



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

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EFHOH's presidents letter

Dear Friends

2009 is a new special year for you and me and also for EFHOH. On behalf of the EFHOH board, I would like to address to you our best wishes for 2009 in your work for hard of hearing people in Europe. For EFHOH 2009 is also a very busy year. We organize two interesting meetings. And we participate in different meetings at European level.

The board will also start to make a strategy for the future of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People. Of course we will discuss and with you inform you about our strategy and other topics at the next AGM in London. We need your feedback and support in our work for a more accessible Europe for Hard of Hearing People.

At the AGM 2009 in London also the elections of the EFHOH board will be held, this time for three places in the board for: President, General Secretary and Treasurer. Kees Twilt, the chairman of the EFHOH election committee will inform you by an official letter and also in this newsletter. We hope that some of you will be candidate for the EFHOH board elections 2009.

In 2009 EFHOH are organising the next meetings:

1st. In April the EFHOH Annual General Meeting will be held, in London organized by RNID. The host organisation RNID has made a nice and interesting program. In this EFHOH newsletter you find some more information or you can have a look at the EFHOH website www.efhoh.org. Please contact us when you have some questions. The papers for the AGM will be sent to the participants soon.

When you like to organise the EFHOH AGM 2011 in your country please let us know so that we make a proposal for the AGM in London. Of course we as EFHOH board will help you to organise the EFHOH AGM 2011. The EFHOH AGM 2010 is in Stockholm/Sweden, together with the AGM of IFHOH.

2nd. EFHOH will organize the International Conference on Hearing Induction Loop Systems on Friday evening 25 September, Saturday 26 September and Sunday 27 September in co-operation with Pro Audito Winterthur. Also in this EFHOH newsletter you find some more information. You can have a look at the special website: www.proaudito-winterthur.ch or you can contact Siegfried Karg our Vice

President by email: siegfried.karg@proaudito-winterthur.ch

In 2009 EFHOH will participate in the next meetings:

1st. The EDF meetings as the AGA of EDF in May in Athens/Greece. The European Day of Disabled People in December in Brussels. Anna Klemattila and Karina Chupina will participate in their EDF committee meetings. Anna is member of the EDF committee for Women and Girls and Karina is member of the EDF committee for Youth.

2nd. Some EFHOH board members will participate at the 3rd International Conference "Media for All" 22 and 24 October in Antwerp/Belgium. The theme of this conference is "Quality Made to Measure". The topics of the workshops will be announced on the website in February or in March 2009 www.mediaforall.eu. Abstract proposals should be presented on the abstract proposal form which can be downloaded from www.mediaforall.eu and the completed proposal should be sent to geral@mediaforall.eu by 2 March 2009.

3rd. EFHOH president Marcel Bobeldijk participates in the final meeting of the European Document about the Services Offered by Hearing Aid Professionals. The final concept document will be sent to the 30 European national standardisation institutes that are CEN members and at this stage, you as EFHOH member and your national mirror committee will be able to make some technical comments. In the first weeks of January EFHOH sends this document to their members for feedback.

Of course EFHOH have in 2009 also our regular activities such as the EFHOH board meetings in London and the meetings in autumn in Oslo. Our website needs a new more modern face so that we are looking to persons/volunteers who will be our new webmaster. And finally I hope that you as EFHOH member are able to write an article for the EFHOH newsletter.

Don't hesitate to contact me or the other EFHOH board members if you have any questions and/or comments.

Marcel Bobeldijk
President of EFHOH.

Good Start to a New Year for IFHOH

IFHOH enters a new year with enthusiasm for the opportunities and challenges ahead. We have started off the new year on a good footing with an increase in membership. The Deafness Forum of Australia has joined IFHOH bringing us membership again from that region of the world. New Zealand has also expressed interest and we hope to hear from them in the near future.

Last year we were pleased to welcome the Association for the Welfare of Disabled People in Bangladesh as an Associate Member and to welcome as sponsorship members 4C Telecom/AnnieS and the Internet Society.

We also look forward to a significant achievement for our community when Jan-Peter Strömngren, President of IFHOH, will assume the Presidency of the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability Alliance Forum on the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He will assume this leadership role on July 1, 2009 for one year. He will be the first hard of hearing person to head up these cross-disability organizations.

We are delighted to report that IFHOH has published Accessibility Guidelines under the leadership of IFHOH Vice-President Ahiya Kamara. The document was presented at IFHOH's Biennial General Meeting in Vancouver on July 2 and was adopted by the IFHOH family. Other documents

are currently in preparation dealing with cochlear implants, and educational issues.

We are pleased that Ms. Duong Phuong Hanh of Vietnam will represent IFHOH at a cross-disability conference in Manila being organized by the International Disability Alliance. Ms. Hanh was a keynote presenter at the 2009 Congress in Vancouver and previously participated in organizing information sessions for Johan Hammarström when he stopped in her country during his worldwide flight.

Look forward to a report on the Manila conference in an upcoming issue of the IFHOH Journal; the deadline for receipt of items is Feb. 15th should anyone else wish to contribute. As well if anyone is interested in assisting me as editor, please be in touch. The current issue of the Journal is posted on our website at www.ifhoh.org.

IFHOH will hold its next board meeting in London, England following the EFHOH Annual General Meeting April 24-25, 2009. If you have any issues to bring to our attention please e-mail me at info@ifhoh.org

With best regards,
Ruth Warick
IFHOH General Secretary

EDF VICE PRESIDENT PASSED AWAY

EDF Vice president, Bas Treffers, suddenly passed away on the 24th December of a bone cancer diagnosed unfortunately in a very far stadium. It is with great sadness that we share this very sad news with all of our friends, as EDF history has been so strongly entwined with the life of Bas, and his commitment.

