

What I'd like to do is invite anybody else that's been affected by the severe lack of disability, D/deaf and disability access issues over this Council or any of the previous Councils. If you want to raise your hands, stand up, and show your visibility as well, please do. With the signs [Laughs].

I also want to say, if anybody wants to come and join me here, up on stage, we have a list. If anybody would like to come and join me on stage, and help me go through this list, or to just be here and be visible, or to add your own words and thoughts. If we can get some chairs that would be absolutely fantastic, please. So, I'll just give a few seconds for people to come join me if they wish to.

Does anybody want to join me at the microphone?

[Inaudible conversation]

Number 1. Disabled people, sorry, disabled Black and People of Colour had to choose between accessing Black and People of Colour only spaces and disabled people only spaces.

Registration forms asked for any access needs and yet these were not provided or acknowledged.

There's been very little or no verbal description of visual materials such as hand gestures... or a zine.

That is not an accessible slope, it has been renamed The Wall or The Mountain.

Public transport is not accessible and no information was provided or alternatives given.

People turning up to their hotel room only found out for the first time that they were having to share a double bed.

Pre-conference communication was poor, often with no responses or confirmation, which causes high anxiety.

Two wheelchair users had to rearrange the furniture in their room because the room was not suitable for their access needs.

We're already on number 9. A person was told that they were not allowed to share a room with a specific person, i.e. someone they knew, causing high anxiety.

Number 10. The venue and accommodation was just not close enough.

Number 11. There's been no clear signage.

Number 12. No quiet space. The designated quiet space originally was in the main hall, next to the childcare area - in a public space - this is not quiet.

Complete lack of travel information around the city.

The one scheduled break, outside of lunch was taken away due to poor time management.

Inconsistent information - the text only programme contained useful information that wasn't available anywhere else.

The only reason the Saturday night venue was accessible, was because it was changed, but only after we asked for people to check. The original venue was not accessible.

The original Saturday night venue was not a trans only space causing high anxiety.

Food was not clearly labelled to cater for allergies.

Number 20. Although requested, dietary requirements were not provided until a participant volunteered to provide a fellow participant with what they needed.

21. We've been met with really shit attitudes when asking for needs to be met, for example, phrases like 'I don't know,' 'it's not my responsibility,' 'I can't really do anything about that.'

A participant got to the point of feeling suicidal due to the complete lack of accessibility.

Number 23. Social spaces were too noisy with no quieter option available.

24. Sorry.

Yeah. 24. [Laughs] The speech to text on the screen was too slow, too fast, non existent, too small, different to what was being said.

25. The quiet space, when changed, that was offered felt too hot and close and was not a space that people were able to relax at all.

The policy pre meeting did not provide accessible food.

People were made to feel that their access needs weren't valid - just checking you're keeping up, on the transcribing - or that they weren't disabled enough, by TGEU in emails even before the conference started.

The Black and People of Colour pre conference space was not accessible, including being up a steep flight of stairs.

An individual...

28. The Black and People of Colour pre conference space was not accessible, including being up a steep flight of stairs.

An individual specifically asked for support around access needs prior to the opening plenary, was told... was told that was all fine and then the request was ignored.

Facilitators don't seem to be briefed on any access needs, not even basic ones.

Number 31. Workshops being held in social spaces creates an inaccessible environment.

32. Some people have no access to water. The water bottles weren't possible for a number of people to open by themselves.

Not all people are able to do the hand signals, such as clicking fingers.

And clicking fingers can cause anxiety and pain around noise sensitivity.

The furniture in many rooms were heavy and not moveable.

TGEU responded to our request for some of our basic access needs to be met. But individuals found this wasn't followed through or was still inaccessible:

[Laughs]

For example, timings were not stuck to

People were unable to get taxis booked after a promise for support.

The quiet space moved around and was a long way away and was hot.

People had to... [inaudible]

People had to queue for an hour in the blazing sun, with nowhere to sit and rest to get dinner on Friday.

Agreed facilitation rules were not always followed in workshops where ... [inaudible]

Intervention/take-over by D/deaf and disabled activists at the closing plenary of the 7th European Trans Council on Sunday, July 1st 2018.

Agreed facilitation rules were not always followed in workshops where call out culture and recognition of privilege including ableism was met with defensiveness.

39. A disabled person who wanted to attend was given one day's notice that they had a scholarship. Organising special assistance when travelling is almost impossible to do without notice.

A participant had to spend their own money which was equal to one month's rent in order to be able to participate in the Council - they had to spend money to make the Council accessible.

