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EFHOH President letter

Dear Members and EFHOH Newsletter Readers,

This issue of the EFHOH Newsletter provides much information on events related to World Hearing Day 2018, which took place on the 3rd of March. It was also great that once again, in cooperation with AEA (European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals) and EHIMA (European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association), we organised the European Parliament Lunch Debate 2018. We see more and more that our members at the national and at the local level are working on the common theme – Hear the Future. The Lunch Debate in the European Parliament was hosted by Member of the European Parliament Renate Sommer (Germany, EPP) together with co-host MEP Heinz Becker (Austria, EPP). For more information, see the article in this EFHOH newsletter.

Another important event was on the 20th of February, the European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness together with Microsoft, hosted a seminar at the Microsoft centre in Brussels with the theme: ACT! Accessible Communication Today! See the article about this event in this EFHOH newsletter.

IFHOH General Secretary

In this EFHOH president letter I would also like to write some words of thanks to the former IFHOH General Secretary Louise Carroll (New Zealand), who has been the IFHOH secretary since 2014. This winter she made the difficult decision to step down as IFHOH secretary due to health problems. We as the EFHOH board would like to say: "Thank you Louise for all of your great work for IFHOH! It was super to have you as a trainer at the first IFHOH UN



CRPD workshop in Copenhagen". "Thank you and warm regards"!

Olympic Subtitles

We hope that you had a nice winter and that you enjoyed watching the Winter Olympic Games on tv with subtitles, of course. Winter is also the time of the year that many people are sick at home or have the flu. I had the flu during the Winter Olympic Games and most of the time I watched the Olympics without my hearing aids. I was happy that all the programs related to the Olympics had subtitles but some live programming did not always have the best quality of subtitling. Let us know if you had the same experience in your country.

Estonia

Warm congratulations to our member organisation in Estonia with their 25th anniversary. Thank you for all your great work for the Hard of Hearing People in Estonia and we wish you even more success in the next 25 years.

Call for 2020

Dear members we (EFHOH and IFHOH) invite you to be the host country for the EFHOH AGM and the IFHOH BGM in

2020. It would be great if you would be interested in hosting it in 2020. Please contact us if you would like to know more details.

AGM and BGM 2018

We hope to see you all at the EFHOH AGM and the IFHOH BGM 2018 in Ljubljana, the capital of the small and beautiful country, Slovenia. On our website you can find a lot of practical information about this event. The theme of the conference day this year is "Accessibility Removes All Barriers". We are pleased that some representatives from the Slovenian government and a member of the European Parliament will participate in this conference.

The EFHOH AGM agenda lists many different and important issues, including the action plan and the budget plan for 2018 and 2019. Also on Saturday afternoon at the IFHOH BGM many important topics will be discussed. Members of EFHOH can find all documents related the EFHOH AGM on www.efhoh.org in the For Members forum. Many thanks to the board and the staff of the Slovenian Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clubs Association of Slovenia (ZDGNS) for organising this important EFHOH and IFHOH

event. See more information on the EFHOH website @ www.efhoh.org

New EFHOH website

Have you visited our new EFHOH website www.efhoh.org? I hope that you agree with me that it looks great.

FOLLOW US

We invite you to follow EFHOH via Facebook and Twitter.

Our Twitter addresses are:

EFHOH	@efhoh
Marcel Bobeldijk	@marbob32
Lidia Best	@best_lidia
EDF	@MyEDF

CALL FOR ARTICLES FOR THE NEXT EFHOH NEWSLETTER

If you have an article for one of the next EFHOH newsletters in 2018, please send it to us. You can also send your ar-

ticle directly to our editor Niels-Henrik, his email address is nhmh@learning.aau.dk

SAVE THE DATE:

- 11-12 May 2018 Conference "Accessibility Removes All Barriers" + EFHOH AGM and IFHOH BGM: <http://bit.ly/2zCVnTP>
- IVSS Churchear International Conference 13-17 September 2018 in Strasbourg, France: <http://bit.ly/2jkHiXc>

Dear All,

On behalf of the EFHOH board I wish you all, together with your family and friends, a happy spring time!