Bas Treffers has been active in EDF since its establishment in 1996, and he was one of the key figures beyond many of EDF successes, starting from the demonstration in Amsterdam in 1997 that led to the inclusion of disability in article 13 of the EC Treaties on non-discrimination. We also owe many of other achievements to him, particularly in the accessibility to transport and the building environment. We

are confident that his great commitment and his passion for the truth will continue to lead us forward.

Bas was a special person to me because during our youth he and I lived in the same small place in the Western part of the Netherlands, called Boskoop. And always at meetings across Europe Bas asked me how are things in Boskoop and how is your father, because my father would fix his moped when Bas was a young man.

Our thoughts are particularly with his wife Astrid, his two sons, and his grandchildren.

By Marcel Bobeldijk

EFHOH board meeting

Walking towards arrivals I see Riva Liisa inside the luggage hall. Her plane has landed a few minutes early. After a quick embracing we walk to the car to have lunch at home in Alphen on Rhine.

After lunch we discuss a few items about the financial administration of EFHOH and then we visit the bank to have the new bankpass activated.

At 16.00 hrs we take the train to the hotel in Utrecht. When Ritva Liisa and I arrive, we see Siegfried pacing up and down in the hall. After a couple of hours also Jan and Knut have arrived. Now that we are complete, it is the right moment to have dinner.

Late at night I collected Karina from the airport (president of IFHOHYP) and together we went to my house in Alphen on Rhine. The next morning we went to the NVVS office in Houten. We met the other EFHOH board members at the station in Utrecht and we went to the NVVS office in Houten. When we arrived there Kees Twilt, chairman of today, has made coffee and tea.

After a brief welcome the board meeting begins. The main topics were:

1. The preparation of the AGM 2009 in London. You can find information in an other article in this newsletter.
2. As a board we are very pleased to inform you the conference about induction loops takes place in Switzerland on 26 and 27 september. Also in this newsletter.

3. As you know, Anna is a member of the EDF committee for women and girls. We discussed her article, and we want to talk about this during the AGM in London.

4. Karina is a member of the EDF committee youth and we have discussed youth policy within EFHOH, also this discussion will be continued during AGM in London.

5. Niels-Hendrik and Marcel have written a proposition about the EFHOH newsletter. Inside the board meeting we have discussed this. Knut and Marcel will write down the policy strategy of EFHOH in early January and we want to present this during AGM in London.

6. Finally we put up the program for the EFHOH board for 2009.

At 16.00 hrs three Dutch people joined the EFHOH board meeting. Christi and Lianne are both board members of the IFHOHYP and Bert for the NVVS. Within this hour we have informed each other about several matters inside the NVVS (Dutch association for the hard of hearing), SHJO (hard of hearing young people) and IFHOHYP (international federation for the hard of hearing young people). After we had a lovely Chinese dinner in Houten village.

Sunday we visited the Van Gogh museum and afterwards everyone went to his own country. Karina and I walked through the old centre of Amsterdam and Karina made lots of photographs.

It was a successful board meeting in which we made a good step forward for the future of EFHOH.



By Rosa Wendelina Timmerman.



Living and working with hearing loss,

When I worked as a physiotherapist in a health centre I regularly saw people with stress symptoms and hearing loss. Because I live with hearing loss myself, I can immediately detect when people are hard of hearing or when they are wearing a hearing aid. I massaged, gave advice and relaxation exercises. I explained to these people that there could be a connection between hearing loss and strain. Some people were surprised and felt understood and wanted to know more. This encouraged me to study more about the meaning and implications of hearing loss.

I was receiving more and more questions from the team, from the doctors, district nurses, social workers: they wanted to know how best to deal with clients with hearing loss. They wanted to know what it means to live with hearing loss and they wanted tips to enable them to communicate.

As a result of these questions, I designed and held workshops on how to live and work with hearing loss and which hearing solutions are available, including tips for communicating and referral opportunities.

Meanwhile, I now have my own company, Hooridee advice on hearing loss, and I give training to professionals working with the hearing impaired, as well as various workshops for the hearing impaired themselves. I also give training to professionals who care for the elderly and I am increasingly receiving requests from employers who wish to offer training to their hearing impaired employees.

I find it very important that people with hearing loss learn to relax. During my work I myself try to take as many micro-breaks as possible. These short breaks provide relaxation. Just as it is sensible for someone working with a computer to organise microbreaks, it is equally sensible for someone with hearing impairment to do the same. I find that it helps me when I loosen my shoulders and turn my head to the right and then to the left. I also stretch my arms out as much as possible and breathe in and out deeply a couple

of times. When seated, I try regularly to sit as straight as possible with my back against the chair and my feet flat on the floor. This is a more receptive listening posture and reduces listening tension. I do this a couple of times a day. This makes me feel fit again in no time and I am able to concentrate better. In this way I feel less tired at the end of the day.

Where possible I also make use of solo equipment such as the Phonak Smartlink, and I work with a telephone specially adapted for this device. My practice has excellent acoustics which makes understanding much easier. I am constantly looking for opportunities to relax while listening; this is important for my work and for the hearing impaired clients. In addition, I also practise aikido, a form of martial art; for the hearing impaired this is particularly an excellent way of keeping physically fit. I practise my sense of space and learn to observe using all senses.

Recently I started with sign language. What I have noticed is that learning this language helps you to gain a better understanding of the non-verbal language, as well as the natural gestures that people make themselves.

Your questions or reactions are most welcome:
Send an email to Rosa Wendelina Timmerman at: hooridee@xs4all.nl
or visit the website in the German or English language:
www.hooridee.nl



ANEC in brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardization. We represent and defend consumer interests in the development of technical standards and in the construction of certification schemes to standards. Our aim is to achieve the highest level of consumer protection possible.

