project partners and fosters effective and successful collaboration of the EASIER consortium. The repository serves as a library, which stores all relevant presentations, documents, distribution lists, and information about project-related meetings. Besides, it also enables the generation of highlights, presentation of management data (manpower, finances, deliverables, partner contacts, GANTT charts, etc.), and the organization of meetings. The repository is managed by MARTEL which has a corporate subscription to Google services, which increases the level of encryption, and therefore the level of privacy and data protection.
- **Mailing lists** – to ensure an effective information flow, several mailing lists have been created. The general mailing list includes all individuals involved in the project and is used to share relevant project-wide updates. Each work package has its own mailing list dedicated to the specific activities performed within it. In addition to that, there is also a mailing list dedicated to all financial matters of the project. All mailing lists are managed by MARTEL.
- **Mattermost** – to further facilitate the communication among project partners, the consortium decided to use Mattermost, an open-source platform for secure communications, collaboration, and workflow orchestration. As this tool allows for instant exchange of ideas, it is used mostly for discussions around specific topics and tasks.

### 1.4 Community building

The EASIER project and its activities and results regard a large community of end users, which requires bringing together a large group of individuals including native signers, interpreters, as well as academic and industrial stakeholders from the human sciences and innovative technologies domains. Effective collaboration among these stakeholder groups is necessary to ensure the design of an effective, user-driven, inclusive, and human-centric solution. During the first half of the project, EASIER has reached out predominantly to the Deaf and SL communities that the individual EASIER project partners are part of.

In 2021, 7 activities engaging end-users took place in the form of focus groups. The purpose of these activities was to gather the end-users' opinions on their needs and practices, as well as the projected use of the EASIER tool. The results stemming from the focus groups were documented in deliverable D1.1. Through these 7 activities, 24 people were consulted, including 8 deaf individuals and 16 sign language professionals. The EASIER end-users community is expected to grow in the upcoming months in the framework of the first evaluation phase.

In addition, the consortium is discussing about a possibility of opening a dedicated feedback channel, allowing end-users to communicate their feedback on the developed technology, and the project activities, in general.

### 1.5 Cooperation and liaisons with related projects and initiatives

To ensure a broad project outreach and its successful uptake and validation and smooth knowledge transfer, liaisons and synergies with several related initiatives and projects were established.

### 1.5.1 SignON

Collaboration with the SignON project was initiated because just like EASIER, SignON is a user-centric and community-driven project that aims to facilitate the exchange of information between deaf and hearing individuals across Europe. As both projects will last 36 months, the consortia closely collaborate and exchange knowledge since the early project stages. The meetings between the two project coordinators take place monthly, providing a great opportunity for discussions about ongoing and planned activities and the exchange of lessons learned. The two consortia also collaborate on event organization.

### 1.5.2 ELG

As outlined in the project Technical Annex, the EASIER project is tightly connected with the European Language Grid (ELG) at the infrastructural level; In that it is planned to extend the ELG portfolio with SL Language Technology (LT) APIs and standards. The relevant works are incorporated within WP8 *Integration*. They are foreseen to begin at M25 and run during the last 12 months of the project. Furthermore, if and when necessary, EASIER will also exploit the ELG LT processing services at any stage of the project.

### 1.5.3 SocialWear

Part of the research on affective computing (i.e., the recognition of affective components of sign language and its realization on the avatar) conducted as part of EASIER is shared with the SocialWear project (Socially Interactive Smart Fashion, DFKI Kst 22132), supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The research conducted within the SocialWear project focuses on the synthesis and recognition of sign language and its affective components through wearable devices will help in implementing and improving the synthesis and recognition of affective dimensions of sign language for EASIER. The difference is that SocialWear focuses on the grounding technology at the signal level, while such technology is applied in EASIER as a tool for an analysis at the linguistic level.

## 1.6 Progress tracking

The communication and dissemination strategy has been closely monitored since the inception of the project. A set of KPIs has been defined to measure the impact and help conduct the most accurate assessment of the communication and dissemination activities (see Table 1). The evaluation is carried out on a regular basis to ensure that all KPIs are met.

