

## **The World Meeting of the Blind, partially sighted, their families and friends**

The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Conference

### **REHA FOR THE BLIND IN POLAND**

**The world of touch, sound, and magnigraphics**

**The 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> September, 2020**

Palace of Culture and Science  
(Plac Defilad 1, Warsaw)

Copernicus Science Centre  
(Wybrzeże Kościuszkowskie 20, Warsaw)



#### Co-organizers:

- Self-government of Mazovian Voivodeship
- Welfare & Social Projects Department of the Capital City of Warsaw
- The Center for the Blind in Israel
- The Challenge Europe Foundation

#### In cooperation with:

- World Blind Union
- International Mobility Conference
- The Group for Special Education at the Committee of Educational Sciences of Polish Academy of Sciences.

## THE INVITATION

Dear representatives of organizations of and for the blind,

The Chance for the Blind Foundation would like to invite you to the world meeting of the blind, partially sighted, their families and friends organized within the 18th edition of the International Conference REHA FOR THE BLIND IN POLAND (REHA). It is a multi-threaded event, during which we will manifest solidarity with our beneficiaries, ideas on how to change the perception of disability and its consequences, ideas on how to best organize the world in order to achieve still unsurpassed goal of real equality of life chances for those, who are still largely excluded. To the guests gathered in the halls of the Palace of Culture and Science, Copernicus Science Centre and to online audience in many countries of the world, we will present the achievements of scientists, engineers, organizations and institutions, professionals, working in the field of rehabilitation. The aim of the Conference and its accompanying exhibitions is to enable the numerous participants to learn about the latest technical and methodological solutions created for this group of citizens.

For 21 years, we have been meeting at REHA with thousands of people who use these products and services. REHA is growing year by year, becoming a great undertaking organized not only in Warsaw, as during its first editions, but also in other major Polish cities. This extraordinary event consists of sixteen regional conferences in voivodship capitals and a four-day lasting central meeting in Warsaw. Poland is divided into 16 voivodships. Voivodship means region, province.

Thanks to such events and your presence, we can trust that the lives of the blind and partially sighted will look like the lives of non-disabled people. Our REHA is the first place in Poland, and many times in Central Europe, that pioneering solutions appear. These solutions include: programs that made Windows accessible to the blind, internet applications, specialized notebooks, modern text and graphic printers, 3D technology, navigation solutions, etc. We hope that this year it will not be different.

The Palace of Culture and Science is one of most famous places in Warsaw. It is located in the very center of Warsaw. One can have view of almost whole city from the observation deck on the highest floor. Biggest conferences and concerts take place in Palace halls.

Copernicus Science Center is another renowned place in Warsaw. Every year, thousands of visitors who are interested in the latest achievements in science and technology come to Copernicus Science Centre. Among the numerous fields of knowledge that Copernicus Science Centre deals with, there are activities related to eliminating the effects of disabilities. Copernicus Science Centre takes part in works and presentations concerning making the space accessible to people with mobility problems and providing information to the blind and partially sighted. For these reasons we chose this location for our exhibitions.

For many years REHA has been held under the honorary patronage of the Spouse of the President of the Republic of Poland, who visited our conference in 2016. The Foundation has

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applied to get her patronage this year as well. We have also applied to receive the patronage of MR. President, who honored us with his positive decision in 2017, which was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of our organization. Members of the honorary Committee are eminent representatives of the world of science, politics and NGO organizations. The Foundation has also established an Organizing Committee to ensure the best possible organization of the event. To make our meetings attractive for both visitors and organizations, we employ over 50 service staff and about 150 volunteers. The events are covered by central and regional media. Substantive speeches, presentations, discussion panels will be available online for both Polish and international viewers and listeners.

While in previous years they were being interpreted into English and Russian, this year we will be interpreting them into 12 languages. In this way, we want to achieve our important goal that REHA FOR THE BLIND IN POLAND becomes a worldwide event. The Foundation cooperates with blind people and their organizations in many countries, especially in Central Europe.

The languages into which we will interpret conference speeches are the following:

English, Russian, German, French, Spanish, Georgian, Romanian, Lithuanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Arabic and Hebrew.

In era of smoldering epidemics, our beneficiaries can take part in a central conference and exhibition in person or online, as well as representatives of organizations of the blind can do. Representatives of organizations can come to Warsaw or communicate with us online. At the stands presented during central REHA meeting in Warsaw, and at regional meetings, you can appear in person or take advantage of the service we can provide.

Our initiative is of a great interest among our participants. We will have guests from various countries, both “ordinary” participants of the Conference (beneficiaries) and speakers who want their speeches to be broadcast via the Internet. If you want to take part in this event, you will be able to broadcast your message to a large number of viewers and listeners. After all, the broadcasts will be organized for both central and regional meetings.

Within our possibilities the Foundation will help you to arrive to Warsaw. We have some funds available for financing travel and stay expenses of conference guests. You can also consider your online participation. We can connect with you via Internet. We can play recordings you send us or organize remote speeches, presentations or discussion panels.

**REHA in numbers - our records:**

- 62 exhibitors
- 3000 participants
- 17 separate events forming a coherent whole REHA
- 70 employees
- 245 volunteers

- A budget of up to EUR 200 000

The Chance for the Blind Foundation today is:

- 17 branches,
- 45 employees,
- Activities in several neighboring countries
- Various conferences, among which the international conference REHA FOR THE BLIND IN POLAND is the most important
- Close cooperation with the media, central and local authorities, the community of the blind: associations and foundations and outstanding blind and partially sighted people, experts
- Thousands of beneficiaries and volunteers
- One of the first organizations working for people with disabilities
- Participation in advisory bodies of the Polish government

What do we care about most? Social empathy, necessary to achieve a wide range of goals. It is about the widest possible openness to the problems of blind and partially sighted people.

What is the target effect of these actions?

- Creating an accessible space
- Adjusting public buildings so that blind people can get there by themselves
- Making all the information and websites accessible
- Employment of the visually impaired by creating modern workplaces
- Access to information through a practice of universal design for all services and products
- The implementation of the rights of this group of citizens (UN conventions and EU directives)

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The Foundation deals with the world of touch and sound, in which sight is replaced by other senses. This is made possible by innovative electronic and IT solutions. That is where the idea of organizing such events as the REHA FOR THE BLIND IN POLAND exhibition comes from.

If you have questions, we offer help. Please contact us at:

[reha\\_in\\_poland@szansadlaniewidomych.org](mailto:reha_in_poland@szansadlaniewidomych.org).

Marek Kalbarczyk  
the chairman of REHA 2020 Organizing Committee  
and  
Honorary President of Chance for the Blind Foundation