Warm Regards,
Marcel Bobeldijk

Spend2Save: Hearing care **changes** lives and **saves** society money

Report from working group: Taking the campaign forward: Brussels, 6th Nov 2017

Executive Summary.

The Spend2Save Campaign grew out of the work by the Ear Foundation in the UK on the real cost of hearing loss. This work, reflected in the WHO Sound Investment campaign and other policy, health economics studies and academic work, established that it costs more not to address the consequences of hearing loss than to provide access to good quality hearing care. Our European Report, Spend to Save, and the Europe wide campaign was launched at the Brussels conference in September 2016 with EHIMA, AEA, EFHOH and EURO-CIU. A working group met in Brussels in November 2017 to share and expand our collective work, ensuring that Hearing becomes a major public health issue in Europe, aligned with the WHO resolution of May 2017.

Summary of key outcomes from the meeting

There was great support for Spend2Save message and campaign, with ten translations of the summary and ongoing

political and awareness activity in many countries and organisations.

The key conclusions from the meeting are that we need to: Create a working coalition to support collaborative work and advocacy for better hearing care in Europe

"Why don't we start this group as a working coalition. It's one thing to be part of a coalition, and another to be working in a coalition...."

"We need to create a European Consortium on Hearing including Scientific societies, Health Technology Agencies, Parent/ user associations, Industry."

All were agreed that we are stronger together, that it is crucial to learn from each other, to continue to meet, develop the agenda outlined here and find the resources to drive this forward in partnership. Some of the suggested work is already planned: we need to share this to avoid duplication or gaps.

Main priority: Raise awareness and build political commitment-We need to move the discussion about hearing loss:

- From a minor health issue to major public health, disability access and social justice issue
- From hearing loss to hearing well and living well
- From audiology to public health
- From hearing to better communication, cognition and independence
- From the cost of taking action on hearing loss to the cost of not taking action on hearing loss: Spend to Save.
- We need to see "hearing care" as an action to prevent the comorbidities of hearing loss

Users and families are key. "We need to convince users and potential users of hearing technology and ensure they have a story and public voice and they should use it... sensitisation and awareness"

"Policy changes only ever occur over long periods of time, and typically come from a bottom up initiative"

"WHO and this (Spend2 Save) combined together is really important and we have a great opportunity"

Actions:

A Clear Narrative and Communication Plan -A clear narrative (story) that brings together the various strands of our Spend to Save case and which can be used to promote the case across different audiences in different countries, using the same arguments and data but applying this to local circumstances.

Greater Focus on the Impact of Hearing Loss: Integrate hearing loss into public health policy-A need to broaden the understanding of the impact of hearing loss, in communication but also in mental health, cognitive decline, falls, isolation, on employment and use of social services was recognised by the group.

Spend2Save Website- A clear digital presence for the network and Spend2Save campaign that all can access, and act as a focal point for activities and a Launchpad for communication campaigns.

Media work and political promotion-All to take and share media and other opportunities with message about hearing care and the costs to society of not intervening to address hearing loss.

Improved Data, Research and Dissemination- A priority, and the need to disseminate data we already have in understandable forms more widely as well as identifying the areas needing more robust data.

Specific Areas of work:

There were some specific areas where the campaign could help develop and promote policy that spanned a number of countries concerns or needed implementing across Europe:

Develop National Action Plans on Hearing Loss- Members of the World Health Assembly agreed to have national action plans when they supported the resolution and a few countries have done so. The UK Action Plan on Hearing Loss and its implementation is one example to promote hearing loss as a public health and social policy issue for Governments and funders of services. Agreed to develop an Action Plan template for countries to adapt for their local needs, including users in the development.

Adult Screening-The establishment of Adult Screening programmes is a major challenge across most European countries: a campaign for adult hearing screening needed. Sharing current data on importance of early intervention, links to cognitive decline and mental health issues, and economic impact.