Consumer participation in standardization is paramount. Indeed, not only does it complement the industry view, but it also ensures that the public interest is represented in the standardization work within the European legislation and broader public policy initiatives. Lastly, goods and services based on standards developed with effective consumer participation are more readily accepted in the market place.

ANEC was established in 1995 as an international, non-profit association under Belgian law. We bring together national consumer organisations from EU Member States and EFTA countries in order to define joint European positions on matters affecting consumer protection and welfare. We receive funding from the European Commission's DG SANCO and from the EFTA Secretariat. We also count on the participation of volunteer experts from consumer organisations which is considered as a contribution in kind.

ANEC has grown to be a competent and trustworthy partner in the European standardization process. Since 2001, we have grown both in terms of staff and funding, thus being able to pursue research activities through which we can develop positions based on empirical evidence.

Research and testing projects underpin our activities at the technical level and the research we commission reflects our priorities. Consumer representatives need scientific information to support their argument in standardization committees and working groups, especially when faced with strong industrial interests.

In the near future and according to its 2008-2013 Strategy, ANEC will seek to further reinforce consumer participation in standardization in both political and technical fora. In addition, we will forge new alliances and partnerships with other organisations in order to combine otherwise limited resources in the pursuit of common goals. And lastly, ANEC will build on its existing relations with European and National institutions in order to improve the welfare of consumers.

Every newborn in Norway is being hearing tested

By Trym Helbostad, Informasjonsrådgiver, Hørselshemmedes Landsforbund (HLF), Norway

In Norway there are 60.000 newborn every year. Approximately 1-2 of every 1000 newborn have some sort of problem with their hearing. For a number of years the Norwegian Association of the Hard of Hearing (HLF) has stressed the fact that all newborns should have their hearing tested.

In 2008 the Ministry of Health followed up on HLFs requirements, demanding all maternity wards in Norway to acquire hearing screening instruments.

A survey HLF did in the end of 2008, show that all 50 maternity wards in Norway now have the necessary equipment to test newborns hearing capabilities.

- I'm really satisfied that hearing screening of newborn now can take place everywhere in Norway, says Knut Magne Ellingsen, president of the Norwegian Association of the Hard of Hearing.

- Hard of hearing children should get on with hearing aids or cochlea implants as soon as possible, to ensure that

they can develop their communication skills as they grow older, Ellingsen adds. The associations next target is to establish national routines for the follow-up in cases where a hearing loss is detected.

The last maternity ward to acquire hearing screening equipment, was the one in Valdres, which help 50 pregnant every year.

- We are very pleased to have screening equipment, its something we've wanted for a long time, says midwife Wenche Hermundstad.

5 days old Ole Erik was the first to have his hearing checked at Valdres. After a few seconds the result came back from the boys tiny little ears.

- I'm glad it was clarified that Ole Eriks hearing is normal before we left the maternity ward, says his mother, Sissel Boe.

Quality control of cochlear implantation in the Netherlands

Starting July 1st 2008 cochlear implantation in the Netherlands can be performed freely in all hospitals meeting the newly introduced CI practice standards.

In the past only the academic medical centres were allowed to do so based on existing legislation on special medical treatments. However, since July 1st, the practical standards for Cochlear Implantation (PS-CI) as made up by the HNO-specialists association have replaced the legal constraints. The PS-CI is the result of a well organised cooperation of the existing CI-teams, CION, with the Family-Guidance Organisations and OPCI, the Platform of patient organisations.

This means that any hospital or clinic meeting the newly formulated standards is free to perform implantations. However, meeting these standards is difficult because it has to do not only with professionally performed surgery but also with carefully given information and guidance prior to the CI-decision making and a very careful rehab and support afterwards as well. This concerns not only the medical staff but also the paramedics involved. The standards obliges all involved to a good, well organised cooperation and communication to the benefit the CI patients. The PS-CI makes the CI-teams (end)-responsible for the whole process of cochlear implantation (selection, pre-care, surgery, fitting, rehab and permanent follow-up care). An important issue stated in the PS-CI is that a CI-team has to perform the whole process.

Essential for good progress of the whole process is the multidisciplinary consultation in the CI-team. So, the team must have available the following specialists: a clinical-physicist/audiologist, a HNO-doctor/surgeon, a psychologist or ortho-pedagogist, a speech-trainer (acquainted with sign language), a clinical linguist and/or speech-language pathologist, a social worker, a technician and administrative support.

To maintain to specific expertises of the team a minimum number of patients per year should be treated. CI-teams taking care of young children should be able to precisely measure the hearing loss and to determine the added value of a CI as compared to a hearing aid.

The teams have to show that their expertise is kept up to date by continuous education and participation in scientific research.

Furthermore each CI-team will be visited by an accreditation committee consisting of two members of CI-ON (the

CI-team counsel), a representative of OPCI and one of the Family Guidance Organisations.

The PS-CI can be used as a touch-framework by all involved in the process to CI: medical specialists and other aids, family-guidance organisations, individuals/patients, patient interest groups, the Governmental Inspection of Health services and the Health insurance.

Wake up call

From RNID magazine One in Seven

RNID welcomes a new study by the European Commission's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks which confirms that listening to personal music players at a high volume over a sustained period can lead to permanent hearing damage.

RNID Director of External Affairs, Emma Harrison, said: "Decision makers and opinion formers are finally waking up to the hearing loss time bomb threatening many young MP3 users. Don't Lose Music campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of listening to MP3 players too loudly and its squad tour UK cities testing the public's listening habits. The campaign submitted to the European Union study revealed that 58% of 16-30 year old are completely unaware of any risk to their hearing from MP3 players. We want to see the government and industry taking decisive action to save the hearing of future generations".

