

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People
Editor: Ulla Konkari Koski

July 2006

EFHOH president letter

Dear Friends,

I will start this president letter with some words of THANKS to the people in Dubrovnik for organizing the wonderful Annual General Meeting (AGM) of EFHOH and IFHOH. It was a nice surprise for me and the other participants to see some posters with the IFHOH/EFHOH meeting in shop windows and strewn across some streets in the old city. Darja, Siegfried and special Tajana, thanks for your great job! I hope to see you and all the other nice hard of hearing people from Croatia/Dubrovnik again in Oslo in the spring of 2007 at the next EFHOH AGM.

In Dubrovnik it was time to say goodbye to friends and colleague IFHOH board members. Darja Holec, Barbara Wenk, and Marcia Dugan. Thanks for your work in the period that you were IFHOH board members. We as EFHOH board will never forget your intention to co-operate with us as EFHOH. We remember nice and good joint board meetings across over Europe the last years.

Welcome to the new IFHOH board members, Ruth Warick (Canada), Katja Perttilä (the Netherlands), and Ahiya Kamara (Israel). Welcome in the IFHOH board and good luck in all your work for hard of hearing people all over the world. In the EFHOH board there were no changes Siegfried Karg as vice president and Ulla Konkari Koski are re-elected in the EFHOH board and that is very fine because this is good for the continuity in EFHOH 's work.

EFHOH has made a response to the proposals from the EU Commission for amending the Television Without Frontiers Directive (Amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC). EFHOH has made this response with the very fine support of Pat McKenna from Ireland. IHHA has also made a special response for the Irish Members of the European Parliament. All our members can do this in the same way as IHHA in Ireland. Of course when you like to receive the EFHOH response, contact me so that I can send this to you.

EFHOH point out that universal access to Television is possible through subtitling, signing and audio-description and she firmly believes that the absence of subtitling discriminates against a significant group of people with a disability, who are tax payers and in many cases subscription payers to cable and satellite services. They want to be treated equally through alternative means. There is an acute need for European legislation to ensure that all Member States embark on a program to make Television accessible to all.

Wednesday 31 of May Arnoud van Wijk (The Netherlands) and I go to Brussels for the International Expert workshop of "The potential contribution of FP7 research to a well functioning European Policy and Research Area on e-Inclusion". In this topical areas the project focuses on e-Accessibility issues, emerging from the eEurope 2005 roadmap and from the inclusive electronic communication regulatory from work, in particular, as well as other relevant policy frameworks will be addressed. For EFHOH and hard of hearing people are access to telecommunications and broadcast services for disabled and older people in light of the EU Universal Service Directive. Important. More information about e-

Inclusion you can find on the special website www.einclusion-eu.org It is very important that Arnoud van Wijk and Guido Gybels (RNID UK) go to the minister conference about Accessible E-communications in Riga in the middle of June.

Siegfried Karg presented for EFHOH at the European Disability Forum (EDF) Annual General Meeting in Roma. Also in the 2nd half of 2006 we as EFHOH board try to participate in some European meetings in Brussels or in other towns in Europe. But Brussels suits me fine, for I can go by train early in the morning and after the meeting back home. The travel is three hours but with a good book that is no problem.

I wish you and your family a very sunny summertime and a great holiday!

Kind regards,

Marcel Bobeldijk
President of EFHOH



Marcel Bobeldijk and Mr. Andrija Halec (president of Croatian organisation in Dubrovnik April 2006)

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IFHOH/EFHOH AGMs 27th April – 1st May 2006



Advertisemet banderoll above a street in Dubrovnik

*"If you want to see Heaven on Earth, come to Dubrovnik."
(George Bernard Shaw)*

We had possibility to follow up Shaw's tracks and had the EFHOH and IFHOH board meetings in this marvellous paradise. During the long weekend we enjoyed the breathtaking views and great hospitality of Croatian organisation. It was amazing to see posters in a local bus and a banderol above the street advertising our meeting. Whole EFHOH board wants to give our warmest thanks to all those people who made this event to happen!