Accessibility Act/Standards of Quality Hearing Care-The sector has already been successful in establishing European wide standards around the quality of Hearing Aid provision. The next stage should be implementation in EU countries in their healthcare protocols with legislative levers to establish greater funded entitlements of the provision of Quality Hearing Care, access to long-term services, assistive devices and other technologies. Greater communication access, particularly via speech to text services, must be included. Empowering users with the knowledge of what to expect from hearing care specialists.

Hearing Loss and Dementia-It is clear from the recent work of the Lancet commission and other research such as Amieva et al., (2016) that addressing hearing loss in middle age could help reduce the overall incidence of cognitive decline but, we need to do much more to disseminate what we know already and promote further the understanding of the impact of hearing loss on dementia.

"WHO has finally passed the resolution and in two years' time we have a report in our hand. The most important thing is user representatives are pressing for change"

Sue Archbold, Brian Lamb, Mel Gregory, The Ear Foundation. Full report at www.earfoundation.org.uk and [www.eurociu.org](mailto:eurociu.org) sue.archbold@btinternet.com

A close-up portrait of a woman with short, wavy blonde hair and blue eyes. She is wearing a dark, textured blazer over a light-colored top and a pearl necklace. The background is blurred.

***My cinema
experience
– a tale of two
countries***

Let's **shout** out for a carefree **cinema experience**, free from exclusion where **all people** can enjoy the joys of cinema equally!

Recently, a new petition to improve access to cinemas for deaf and hard of hearing people in UK was set up by Charlie Swinbourne, the Editor of the "Limping Chicken" online blog. See the petition here <http://limpingchicken.com/petition/>. Hot on this petition, another one has been set up in the USA after Nyle DiMarco an well know Deaf activist complained about poor access in the USA where assistive captioning devices are used.

It came at a time when some people were voicing complaints about subtitled films from hearing viewers and others are simply not able to find subtitled screenings nearby. To add insult to injury, it is one of the most highly-anticipated releases of the year, "Star Wars: the Last Jedi". Anyone can see it at any given time... providing you are hearing well.

So, why a tale of two countries? I hold dual citizenship, having grown up in Poland and settling as an adult in the UK. My best childhood and teenage memories are closely associated with the cinema experience. In Poland, television was completely inaccessible to me, it still is when you compare it to the accessibility of UK TV channels, they top the leagues in Europe. Yet, it was the cinema in Poland where I felt completely immersed in the plot and treated like an equal, thanks to all Hollywood movies being subtitled! I spent half of my free weekends in the cinema! What a joy to discuss the latest release during school breaks, and the race to be the first to see the movie. Can you believe that once I saw the same movie 7 times? Deciding on a whim... let's go to movies!

So you can imagine my disappointment, then, when I realised that this is apparently a luxury experience in the UK. We have simply stopped checking for subtitled releases, why even bother? Every time I visit Poland, I make a point to see the latest blockbuster release, with the knowledge that I will be enjoying it on an equal basis with my sister and other viewers. A cinema experience every day, at any

time of my choosing! I saw "Gravity", "Circle" and many more before my deaf friends in UK could see it.

When we were checking Vue cinema subtitled offerings on Star Wars in our area of West London after the premiere in December, to our dismay we found none! We had to wait a long time for one in our area. Do I have to fly out to Poland to see the latest Star Wars release? Well, technically I could but...what about my husband? He cannot read Polish.

I know that this is not limited to Poland, other European countries have open captions in the cinemas for foreign movies, which is 90% of their offerings. To be fair to my European friends and Polish ones too, the native made-movies are often not accessible, a similar situation to what my UK friends are experiencing. The exception to the rule is perhaps Sweden, where all movies- native or foreign- have open subtitling, perhaps other countries followed suit?

In the UK, we are greatly disadvantaged as most cinema movies are in English and I really miss my childhood carefree experience of popping in to the cinema whenever I fancied it.

Let's shout out for a carefree cinema experience, free from exclusion where all people can enjoy the joys of cinema equally!