TABLE 1: COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION KPIS

| Measure          | Indicator                | Target at M36 | Source and methodology                           | Status at M18    |
|------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--|------------------|
| Flyers           | No. of flyers.           | >3            | Physical copies distributed at dedicated events. | 1 (+ 2 stickers) |
| Posters/roll-ups | No. of posters/roll-ups. | >3            | Electronic distribution via the project website. | -                |

|  |   |   |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Project website                                    | Yearly average number of unique visitors to the website.  | > 1500  | News items, Publications, Videos, Newsletter, Deliverables.  | 4011   |
| Social networks                                    | Yearly average number of followers on:<br>- Twitter<br>- LinkedIn   | > 200<br><br>> 100                                    | Keeping EASIER profiles active through regular monitoring and posts.   | 190<br><br>100   |
| Press releases/ press publications                 | No. of press releases issued to specialized and general media channels at key project milestones.   | >4  | A press/media kit will be developed containing press releases, videos, publishable images, and flyers.   | 2  |
| Quarterly newsletter                               | No. of distributed newsletters.   | 12  | Recording of subscribers to the electronic newsletter.   | 5  |
| Videos   | No. of videos published on the EASIER website and social media channels.<br><br>Average number of views.                                  | 4 videos per year<br><br>100 views/video              | Press releases in forms of videos and introduction and training videos supporting awareness creation, stakeholders' engagement, and the use of applications. | 2 multilingual press releases<br><br>1 project video by EURid<br><br>1 project video by MARTEL |
| Workshops (at least two by the end of the project) | Average number of participants per workshop.  | 15-25 participants per event                          | Attendance proof, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports depending on scope and co-location.                     | 2  |
| Participation in events and presentations          | Number of external events EASIER partners attended to promote the project, including scientific conferences, demos, and/or presentations. | At least 5 events per year (including virtual events) | Attendance proof, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports.  | 5+ per year  |
| Webinars (one by the                               | Average number of participants.   | At least 20 participants                              | Attendance proof, video streaming, presented materials, photos, animation  | -  |



|                         |  |             |  |     |
|-------------------------|--|-------------|--|-----|
| end of the project)     |  |             | of social media channels, and event reports.   |     |
| Scientific publications | Number of published or submitted publications by the end of the project. | At least 10 | Publication number, link to repository.  | 18  |
| Presentations           | Number of presentations, keynotes, and invited lectures.                 | At least 10 | Attendance proof, video streaming, presented materials, photos, animation of social media channels, and event reports. | 10+ |



## 2 UPDATED COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

### 2.1 Planned communication and dissemination activities M19-M36

The EASIER Communication and Dissemination Strategy defined in deliverable D10.1 *Impact Creation Strategy and Plan* will be continued in the second half of the project, evolving around activities listed below.

#### 2.1.1 Project website and social media channels

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EASIER will continue to grow its community and raise awareness about the project via the established channels including but not limited to, the project website and its social media channels: Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube. Relevant project findings will be made available to the general public to keep the community updated about project activities and results. This will be achieved through publication of news items, press releases, social media posts, as well as the project newsletter and ad hoc newsflashes.

#### 2.1.2 Planned events

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##### 2.1.2.1 WMT Shared Task on Sign Language Translation

In 2022, for the first time, a machine translation competition (called a “shared task”) will take place at the WMT 2022, the most prestigious conference on machine translation. UZH’s Mathias Müller and Sarah Ebling are key organizers of this shared task. Many other partners involved in EASIER, as well as members of the SignON and other projects’ consortia are also involved. In June 2022, an important milestone was achieved. It was the release of training data (including a new corpus we have acquired and processed) and baseline systems. The final outcome of the shared task will be presented in December 2022 at EMNLP in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

##### 2.1.2.2 Joint workshop at the EUD General Assembly

The General Assembly of the European Union of the Deaf is an annual event for EUD’s member countries where deaf representatives from the national associations of the deaf from all the 27 EU countries, 3 EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway, and Switzerland), and the United Kingdom are present.