For more details visit RNID website www.dontlosethemusic.com

NHS 2010 - Beyond Newborn Hearing Screening: Infant and Childhood Hearing in Science and Clinical Practice

Villa Erba Congress Center, Cernobbio, Italy
June 8-10, 2010

We are pleased to announce that the NHS Conference will be held once again in Cernobbio (Italy) from June 8 until June 10, 2010. We cordially invite you to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the historic Lake Como conferences.

The first NHS, held in 2000, was a follow-up to the successful Milan 1998 European Consensus Development Conference and began the Millennium by paving the way for a new era in the care of infants with hearing loss. In the past 10 years the field of Newborn Hearing Screening and Early Intervention Programs has undergone tremendous advancement.

Many countries throughout the world have well-established highly successful programs, yet there are still countries and regions that are well behind, which need support to forge ahead. Since the NHS Conferences have been the fuel to start and to maintain the engine, it is not difficult to predict that the 2010 NHS may be the final impetus in establishing early identification and intervention as a concrete reality worldwide.

Technology for hearing aids, cochlear implants and audiological equipment is making continuous and impressive developments, thus offering increasingly reliable and affordable solutions. Still, one of the great omissions in too many intervention programs is the crucial role of parents within the process. Implementing improved systemic protocols and practices which encourage informed choice and the empowerment of families with children who are deaf or have hearing loss must be a fundamental objective to ensure the effectiveness of programs worldwide.

The NHS 2010 will include keynote addresses, special sessions, workshops, a number of satellite events, free communications and massive poster sessions. You are cordially invited to attend the NHS 2010 International Conference, and we would like for you to join us in making this historic event another great success!

NHS 2010

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International Summer School on Human Rights

We are pleased to inform that the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights is organizing the 20th International Summer School on Human Rights. The School will be held in Warsaw-Miedzeszyn, Poland, between 20 and 27 June.

The School is intended for human rights activists, university teachers and representatives of institutions from all levels of public administration dealing with human rights issues from Central, Eastern European and CIS countries. We regret to inform you that our offer is limited only to those who have not yet participated in our Summer or Winter Schools. The program is open to university graduates or final-year university students. Our program combines lectures and workshops on the historical and philosophical background of human rights, domestic and international systems of human rights protection as well as the applicability of rights of primary importance (see programme attached). The lectures will be given by renowned professors, university teachers and experts in the field of human rights and international

law. English and Russian are the working languages of our Summer School. The ability to communicate freely in one of the above is required.

Participants (65 people in total) will be chosen by a selection committee on a competitive basis. Out of 65 participants, 30 can attend the School free of charge (organizers will cover accommodation in double rooms and meals during the course). The other 35 people may participate in the School under the condition that they cover expenses themselves (please see the application form). Lectures and workshops, translation of classes, educational materials, medical insurance while on the territory of Poland are free of charge to all participants provided that they attend all classes.

Please send the application pack by e-mail to 20summer@hfhrpol.waw.pl, or by post to: Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, 11 Zgoda str. 00 018 Warsaw, POLAND. The closing date for Summer School applications is 21 February. Only complete applications containing all required information will be eligible for admission. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by 8 May. More info: <http://www.hfhrpol.waw.pl/news196-en.html>

New European Legislation Related to Equality between Women and Men

Newsflash January 2009

There are many ingredients that will make 2009 an important year for gender equality in the European Union. Three proposals for EU legislation (directives) are currently being negotiated by the Member States and the European institutions – one Directive proposes significant improvements in the right to maternity leave throughout the EU, the second should introduce improvements to the situation of self-employed workers and assisting spouses/lifepartners and another Directive will introduce an EU wide ban on discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in media, education, social protection, and in access to goods and services. Another negotiation process between social partners aims at revising the existing European legislation on parental leave. The European Women's Lobby is committed to follow these legislative processes to make sure their outcome will have a significant positive impact on the lives of women throughout Europe, in particular in relation to giving real opportunities to reconcile work and private life for both women and men.

New Initiatives

The EWL will input to the activities and initiatives of the Czech EU presidency during this first part of 2009, and the Swedish EU presidency during the second part of the year, raising the core issues of our member organisations in areas such as women's employment and economic

independence, violence against women, women's sexual and reproductive rights, women and media, and women and migration.

A Year of International Mobilisation

This year, women's groups throughout the world will continue to work towards the strengthening of the United Nations mechanisms for gender equality in the framework of the Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign (GEAR Campaign). 2009 will also be the year when women's groups and movements all over the world prepare for the 15-year follow up to the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women's Rights. The EWL will be preparing an alternative report assessing the performance of the EU in achieving the objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, and will be calling on policy-makers to use the BPFA follow-up process as an opportunity to define a new and ambitious agenda for gender equality at EU level.

We look forward to work in solidarity with policy-makers, partners, and allies to make 2009 an thriving year for gender equality in Europe and beyond!

Read more : http://www.womenlobby.org/site/1abstract.asp?DocID=2448&v1ID=&RevID=&namePage=&pageParent=&DocID_sousmenu=

EFHOH and RNID would like to welcome you all at the EFHOH AGM + Conference in Central London, UK on 24 and 25 April 2009.

EFHOH AGM and annual conference 2009.

EFHOH and RNID would like to invite you to the EFHOH AGM + Conference in Central London, UK on the 24th and 25th of April 2009.

Friday 24 April: EFHOH AGM followed by a social event in the evening

Saturday 25 April: Conference: "Communication in the Information Age", focusing on services, policies, campaigns and technologies that can empower hard of hearing people to be fully enabled citizens.

There will also be a conference exhibition and presentations from industry leaders.