It was nice to meet new people participating and also meet again old fellows. I was especially delighted to see two new countries represented: China & Kuwait, even they don't belong to EFHOH area, but international HOH work needs strong participants from all over the world.



Audience in the auditorium, velotypist Daniel Tuijnman on the left

On Friday afternoon we had lectures about the situation of Croatian HOH organisation. On Saturday it was time of EFHOH AGM, where Siegfried (vice chairman) and Ulla (board member) were re-elected to the board. There were no motions and the financial report, budgeting and annual report were approved. Saturday evening we had a nice guided walk tour in the Old City of Dubrovnik and after it we went to a small cruise by old pirate (look-a-like) boat.



EFHOH Board 2006

On Sunday we participated to the IFHOH AGM. In the agenda there was a lot of items, and the AGM took all day. It was a day for sorrow and joy. We were sad to say goodbye to Marcia Dugan, chairwoman of IFHOH, Barbara Wenk, and Darja Holec. They all have worked long and hard to make IFHOH success. Thank you for the co-operation and I hope that you won't forget us and participate to the meetings later on.

It was joyful day also, we got new power to the IFHOH Board. Ruth Warrick from Canada (secretary), Katja Perttilä from Netherlands (treasurer) and Ahiya Kamara (vice chairman) from Israel are in the IFHOH board now. J-P Strömgen took chairman place and Marcel Bobeldijk continues as a board member as EFHOH representative.



IFHOH Board 2006-2008

Next EFHOH AGM will be in Oslo, Norway in year 2007. Next IFHOH AGM will be in Vancouver, Canada in year 2008.

*Ulla Konkari Koski
Photos by Siegfried Karg*

EFHOH Board Task Allocation

Marcel Bobeldijk: Contact person EDF, board member of IFHOH, subtitling, Public transport

Siegfried Karg: Contact person German speaking members and contact person industry/sponsors and is the contact person for the technical subjects

Jan Lamby: Secretary's work contact person all our members, important is make a new up to date member list with the contact persons and Agenda 22.

Ritva-Liisa Schädling: Treasurers work and look to new sponsors/funds

Ulla Konkari Koski: Communication and contacted person of IFHOHYP and the editor of the newsletter and the website.

EFHOH Programme 2H/2006

3rd-13th Aug: International Holiday for HOH people in Germany / Ritva-Liisa
19th-22nd Oct: European Day of Deaf Education EDDE 2006 Orebro Sweden / Jan
27th-29th Oct: EFHOH board & joint board meeting with IFHOH board in Finland/ All the board members
Nov: EDF Universal Access Committee meeting Brussel / Marcel
Dec: European day of Disabled People / Marcel

The importance of being eInclusive

Technology is changing our lives, and changing it profoundly. While most people recognise that the world we live in is becoming more and more permeated by information and communication products and services, not everyone realises the impact this has on our ability, as individuals, to be fully enabled citizens.

The rapid evolution of digital technology has without doubt made life easier and more efficient for many. However, there is another side to this technology coin: it can create new barriers. Indeed, it has already created a divide between those who can use it and those who are excluded from it: the digital divide is real.

Contrary to what some people suggest, the digital divide is not an inherent characteristic of technology itself. It does not follow that technological and scientific evolution leads inadvertently to a two-tier society. Technology is neutral. It is what people do with it that determines whether it has a positive or negative impact.

It is not people's "disability" that makes it difficult for them to use certain technologies. It is the fact that whoever designed them did not take into account the fact that people are individuals, with differing abilities and preferences. Certainly, individuals with disabilities have all too often been at the wrong side of the digital divide. But at some point or another, almost all of us have found ourselves in a situation where we are being disenfranchised by the lack of accessibility and usability in every day products and services.

As a society we are getting older and an inevitable part of that process is that we lose our cognitive and sensory agility. Our hearing diminishes; our eyesight deteriorates; our hands might find it harder and harder to use a mouse and arthritic or other pains might make using the keyboard a painful experience.

So, in reality, the need to create more accessible and usable products and services is not, as some people still seem to think, a minority issue. It is not just an issue of equal opportunities for disabled and older people. It is a challenge that will affect, in some way or another, the majority of citizens in our modern world.