As the EUD General Assembly often features workshops and presentations, EASIER was originally planning to hold a workshop during the 2022 EUD General Assembly in Marseille, France, in cooperation with SignON. The aim of the workshop was to present, demonstrate, and discuss different aspects of sign language machine translation projects and the challenges to overcome. The main objective of this event was to enlighten the representatives of EUD’s member countries about the finer details behind the scenes of sign language machine translation projects. Topics such as sign language annotation, the challenges with data for low-resource languages, co-creation and the technical aspects for getting a good-quality sign language output through an avatar were to be discussed and opinions from the deaf representatives were to be gathered. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances around the availability of International Sign interpreters to interpret the presentations of some of the non-signing project partners, we had to postpone the event. The workshop is now scheduled for May 2023, to be collocated with the EUD General Assembly taking place in Stockholm.

### 2.1.2.3 Neologism workshop

The neologism workshop organized under RU's leadership will serve as a venue for discussing neologisms among translators into European sign languages, especially in the context of handling broadcast news, linking new stories with challenging vocabulary, and solutions existing across European SL productions. The workshop is currently in the early planning phase – the first meeting to discuss plans for this event took place on June 29, 2022. The workshop is planned to be held by mid-2023. The content and discussions from this workshop are planned to be preserved for public access in an update to the WP9 workflow documents at some point prior to December 2023.

### 2.1.3 Planned papers

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Below is a list of papers that are currently awaiting publication or review.

- **“Organizing a Bilingual Lexicographic Database with the Use of WordNet”** by A. Vacalopoulou, E. Efthimiou, S.-E. Fotinea, T. Goulas, A.-L. Dimou, and K. Vasilaki. *Proceedings of XX EURALEX International Congress: Dictionaries and Society* - accepted, to be published in **July 2022**.
- **“Language Accessibility for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing”** by Debevc, M., Wolfe, R., Ebling, S. *Joint International Conference on Digital Inclusion, Assistive Technology & Accessibility (ICCHP-AAATE)* - accepted, to be published in **July 2022**.
- **“What about synthetic signing? A methodology for signer involvement in the development of avatar technology with generative capacity”** by A.-L. Dimou, V. Papavassiliou, T. Goulas, K. Vasilaki, A. Vacalopoulou, S.-E. Fotinea, E. Efthimiou. *Frontiers in Communication/Language Sciences* - under review.

The EASIER consortium will continue to submit papers in line with the conducted research.

### 2.1.4 Promotional materials

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Additional promotional materials will be produced in alignment with event organization and attendance. In Q3 2022, the design team will work on a second, more comprehensive project flyer. Later this year, a poster and a project roll-up will also be produced.

### 2.1.5 Communication campaigns

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In the first half of the project, the communication activities focused primarily on educating the general public about the Deaf community, sign languages, and shedding light on the project activities as well as the context in which the project operates. As the project advances, more focus will be given to the technological aspect. A new communication campaign targeting European Deaf communities will be launched at the beginning of Y3. The campaign will introduce the concepts of data-driven SL video recognition, SL animation, and SL translation technology and talk about the potential of technology to ease the communication barriers. The goal is to acquaint the Deaf community with these concepts and make them aware of the benefits automatic translation will bring. This campaign will be developed in close collaboration with the EUD.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

This deliverable provided updates on specific communication and dissemination activities carried out by the EASIER consortium during the first half of the project and the performance of the EASIER Impact Creation Strategy and Plan against the KPIs defined before the project launch. The report also outlined the communication and dissemination activities planned for the remaining 18 months of the project.

At large, we can confirm that the project communication and dissemination strategy is on track, having brought positive results in the first 18 months of the project. This is largely due to the regular monitoring of performance against the set of communication and dissemination KPIs, which allowed us to track progress and quickly identify areas for potential improvement. With the active support and participation of all EASIER project partners, we were able to meet the targets and even surpass some of the initial objectives.