Attendees will be able to get hands-on experience of the most up to date products and services available to hard of hearing people.

Alongside this event, you can enjoy world-class heritage sites, unrivalled shopping experiences and the vast entertainment opportunities of the European Union's largest city.

Make sure you put the dates in your diary and we hope to see every one of you in London in April 2009!

For more information or to book a place visit: <http://www.ictrnid.org.uk/efhohagm09.html>, ring +44 20 7296 8280 (voice), +44 20 7608 0511 (text) or email ict@rnid.org.uk

WANTED! WEBMASTER FOR EFHOH

Do you have good skills in computer work/web design and English?

We are looking for a person who likes to do some volunteer work for EFHOH. We need a new webmaster for editing and re-designing the EFHOH website.

For more information, please contact our secretary Jan Lamby by email efhoh@hrf.se

Our current website is found on www.efhoh.org

Enthusiastic girls with hearing impairments

Hello to everyone. I am very glad to write to EFHOH Newsletter again. In the last issue (November) I read the article by Karina Chupina, IFHOHYP president. It reminded me of the World Congress 2008, of Vancouver – a beautiful city where I had never visited before.

It was the first time that I went oversea and attended the big international event. I was very worried and made much mistakes during the congress. I am not speaking English very well and not satisfied with my report result. I also forgot to test my hearing with technical devices used at the congress and displayed at trade shows. I also did not have time to learn and make friends with hearing impaired persons who I greatly admire their enthusiasms.

The biggest things that I learned from the congress is the responsibilities of the people of the convention. They are Mr. Jan-Peter Strömrgren-President of International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOHP), Ms. Ruth Warick-Secretary of IFHOHP; Charlotta Göller-International Policy Officer for the Swedish Association of Hard of Hearing People, girls from International Federation of hard of Hearing Young People, specially, Karina Chupina-IFHOHYP president ... They all worked too hard, they were friendly and hospitably to hold the perfect event with useful information to 520 delegates who came from 27 countries all over the world. It would be a mistake if I did not mention the Sheraton Hotel Staffs who served with their whole-heart and contributed into the congress' success.

Because of hearing loss, I have usually had some troubles when attending workshops in Vietnam. I could not pick up all information. The world congress 2008 made difference. I could HEAR all from caption and took in an advanced technique. Obviously, it is too difficult for typists to listen to the accents of delegates from different countries. I was really worried since I was not speaking English very well. After the congress, I said thanks to them. I have applied a caption to two workshops which I was one of the organizers. One was "Solutions for employees with hearing impairments and employers", and another was "How to live a good life with hearing loss?". That was a breakthrough for people with hearing impairments in Hochiminh City so they can have a chance to participate in the society. I greatly thank to GN ReSound, IFHOH, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-the congress organizer, Mr. Johan Hammarstrong, delegates ... to help me the opportunity of participation and learn.

In my thank-you letter sent to the GN ReSound sponsor, I wrote "GN ReSound did not only help me but also the Vietnamese Deaf Community, because I have shared my experiences and knowledge that I had learned from this event to them. I hope they can have more confidence and realize that "if people with hearing impairments strive to overcome their disabilities, they will make impossible into possible". I also shared my knowledge to other organizations of people with hearing loss in Vietnam together to make organizational development.

By the way, I also express my sincere thankfulness to IFHOH to bring advanced knowledge to me and show their concerns to people with hearing impairments over the world, including me. I feel strong to know that you are behind me.

I would like to appreciate EFHOH to encourage me in participating and sharing information to European hard of hearing community through EFHOH Newsletter. Writing is my favorite subject. It is a good feelings to have a strong attachment to international people with hearing impairments although the congress finished some months ago. The world congress spirit still remained in my mind as I just met you and said good bye yesterday. The earth is round. I hope to see you again in the near future.

Knowing movements of IFHOH, EFHOH and IFHOHYP, I am very glad and proud to be involved in yours. However, I feel sad to think of Asian Hard of hearing movements. IFHOH and IFHOHYP are for international, have you had any plans to assist people with hearing impairments in Asia? How or what can we do to have enthusiastic Asian boys and girls with hearing loss as IFHOHYP?

Mr. Muhammad Akram from Pakistan and I are planning to improve Asian hard of hearing movements. The progress is too slow and we do not have much experiences. It is a long road ahead but we are believing in possible and that we will reach our goal./.

Duong Phuong Hanh
President of Hochiminh City Deaf Association

EDDP 2008 – The European Day of People with Disabilities: Acting locally for a society for all.

The annual conference hosted by The European Commission and the European Disability Forum (EDF), took place on Dec 1 and 2 in Brussels.

Opening speeches were held by Commissioner Vladimir Spidla and EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis. It was inevitable they mentioned the global economic crisis and the impact it might have on the situation of the disabled. As Mr Vardakastanis put it, the disabled people “are the last to be hired, and the first to be fired”. Of course we all hope the real situation is better than this wording. All officials from the European Commission declared they would do all they can to avoid negative impacts on matters concerning the disabled people.

Presentations

The first day sessions dealt with the UN Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities, now commonly known as “the CRPD”; how to implement the convention locally. An example from Spain showed the importance of good communication and spreading the knowledge: In Spain the convention has its own website, making it easy to find the convention text and other useful information linked to it.

In Denmark they have Pilots of the Convention: Persons from the DPOD, Disabled Peoples Organisation Denmark, who works voluntary. They train local representatives in argumentation and negotiations based on the Human Rights and the convention. Each municipality has a statutory Advisory Disability Board. So far 50 % of the Danish municipalities have a written disability policy.