If you want to fully participate in the Information Society, access to information and communication, and to the products and services that deliver this, is a basic requirement. Our access to education, to employment and, also, to a satisfying social life, depends on our ability to use information and communication technology. Products and services like mobile phones, digital television, the Internet and the World Wide Web are not just fancy gadgets or luxuries. They are vital tools to fulfilment and full participation in our modern world.

In addition, creating more usable and better accessible products is not just of relevance towards customers. Employers often fail to tap into the quite huge quantities of expertise, knowledge and skills that disabled employees could bring to their organisation. This deprives their business of valuable know-how, not just in the field of disabilities, but all across the board of human capabilities and erudition.

In the past, the strategy to meet these challenges has been largely reactive. What we need is for services and products to be designed inclusively so that they are to be more usable by a wider audience. The combination of this forward-thinking strategy with the ongoing need for reactive work will make a difference.

Inclusive design is a very misunderstood concept. It is still too often viewed as a lofty but impractical principle which is costly and difficult. In reality it is none of these.

Inclusive design is a pragmatic way to create more accessible and usable products and services at lower cost when compared to retrofitting accessibility and usability features into existing ones.

Whether or not you believe that we should pursue this agenda of inclusive design, of improved accessibility and usability on ethical and moral grounds, for economic reasons or simply because the law tells you to, it makes sense to pursue it. Many of the hitherto considered absolute barriers that mankind faces in its worldly environment can be smashed to pieces by exploiting the positive potential of science and technology. If we do it right, the world will be a better place for all of us. Surely that is worth a little effort?

The eInclusion Charter can be found at the project website:
<http://www.itenables.info>

Guido Gybels
Director of New Technologies at RNID

Articles needed for the next EFHOH newsletter

You can send articles to the editor Ulla Konkarikoski:
puppana@gmail.com

Due this is a newsletter with several short stories, the article should not exceed one page.

Deadline for the next newsletter is at the end of September, if you need more time, contact Ulla and negotiate individual deadline.

Let's make a good newsletter together!

Two Worlds in One Lifetime

On a recent trip to Rome, my hard of hearing Italian friend suggested that I meet a friend of his, a young deaf woman, - for a chat and a cup of caffè.

Along the glamorous, elegant bustling via Condotti, full of lights, splendid cars threading their way through the crowd, tourists and passers-by peering in the stylishly set-up boutique windows of famous Italian fashion designer labels, we entered the Versace boutique on the adjacent street. Smiling Mara was already there waiting for us.

Yes, being a profoundly hard of hearing young woman, she's been working in the Versace boutique for four years now on a long-term contract. While it's much more common in the U. S. for deaf people to hold jobs in the public sphere, Europe is somewhat different. In Italy and other European countries - despite laws on disability quotas in the workplace - a deaf person working in public sphere remains more the exception than the rule.

The irony is that Mara was born hearing in a deaf family of five. "My parents, my elder sister and my three-year-old younger brother - are all profoundly deaf," said Mara, adding that her brother is hard of hearing, uses a hearing aid, and cannot talk on the phone.

Mara, now 28 years old, suddenly lost her hearing in car accident in 2000. She remembers herself laying in bed in the hospital after coma, surrounded by family and friends, and being unable to follow anything they said. "I didn't understand them. I insisted to my mother that I'd become deaf and I asked for a doctor to confirm it." Mother responded: "It is us who are deaf, not you." The doctor finally confirmed Mara's suspicions - and her hearing loss. Mara was to join a family she was already a part of, but on a completely different level, moving from the hearing to the deaf world.

Since then, her life has completely changed from the one she was used to before. She wore an "instrument" like those she always saw on her younger brother's ears, and began to adjust to it. Despite doctors' assurances that her hearing would return within a year of the accident, Mara never believed that, acknowledging the roots of her family. After a year of "weak and distant sounds" and "frightening noises" Mara got used to her hearing aids: "I felt I was revived."

