



**WORLD FEDERATION
OF THE DEAF**

Honza Wirth
President
Znakovárna
CZECHIA
Email: honza.wirth@znakovarna.cz

6 May 2026

Subject: WFD Guidance on deaf-led representation during the International Week of Deaf People

Dear Mr Wirth,

On behalf of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), we thank Znakovárna for bringing this matter to our attention and for your continued commitment to promoting the International Week of Deaf People (IWDP) in Czechia.

The WFD recognises the importance of IWDP as a global advocacy platform led by deaf people, deaf communities, and their representative organisations. IWDP is an opportunity to celebrate national sign languages, deaf culture, deaf identity, and the human rights of deaf people. It is also an important moment to raise public awareness about the rights of deaf people under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), including the right to use and promote national sign languages.

In Czechia, the WFD Ordinary Member is the Union of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Czechia. As the national representative organisation, it has an important role in representing the deaf community and should be meaningfully consulted and involved in matters related to IWDP and the International Day of Sign Languages.

The WFD therefore encourages Znakovárna to coordinate closely with the Union of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Czechia, as the WFD Ordinary Member, as well as with other deaf-led organisations, to ensure that any response, advocacy, or public communication on this matter reflects a united and representative position of the deaf community in Czechia.

The WFD shares your concern when activities organised during IWDP frame deaf people primarily through a medical or deficit-based perspective, including campaigns that focus on “missing hearing” or simulate hearing loss without centering deaf people’s own experiences, languages, culture, and rights. While such campaigns may intend to raise awareness, they risk reinforcing stereotypes and misunderstanding if they do not reflect a human rights-based and deaf-led approach.

IWDP should not be used to promote narratives that present deafness as something to be fixed, pitied, or simulated. Rather, IWDP should affirm that deaf people are members of linguistic and



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cultural communities, with the right to access and use their national sign languages in all areas of life. The WFD encourages Znakovářna, together with the Union of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Czechia, to engage constructively with the campaign organisers to promote a more accurate, respectful, and deaf-led understanding of IWDP.

The WFD strongly supports deaf-led awareness-raising that promotes sign languages, deaf culture, deaf identity, and the human rights of deaf people. We encourage all partners and stakeholders in Czechia to ensure that IWDP activities are developed with, by, and for deaf people.

Sincerely yours,

Joseph J. Murray
President
World Federation of the Deaf

Cc: Union of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Czechia