TGEU and the host organisation has once again failed to provide reasonable and adequate access for D/deaf and disabled people at the Council.

This is in spite of, and made more painful by the fact that they spent considerable money and the significant energy of 10 D/deaf and disabled people to stop this from happening.

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TGEU published a comprehensive report which sets out the practical steps necessary to plan an accessible event and yet here we are.

For the 7th time since the formation of TGEU D/deaf and disabled people have been caused to feel excluded, angry, upset, frustrated, exhausted and have been unable to fully participate. Again, we have had to expend labour, practical and emotional, to try and improve things and draw attention to these failings.

I want to finish with a statement, somebody else's statement:

“Engagement with LGBTIQ organisations is just as important for D/deaf and disabled trans people as for everyone else, and they are

Intervention/take-over by D/deaf and disabled activists at the closing plenary of the 7th European Trans Council on Sunday, July 1st 2018.

currently missing out on valuable experiences within the trans community.

D/deaf and disabled trans people should not have to choose which parts of themselves to forgo, and they deserve to be represented by LGBTIQ organisations who value all aspects of their identities, not just the parts that they find easiest to accommodate.”

[Laughs] We should not have to.

D/deaf and disabled trans people should not have to choose which parts of themselves to forgo, and they deserve to be represented by LGBTIQ organisations who value all aspects of their identities, not just the parts that they find easiest to accommodate.”

That last statement was from TGEU’s own fucking report on how to create accessible events and spaces for D/deaf and disabled people.

I would like to invite anybody else who would like to say anything to take the mic.

I have a couple of things to add to that already very long list.

I had to find out from other attendees that there was money available to me.

I was not told by organisers.

Financial access is an access issue too.

Those of us, and I am one, who came here on scholarships, were asked to provide lots of information, including detailed information about access needs.

Throughout the weekend, I and others, have been expected to find money we don’t have to pay for essential parts of participation, including taxis, food, drinks.

Yesterday, I was told that I would be able to claim for a taxi. I spent money for that taxi, arrived at the party venue to find no one from the organising team to refund me. This meant I had to borrow money from other attendees in order to participate in events. And I know I am not the only person who has had to do that.

Hi. Sorry. I just wanted to quickly say given the extensive list that disabled access is really, really fucking complicated and we have been doing and living with our access requirements for decades and sometimes it's impossible to provide disabled acc-, to meet everybody's access needs at the same time.

For example, there are in this room people who need um, to have gestures be by speech because they can't see the gestures and they need to be said loud, and there are also people who can't deal with loud noises.

You can't accommodate those two things at once, that is why this is really complicated and takes so much planning and sometimes means that you have to have different spaces, and those are the kind of really intricate conversations that non-disabled people cannot possibly have, and that's why no matter how much people have tried and want things to be accessible to everybody, they won't be. And that's why we need to have D/deaf and disabled people on the Stee- Sorry. Bad crip.

In summation. That's why D/deaf and disabled people need to be on the organising team as I suggested in Budapest 3 [asking intonation] Councils ago. There should be a dedicated disabled access planner and yeah. That's it. Thanks.

[Clapping]

Hi there. I have 2 points and I do apologize because I often speak rather fast because of anxiety and also I get easily excited about things I am passionate about. My first point is that accessibility

doesn't stop purely on the form, once you put your access needs on the form those need to be implemented. And what I've learned from this Council in particular is the importance of doing a round of names, pronouns and access needs. This allows people to advocate their access needs there and then. It also allows those who otherwise may not have the confidence to vocalize their access needs -

And furthermore, it allows those who may not recognize themselves as D/deaf and disabled people to listen to other people's access needs and perhaps for the first time have the confidence to say 'Hey, 20 other people have said this is their access needs, I have those access needs, and for the first time because I'm in a room with other people, coming forward and vocalizing those access needs, I have the strength today to vocalize my access needs'. Thank you.

[Clapping]

Hi. This is going to be hard for me to say. Yesterday, this conference had taken so much out of me, that I was suicidal. I reached out via tweet to the official hashtag of the conference and it took until this morning for someone from the organisers to actually see if I was still alive. If it hadn't been for some of these people behind me, I might not be here this morning.

This conference is literally fucking killing us.

It is hard to add anything else after this statement. An effort was made to make the venue of yesterday accessible, um, seen from a wheelchair it was, but it was an acoustic nightmare. I couldn't, and others also, had real difficulties hearing what other people said. It was only possible to hear persons directly next to you because of bad acoustics of the venue itself because of the very very loud music that hurt a lot of ears. So we left early.