Since Mara grew up within the deaf community and with the influence and acceptance of her parents and siblings, the sudden change was not as dramatic for her as it might have been. She admits that at first, she felt quite uneasy. But today, Mara says, her hearing loss makes her uncomfortable mainly in specific situations. For example, when she cannot follow cross-discussions by several people at a time, or when somebody whispers to her at a disco. She jokes about being afraid to be hugged today because her hearing aid might whistle, and how she feels confused and jokes when it happens.

As a hearing child, Mara felt a lot of responsibility with a dash of guilt towards her family. Mara was afraid to be selfish and therefore did everything her family wanted. As an attractive girl, she had admirers-mainly deaf-and the communication problem and the difference of perceptions was especially challenging to her. She was a sign language interpreter but still felt there was something missing.

Sometimes she was accused of being an exploiter or of lying, but she understood that these were misunderstandings or different

approaches to communication that made her family speak so at times. Still, she acknowledges she owes much of her learning to her family: "Today, I am a very strong girl and I am not afraid of anything anymore - all this I owe to them." In a way, her hearing loss made her closer to the family.

Curiously, Mara never directly applied to work at Versace. She had sent her resume to Italy's association of disabled persons. As mentioned, most European countries have certain quotas for employing people with disabilities. "So Versace turned to the association to locate someone with a disability to work for them," said Mara. "They found my resume, became interested, and contacted me." Mara began at Versace as a bookkeeper.

Today, colleagues sometimes forget Mara has a hearing loss and ask her to make phone calls or call her (instead of sending text-message). "I don't have a communication problem with my colleagues, but every day I try to sensitize them", she says.

Since childhood, Mara has loved music. "When I was a kid, music helped me to never feel alone in my world of silence," she says. Mara also likes soaking into autobiographies and literature, chatting with friends, cuddling Netek (her cat), and looking over her house. Sports, walking, and writing poems are also a large part of her life.

I was surprised that despite the seemingly stable job at Versace, Mara wants to change it. She feels the fashion business is too arrogant for her. "I plan to find different job or a second job to feel more economically stable at the end of the month, and to be better positioned to participate in the struggle of people with disabilities who fight for their rights." Jobs with a more responsible role will suit her better: "I like to organize and to make decisions." Mara would also like to be in contact with deaf children and to teach them to speak. If she doesn't succeed in changing jobs, she says, she will find a second job to work in the mornings as her work at Versace takes only afternoons.

This enthusiastic girl (who is, by the way, an avid dancer and party person, thoroughly enjoying life) aspires to study economics and commerce or philosophy; this would be her "other hobby." Today Mara holds a Computer Technician certificate. But study in the university is still a dream, not a plan.

Italy has made more progress towards providing accommodations and accessibility for people with disabilities, including people who are deaf, but it is a very slow process, says Mara.

"We need to stand up for our needs and rights as deaf people. We need to go down to the 'piazza' and create a lot of mischief to capture attention like people did in medieval times," she jokes. "Things could be a lot better, particularly in today's technologically progressing society. But, even so, there is much greater awareness of disability issues, disabled persons are shown on TV, and their needs and aspirations are discussed in the press, too. They do not live a hidden life anymore."

But, as is the case in many countries - and in politics - many events for disabled people appear only before elections; or politicians make far-sighted promises during election campaigns, only to have these promises disappear shortly thereafter. Some things are the same wherever you live in the world!

When I met Mara, I was thoroughly fascinated with her energy, exuberance, and her zest for living. "I want to learn a lot from life!" she says. And I am sure she will.

Karina Chupina

Dutch Tinnitus sounds -CD

Since long, the Tinnitus and Hyperacusis Committee of the Dutch Hard of Hearing Association (NVVS) had the idea to produce a CD with Tinnitus sounds. The aim was to help tinnitus patients inform their relatives, friends, colleagues, (ENT) specialists, etc. about how tinnitus "sounds" and understand the daily burden of it.

In spite of much preparatory work realisation was difficult, until last year our present NVVS manager got in touch with Siemens (producer of hearing aids and tinnitus masks), which offered help and sponsoring. This was a big step forward towards the realisation of the project.