A representative from the Greek government declared that the Greek legislation up to this date mostly has been concerned with the needs of the wheelchair users. But now he claimed a radical change had occurred. Later a speaker from the floor said she didn't agree on this, claiming there is still too much about people with reduced mobility. As always, the people on the floor do not always share the positive view proudly expressed by the high level representatives! Among the important things recently done in Greece is establishing a new national authority for infrastructure.

On the second day sessions continued with the subject accessible tourism. Here we learnt about the ENAT, European Network on Accessible Tourism. This is a rapidly growing network of where local accessibility guides can be found,

making it easier for a disabled person to plan a trip. ENAT is open to all actors and stakeholders within the field. ENAT has its own Europe-wide label showing commitment to accessible tourism.

From the Naples Airport, Italy, came Mr Antonio Pascale who talked about the implementation of the Regulation (***) on the rights of air passengers with disabilities.

This means everything from different adaptations in the airport terminal, at the check-in counters as well as educating all staff. The Naples Airport has about 1.7 million passengers every year. Mr Pascale declared that although they had achieved a good deal, there is still a lot to be done. Especially he mentioned improvements for the hard of hearing persons and the visually impaired.

*** EU Regulation (EC) 1107/2006 on the Rights of Air Passengers with Disabilities.

All presentations can be downloaded from the European Commission website, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main>



Photo: The conference poster displayed the “Rubics Cube”, symbolising the challenge to get all parts = small cubes with the same colours on each side of the cube.

Conclusions and the future

One important instrument that can be used in work like this, are the EU structural funds. Financing projects by these funds now requires a disability perspective. In order to make it easier dealing with the preparation and applications, a tool-kit is on the way; planned to be released later this year

The current EU Disability Strategy will end by 2010. Now we have to set the goals for the next period, spanning the years 2011 -2022. Which are the fields of priority? In order to let the delegates of the conference give their opinion, a voting procedure was set up. This involved the same voting machines/booths used in the recently held US elections. The supplier had shipped a machine to Brussels and the conference venue.

About 100 of the 180 delegates voted, answering two main questions:

a) Which are the most important areas in which we need improvements to reach a society for all? The voters could choose from about ten different areas, the result



Photo: You see the screen with two folding shields on both sides, allowing full voting secrecy. Mr Moreno from the Sequoia Company demonstrates the hand held device making it possible to use the machine in case you are not able to reach the screen or have a visual impairment. The buttons of the device are fitted with Braille text as well. When moving the machine you simply fold all the parts together, converting the whole equipment to a suitcase, complete with a handlebar.

showed a top three: 1/ employment, 2/ education, 3/ accessibility to the built environment and public transport
b) Secondly the voters could choose one or several different means to be used.

Here the result was more diverse, but a clear number one was: legislation.

All in all, this certainly serves as guidelines for both the European Commission and the EDF in how to continue the struggle to achieve a society for all.

To speak - or to hear

On the yearly policy conference EDDP hosted in Brussels by the European Commission and the European Disability Forum, the delegates watched a DVD clip from a film made by a Belgian man named Erik Lamens. He suffered from heavy stuttering in his childhood and adolescence, and had great difficulties to speak. Consequently he called his film "To speak".

Two situations were displayed in the film: one when he was a boy buying a railway ticket; the second as a teenager on the dance floor, trying to say his name to a girl.

With good actors playing these scenes, and strongly conveying the stigma caused by this inability to communicate, an immediate reflection came to my mind:

If the boy had been a hard of hearing or deaf instead of stuttering, the result in these situations would have been exactly the same: Lack of communication!
How many of the delegates thought of this?

FOSS

Main task also in 2009;

FOSS started in 2007 working to get the interests of ESM children and their parents being involved within the tasks of FEPEDA. In 2009 this subject is part of our program again to reach a proper European cooperation with other European organisations to achieve a strong plea for maintaining special expertise and special education for children with an auditive or communicative handicap in the European countries. The thought of integration also holds for the Netherlands, but we must not allow to lose the achievements we have built up so cautiously. In October 2009 an important congress will be held by the Swedish parent organisation 'Participation for all'.

FEPEDA

Important subjects which FEPEDA will aim at, are:

- Family meetings, we are convinced that the uniting of parents and their children is a major aim for FEPEDA to offer our -doelgroep. The next meeting will be organised by the Finnish organisation and they are vigorously making preparations for this.
- Policy statements, during the past few years FEPEDA have developed and taken on several political statements, these can be read on the site www.fepeda.net. Some of the older documents have to be revised and adjusted, this task is also considered one of the future jobs.
- Which would be an important statement of policy to add? We have discussed about this and we have concluded that as a logical follow up of the Policy Statement on Education, which was accepted in Helsinki in 2008, the Policy Statement on Employment will be an important subject.
- This is a logical combination of the aims of FOSS to look at the further development of our -focus group of the 16-year old and older youth.
- Member states, new member states, active members form the base for a good organisation, and we will give attention to motivate members more and to urge new member states, e.g. the new countries in the European Union, to also become a member of FEPEDA.
- Expand cooperation with other related organisations, such as RNID, EFHOH etc.

- Be more active in promoting through publicity, Public relations, adjusting our website to a modern design and tool.

Also I will keep acting the pioneer to obtain subtitling in all European countries. We have booked a lot of success in our own country through the cooperation of SOAP.

In this team all dutch organisations for people with an auditive handicap are represented. We are known in Europe now as second with the highest percentage of captioning directly behind the United Kingdom.

Especially we will continue our efforts to expand the directions approved by the European Commission aiming at more subtitling, together with the RNID, Royal National Institute for the Deaf and EFHOH, European Federation of Hard of Hearing.

Throughout the development of High Definition TV and TV programs on internet, it is important that we control the development of standardisation, because now problems have developed because of the wrong use of subtitles or absence.