Hello. So, I am one of the persons who have just thought of their access needs and one point that I wanted to state is lack of any

emotional and psychological support on the venue. If a person has an anxiety attack, a suicidal episode or any other form of urgent issue, they have no one to turn to.

And I for example, was forced to limit my participation in this conference to have zero chance of such an episode. So, I limited my communication, I limited my participation and I had to take long breaks between the events. And if any volunteers of the venue or any other organisers who were educated how to deal with such panic attacks, anxiety episodes, etc. etc. this list should have been clearly stated before the conference and on the conference. Thank you.

Okay. Hi everyone. Most of you know I'm Kay, I'm a new Board member and the one person who was openly disabled in my nomination form. And I thank you for voting me in, I believe I got, after the BPoC people, I think it was the disabled people vote and I appreciate that and I think everyone here appreciates that there are people here that realise that our needs are important.

I am going to point something that's not necessarily disabled [unintelligible], we'll get to disabled. For me, I want to have a call out to our siblings to the east, who are outside of the EU, and Council of Europe, and who do not have one representative elected to the Board. I sat with a few, I wasn't going to be represent - I wasn't going to be elected to the Board, there is no position on the Board allocated for disabled people, just as there are for none of the other strands. And I understand what it is to be unrepresented to not have a voice, and I am not going to forget you, and having had my first meeting with the Board, I can promise you the Board is not going to forget you.

The Board we have now is not the Board that we had previously and this is an incredibly diverse Board. I might be the most openly disabled person, but that does not by any means mean that I am the only disabled person on the Board.

As a legal scholar, to hear the words “that’s how democracy works” used to dismiss you, my siblings from outside the EU and the Council of Europe, made me furious.

That statement immediately begs the question “For whom?” What is democracy? Democracy is something that’s created by cis, white men. It’s a system like much of law. I just spent a year on a course learning about where law comes from, why we have these laws, who were the laws made for, and it is, it’s interesting. But the answer is pretty clear. We all know who it’s for.

And TGEU has replicated that structure. It’s still replicating that structure in the new Statutes. The Statutes, everything there, we need to review this. I can hear you, as a person who’s had my European identity ripped away from me, because of democracy.

62% of Scottish people voted to stay in the EU. But we’re losing it. And when we raise the issue, we’re told ‘that’s how democracy works’. Unfortunately, that’s the refrain that anyone in Scotland is used to hearing. We didn’t get to pick the system we live under. There’s supposed to be a commitment to not replicating the oppressive structures of patriarchal society.

Democracy in its current form is one of those oppressive structures and we need to do better.

Despite the commitment to disabled people and guidance on how to approach accessibility, this Council has been, to put it politely, a clusterfuck. At this point I wish to put out a thank you to some of the wonderful and hard-working volunteers who tried their best to mitigate this. Unfortunately, you were not equipped with the tools by those in positions of responsibility. This cannot happen again.

Disabled people cannot be asked to spend all their energy on dealing with accessibility failures. This has led to a large proportion of Council attendees feeling excluded. And while I appreciate being elected, at

the same time I'm still feeling this exclusion. However, I will say that having met my new fellow Board members, I feel a lot more positive about the future.

This organisation has serious structural and attitudinal deficiencies that need addressing. Disabled people and the other intersectional strands have been failed for far too long and enough is enough. I've lost my first career at the age of 21 because I came out as trans. I lost my second career at the age of 30, because I'd come out as disabled. I'm not doing this again. And I agree with Nathan, but in one way I disagree. Accessibility is easy. What's hard is changing attitudes.

When accessibility needs are met, it helps everyone. Not just disabled people that will - it's not just disabled people that are helped by these things. And we need to do this. And if anything, I can ask is, don't just treat this as an issue for TGEU. Don't leave it for those of us who are able to use our privilege, who manage to pass, necessarily, or can cope in general society. Those of us who pass as being able-bodied, of having [unintelligible word], those who have the energy to do it.

Don't put it on us, you have to do it in your everyday life. This affects us every day. The most simple things can help and all I ask is that you do this, outside of here, and now I am starting to ramble and my brain's switched off, so I'm going to hand it back to Lee...

[Clapping]

Just very quickly, I want to thank Dinah and Clémence for giving us this space, because this isn't part of the program, we've taken over the stage. And thanking them for their support and stepping back and allowing us this space to voice publicly our anger.