A workgroup went ahead with the idea, which was a CD with as much sounds as possible: a representative collection, in which preferably everyone would "recognize" his/her sound. The CD would be supported by a leaflet with more information, addresses and website data.

The Chairman of the Dutch Hearing Foundation was willing to read an introduction about tinnitus and its consequences in daily life.

Most work went into collecting as many examples of sounds as possible and organizing these in categories, on the basis of contacts with patients, and literature. Within each category it should be possible for most people to (nearly) find his/her sound and show it to others. The result was a collection of over 150 sounds: peeps, rustle, thump, ticks, hum, whistles and more.

The Commission is very satisfied with the eventual result: 5.000 (double) CD's !

Although the CD is in Dutch only, we hope that you will appreciate it, and that it will contribute to better information about, and understanding of tinnitus for all who listen to it.

When you want to receive this CD please contact the NVVS and we will send to you this CD.

For further information:
Nederlandse Vereniging voor Slechthorenden
Commissie Tinnitus & Hyperacusis
Postbus 129
NL – 3990 DC Houten
The Netherlands

Tel. : 0031 30 261 76 16
Fax : 0031 30 261 66 89
Website : www.nvvs.nl/tinnitus
Email : tinnitus@nvvs.nls



World Flight for Hearing project is continuing

Follow up this Swedish project:
<http://www.worldflightforhearing.com/>

REPORT – Workshop on demonstrating conformance with e-Accessibility requirements in ICT products and services

On 27 March, a workshop was organized by the European Commission, the European standardization organizations and with contributions from the US Access Board, the European Disability Forum, the European digital industry and the World Wide Web Consortium. The workshop was held as a part of a two year fact investigation process that the Commission is six months into at the moment.

The needs of disabled users of ICT products and services were described by Bas Treffers, the Vice-President of European Disability Forum. Bas Treffers described the lack of confidence that many disabled users have in the ICT industry and the fact that there were still items of newer technology coming on line that were disabling rather than enabling. He stated that the ICT industry needs to set up pro-active accessibility measures to ensure that the design of products and services takes into account the needs of the users from the beginning. He suggested five elements of a certification scheme necessary to ensure that it meets the needs of end users:

- 1) The scheme should cover all product types.
- 2) The scheme should be transparent and reliable and to ensure this the scheme has to be based on mandatory third party testing.
- 3) The scheme should cover both existing and new technology.
- 4) The scheme should enable fair competition.
- 5) The scheme should be based on the perspective of the users.

The workshop referred to different ways of demonstrating conformance for ICT products and services ranging from mandatory third party testing to suppliers self-declaration. It also dealt with the tools, skills, knowledge and information required to make any scheme work so that all users can get products and services that are accessible to them. The idea of demonstrating conformance is to ensure that all users and purchasers have access information so they can know whether products and services are accessible.

The workshop was concluded by Miguel Ángel Cabra de Luna, Member of the EU Economic and Social Committee, who stated the support of his committee for any scheme that could be seen to work.

Source: EDF News

Adventurous trip in Senegal and the Gambia 27th February- 5th March 2007

From 27th February – 5th March 2007 Cultural Centre O'Dunbeye Land is organizing a special holiday in Senegal and Gambia for deaf and hard hearing people, in cooperation with the NVVS (Dutch Society of the Hard Hearing).

This year an adventurous tour is again organized in the Gambia and the south of Senegal. After arrival on the airport of Banjul in the Gambia, we leave to the fishing village of Tanjeh.. We will visit there the museum, a museum, that will show us in a very particular way the traditions and the nature of these West African lands! We continue our trip to Tumani Tenda, a village of 300 inhabitants of the Diola-tribe; it is situated on a branch of the Gambia-river; we'll see there many birds. We will stay some days in the Gambia, before traveling to the south of Senegal, the Casamance. We get acquaintance with small villages in a part of the Casamance, so named Kalounaye: we can make a walk around or visit a local family. Afterwards we visit via the regional capital Ziguinchor, Thionck Essyl, a large village; there we will visit a regional school for the deaf with an unique education system!