If we ignore this, we will be back at score one.

New directions have to prevent this.

It is still very important for us to convince politicians of the fact that 10% of the citizens has a hearing problem and they are also entitled to full participation in society, also in relation to the media of TV and internet.

Kind regards
For FOSS,

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Old by lack of ideal

Samuel Ullman

The youth – it is not of life time from the age of 15 or 20 to 30. It is conceptual or spiritual. The Youth is not with pink cheeks, red lips or supple legs. It is will, creative capability, and ebullient and violent feeling. The youth is as a permanently bright spring of the life.

The youth is brave to win timidity, weak character and desire particularly interesting adventures which are different from a simple and level life. Sometimes the youth showed from a 60-year-old man is more than a 20-year-old boy. Mature age is not based on number of the year we born. We are old by lack of ideal in the life. Our skins could be furrowed year by year but losing enthusiasm and ardor could make our spirit becoming older. Worry, fright and unself-confidence create hurt hearts and declined spirits.

Being 60 or 16, every heart is filled with wonderfulness and endlessly pure thirsts for good things coming and loving our life. My heart and yours have "a communications station" that they help us to recognize messages of love, beauty, hope, belief, braveness and strength of human and universe. The more we discover these values the more we are youthful.

When antennas of a communications station are lowered and your spirits are covered by a frosted layer of pessimistic, selfish and unconcerned attitude, you become older even being 20-year-old man. However, yours antennas are lifted to pick up signal waves of optimism and belief, it hope that you could die young at the age of eighty.

Duong Phuong Hanh
(Translated from Luu Huong's a Vietnamese copy)

Looking for books/materials in the hearing impairment field

I am a social worker and President of Ho Chi Minh City Deaf Association (HAD) in Vietnam. I am looking for books/materials related to hearing impairment, specifically:

1. Deaf Education
2. Deaf Psychology
3. Technical Interpreting Instruction
4. Skills in communication with people with hearing loss
5. Introduction to taking care of children with hearing loss
6. Social Work with people with hearing impairments
7. Any other training material related to hearing impairment.

I would like to get such materials in order to translate them into the Vietnamese language to support my work and my community as well.

I would greatly appreciate your agreement for me to translate your books/materials by issuing me an official letter of authorization.

Thank you for your time and understanding

Duong Phuong Hanh. President of Ho Chi Minh City Deaf Association (HAD).



The venue of HEARING LOOPS

Photo: Winterthur Tourismus

Hearing Loops

International Conference on Induction Loops for Hard of Hearing People and People with Cochlear Implants

Date: 25.-27. September 2009

Place: Winterthur / Switzerland (Zurich Airport is nearby, with direct trains from the airport to Winterthur)

Winterthur is the sixth largest city in Switzerland with 100'000 inhabitants and is situated north of Zurich

Venue: Zurich University for Applied Sciences at Winterthur, Department of Applied Linguistics, Aula (with induction loop) 3-minute walk from Winterthur train station

Language: The conference language will be English with simultaneous translation into German

English speech to text support (CART) by Daniel Tuijnman, The Netherlands

Preliminary Program: Friday evening, 25. September: Registration, opening ceremony; Saturday, 26. September: Technical presentations, Saturday evening: Dinner on a boat on lake Zurich, Sunday, 27. September: Workshops, international exchange, panel discussion about future developments.

End of conference on Sunday at 3:30 p.m., so that participants from Europe can catch an evening flight home.

It takes 16 minutes by train from Winterthur to Zurich airport.

All major European airlines fly to and from Zurich.

Organizer: European Federation of Hard of Hearing People EFHOH (the European Region of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People IFHOH), and Pro Audito Winterthur (the local organization of hard of hearing people)

Organizing committee: Alphonse Acrémann, Heinz Nafzger, David Norman, Thomas Schmidhauser (finances), Siegfried Karg, EFHOH vice president (chairman)

The conference will deal with the latest technology of audio frequency induction loop systems (AFILS) according to the international standard of the International Electrotechnical Commission IEC 60118-4:2006, including future developments.

It is aimed at technical / accessibility committees of hard of hearing and CI organizations, disability organizations, installers of loops, hearing aid providers, the hearing aid and cochlear implant industry, manufacturers of assistive listening devices, as well as interested hard of hearing people.

Hotel: The hotel is within walking distance of the venue (2 minutes). Although Switzerland is a very expensive country, hotel prices in Winterthur are cheaper than in Zurich (the city of Zurich can be reached by train in 18 minutes).

The hotel offers a weekend discount (Friday through Sunday). We are currently discussing a special conference rate.

Participant's fee: There will be a participant's fee to cover the costs for renting the venue, technical equipment, translation booth, simultaneous translators, speech to text support, expenses of the keynote speakers and so on.

We are looking for sponsors to reduce these costs.

You will find news about the conference at www.proaudito-winterthur.ch. At the beginning of March the conference website www.hearingloops.org will be online.

If you are interested in attending the conference, please send an email to siegfried.karg@proaudito-winterthur.ch so that we can keep you posted and send you further information and the registration form in due time.

(EFHOH-Information No. 2, 10. January 2009)

Siegfried Karg



EDF news

EDF launched its new European elections campaign website: www.disabilityvotescount.eu

On 19 January, at the occasion of the New Year Cocktail co-hosted by EDF and the European Parliament Disability Intergroup, EDF launched its new campaign website in view of the 2009 European elections.

The objective of the website are three-fold :

1. to promote free and equal access to the electoral campaigns and procedures for citizens with disabilities
2. to encourage citizens with disabilities to exert their right to vote and to participate in the European Elections
3. to invite the electoral candidates to commit to the demands of 50 million disabled citizens in their political campaign and in their future role as member of the European Parliament

The information on the website will be updated on an ongoing basis, in particular the page relating to the EP elections in EU 27 will have to be updated with useful information and links from your respective countries.