The second week of the holiday we will stay at O'Dunbeye Land, situated at the Atlantic Ocean in a village called Abene. There we make little trips, meet African music and dance and when you are interested: a trip with the fisherman on the sea!

The experience has taught us, that clients, when they are back at home, look back at an unforgettable holiday in Senegal!

program

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| Day 1: Arrival at Banjul Airport. We will head for our guest house in Tanjeh |
| Day 2: After breakfast we will visit the Tanjeh Museum. During the lunch at the beach, we will the fisherman of Tanjeh, coming back with their catch. |
| Day 3: Today we continue our journey to Tumani Tenda , a village of 300 inhabitants of the Diola-tribe. It is situated on a branch of the Gambia-river; we'll see there many birds. The village is known as for rooted traditions; we will see how they make home-made soap, make ty and dy batiks, we enjoy a boat trip on the river, and perhaps we assist traditional Diola-dances! |
| Day 4: Today we rest also at Tumani Tenda; we make a choice of the different possibilities, we can do in the village |
| Day 5: We will leave for Senegal now. After customs formalities, we will go to Bignona , where we will have lunch. Afterwards we make a very nice trip to Dieba , a small village, situated at the foot of a beautiful creek. There we spend the night. |
| Day 6: From Dieba we visit Marsassoum , a coloured village at the other side of the river. We go by local ferry-boat. We visit a pottery and looks at the marketplace. We return to Dieba; in the evening music party! |
| Day 7 : After breakfast we leave Dieba by a nice way along many creeks of the Kalounaye to Ziguinchor, where we take lunch and visit the internet-café. Afterwards we continue to Thionck Essyl , a big village in the Basse Casamance. Our lodge is hidden deep in the forest: monkeys and birds are our neighbours. |
| Day 8: To day we visit the school for the deaf. After lunch at a local family, we make a walk to the beach: tomorrow we will leave her by boat! |

Day 9: After we have put our luggage at the car, we leave by a motorboat to **Kafontaine**, six kilometre from the village of **Abene**, where we pass the rest of our holidays. Those, who want to go by car, go straight to Abene. In Kafontaine, the travellers of the boat go by our car to Abene.

Days

10-14: on Day 10 in the morning introduction of O'Dunbeye Land's employees and teachers with music performances; we relax from the long trip; swimming, be idle, sun bathe is our only aim today! **Day 11** we visit the craft market **and the holy tree Banta Woro** in the village; in the evening **buffet** at restaurant Chez Vero. **Day 12** is free program; those who want: guide walk along the beach or along the river. **Day 13** the (musical) artists of the village learn us drumming, dancing and wood crafting! **Day 14** is a festal closing of our holidays: music and dance, **baking barracuda!**

Day 15: Departure to Banjul Airport

this journey

You will get to know this African country, its nature and its culture in a friendly way. Respect for the people, their surroundings and their culture are our most importable principles.

information

When you are interested in this trip, you can make contact with Mr. Kees Twilt in Holland

(Email: ctwilt@hotmail.com)

Here above we will give you some addresses of Internet sites, which you can visit for information of Senegal and the Gambia. A good guide is Lonely Planet: Senegal and Gambia, ISBN 0-86442-593-7

tour accompaniment

Kees Twilt will guide the trip, as it has been in previous years. Additional support from O'Dunbeye Land will be provided by Ibrahim Coly. During our stay at O'Dunbeye Land in the second week of the holiday, Babakar Sow, as usual, will be our guide.

accommodations

During the trip we will spend the nights at simple but beautifully situated and well-kept accommodations. In Abene we will be staying at O'Dunbeye Land.

Most accommodations have joint sanitary supplies.

total trip price: € 835,-- = 572.234 British Pound

price includes

- All inland transportation
- Accommodations and breakfast during the trip
- Accommodations and half-board at O'Dunbeye Land
- Accompaniment during the tour and activities

price excludes

- Transport by plane: England - Banjul (The Gambia) or other planes Germany-Banjul for example)
- Travel to and from home to your airport
- Other meals and tips
- Insurances
- Tax airport The Gambia (€ 10,--)