Any information or useful links about EP elections in your countries are to be sent to valerie.asselberghs@edf-feph.org.

EDF members are encouraged to widely disseminate this new website : <http://www.disabilityvotescount.eu>

UN Convention on the rights of disabled persons – adoption of a strategy at EU and national level

EDF Board welcomed the EDF position paper on the proposal for a Council decision on the ratification of the UN Convention (issued on 23 October) and unanimously approved the planned actions on the follow up to the UN Convention. The strategy mainly consists in continuing to raise the profile of the UN Convention towards the EU Institutions, particularly the Council and the European Parliament. EDF will also monitor the EU report on the implementation of the UN Convention in the member States

drafted by the High Level Group on Disability. This report will be presented to the Council in June 2009. Furthermore, EDF will continue to work to ensure that the issue of development cooperation is included in the list of Community competencies and that the EU delegations in the world are properly trained about the obligations imposed by the Convention. It was also agreed that national councils from countries that have ratified the Convention would write to the French Presidency to ask EDF to be invited to speak at the Council working group on human rights discussing the proposal for the ratification of the European Communities. A model letter has already been sent to national councils from Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and Spain.

EDF issued its Manifesto for the 2009 European Parliament elections

On the occasion of the 3rd of December, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, EDF released its 2009 European Election Manifesto "Nothing about Disabled People, Without Disabled People".

The manifesto, which contains the EDF TOP 10 demands to make disability discrimination history, calls on politicians to assure equal access for voting and participation in electoral campaigns and for a European Parliament for all. More than 50 million disabled citizens of Europe, representing one family out of four and 15% of the electorate, could change the low turnout of the last years' elections, if they are allowed to exert their right to vote.

"Today many obstacles still exist in front of disabled people to cast their vote independently due to inaccessibility of premises voting booths or ballots, not to mention those of us who cannot leave their homes or are imprisoned in institutions. The electoral debates are also inaccessible. The politicians need to realize that disability should be addressed in all the possible ways – from its visibility in their campaigns to ensuring the right to vote", said EDF President.

"The most recent and prominent example of the significance of the presence of the disability issues in the electoral campaign are the US elections in which the commitments of the winning candidate to solving problems of disabled people also influenced the vote turnout and results", he added.

The right to vote is addressed in Art. 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entered into force in 2008. It is the legal base of the Manifesto, in which disabled voters call for all their rights of citizens, including the rights to a decent income, access to

services that allow participation in daily life, education and employment, to be taken into consideration by the future members of the European Parliament before and after the forthcoming elections. EDF invites the political leaders to endorse the Manifesto and to integrate its principles in their parties' campaigns.

In January 2009, EDF will launch a specific website in view of the 2009 European Parliament elections. This website will not only address the candidate members of the European Parliament but will also inform and encourage disabled citizens and their families to exert their voting rights.

In the meantime, further information on the European elections and EDF manifesto are available on the EDF website under the "TOP 5 campaigns".

EDF Statement on the Economic Crisis: Disabled People Must Not Pay for the Crisis

Paris, 16 Novembre 2008 – The European Disability Forum, which is the voice of more than 50 million European people with disabilities, calls on the European Council, Commission and Parliament and other European institutions and all the governments of Europe to ensure disabled people and their families do not pay for the world-wide economic crisis by the reduction in their income, benefits, employment opportunities or in cuts in support to our representative organisations.

The crisis was caused by the irresponsible lending and unacceptable negligence by those in charge of the financial institutions and regulatory bodies of the world. Governments' response to the 'credit crunch' has been to create financial resources to bail out the banks. Now as this lack of confidence feeds its way into the general economic system it is vital that poor, elderly and disabled people and their families of Europe do not pay for this crisis. We already in a precarious position prior to the crisis, therefore call for a reflationary approach to spend more on investment in accessible infrastructure, on benefits and the provision of tax relief, so that these groups can buy goods and services so improving the economic situation.

The world through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities has only just recognised the urgent need to extend the international human rights law framework to disabled people. Society cannot afford to dilute its commitment to human rights including the right to employment and family life. Traditionally disabled people have been the 'reserve army of labour', 'the last to be hired the first to be fired', seen as expendable at times of economic crisis. Disabled People, their families, the unemployed and the poor cannot become the scapegoat for a crisis not of their making. Already the worsening economic position has led to attempts to cut benefits in many countries such as Ireland, Hungary, Sweden and Italy.

The lesson of this crisis - the value of investing in people - is far more important than speculative investment and it benefits the whole of society and strengthens its resistance to such crisis driven changes. If the gap between the disadvantaged and the wealthy widens, it will cost society more in the long run. The EDF will ensure the equality and rights of disabled people come to the top of the political agenda in the forthcoming European Elections.

Cutbacks and mass unemployment will develop a fertile ground for violence, hate crime, undermine solidarity and produce dangerous attitudes for democracy. We call on all those with political and economic decision making responsibility to do all they can to ensure that disabled and poor people are treated with equality and their economic well being is assured by the measures they take at this time. Now is the time for strong action so that in 2010-European Anti Poverty Year- disabled people and other disadvantaged groups do not again come to the top of the agenda.

EFHOH - European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People consists of National Associations of/for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened People, Parents' Organisations and Professional Organisations.

EFHOH comprises the European members of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) and was established in 1993. It has its own board and secretariat. The federation has non-profitable and benevolent aims and it is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation. EFHOH is a general member of the European Disability Forum (EDF). We also work in good co-operation with IFHOH and our official language is English.

The Board members of the EFHOH carry out their work on an honorary basis.