Lidia Best
Chair National Association of Deafened People
Vice President of European Federation of Hard of Hearing People



Norway's implementation of the **EU's Web accessibility** directive and why it is a possibility for **improvement**

HLF (The Norwegian Association of the Hard of Hearing) is the world's largest organization for hard of hearing people with 65 000 members. The organization's main objective is to improve the life quality of Norway's hard of hearing people.

HLF (The Norwegian Association of the Hard of Hearing) sees potential for improvement in universal design of information and communication technology (ICT) through the Web accessibility directive.

Norway is not a part of the EU, but many EU directives are implemented into Norway law through the EEA-agreement. This is also the case with the Web Accessibility directive, and in the fall of 2017 the Norwegian government asked for opinions on the directive through a hearing process. HLF answered this hearing, and the most important thing for the organization was to underline the need for captioning of all online video content.



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Revision of the Norwegian law

Today web accessibility is regulated by a law on universal design of ICT. This states that all web sites created or upgraded after 1st of January 2014 should be universally accessible. From 2021 this goes for all web sites. The law is going to be revised to implement the directive. For our organization the most important point is to ensure that both prerecorded and streamed content online has to be captioned to be in compliance with the law. Captions are necessary to include the close to one million hard of hearing Norwegians on web sites. HLF's opinion is therefore that the proposed exceptions to the WCAG-standard, regarding captioning of directly streamed content, should not be implemented.

Even though the law today demands captions on all prerecorded content, it is still rare to find prerecorded material online to be captioned. The Norwegian government has a supervisory body whose mission is to make sure the law is being followed, but this body has limited resources.

Intranets

Another question in the hearing was whether company intranets should be regulated by the law. In Norway only 46 per cent of disabled people are employed, while the equivalent number is 76 per cent for the general public. HLF used the opportunity to state the importance of company intranets being under the scope of the law, meaning they also have to be universally accessible. This is important if we are to include more disabled people in the work force. The Norwegian government also asked specifically for opinions about whether the law should be stricter for public web sites (such as sites for government bodies), than for private corporations. In the Norwegian law today there

is no such division, but the Web accessibility directive has this division. HLF are opposed to a division, since many of the most used web sites are private, for example those of banks, cultural institutions and service providers. It may also have a positive effect that the law is equal for all sites, making one unified standard.

HLF is still awaiting the revision of the law as of March 2018, and we are optimistic that the revision of the law and implementation of the directive may improve web accessibility in Norway.

HLF's main points summarized:

- All audiovisual content should be subtitled, regardless of whether it's streamed directly or prerecorded. Therefore the directive should enforce the AA-standard without the suggested exceptions.
- Intranets should be covered by the demands for universal design.
- The scope of the Norwegian law of universal design of ICT should be continued with the implementation of the directive into Norwegian law, with the same demands for all web sites regardless of whether they are from public or private sector.

Photo: Hildegunn Fallang, political advisor in HLF, wants to improve universal design on the web in Norway. Photographer: Tor Slette Johansen.



Under the theme of World Hearing Day – “Hear the future... and prepare for it” – a lunch debate was held at the European Parliament in Brussels on March 6th. The overall conclusion from the debate was that hearing loss is a major health issue that will only grow in the coming years. Host MEP Renate Sommer (Germany EPP) introduced the debate and opened it by saying that we face a major health issue in Europe when it comes to hearing loss today. Especially in the future, towards 2050, we face a problem as there will be more and more people aged 65+ in the EU in the coming years and at the same time we are living longer and longer.

Vice-president of The European Federation of the Hard of hearing, EFHOH, Lidia Best gave an overview of the earlier lunch debates in the European Parliament and said that it was very important for the hard of hearing in Europe and that hearing loss and professional hearing care should be put on the agenda by the EU and the European Parliament.

A growing problem - with side effects

The president of The European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals, AEA, presented a series of figures showing

how the number of people with hearing loss will rise in the coming years, as hearing loss to a greater extent is age dependent and the number of seniors aged 65+ will rise substantially in the next 30 years. The same is the case with cognitive decline and dementia, which are also age dependent. The risk of dementia increases by 2-5 times with an untreated hearing loss. Mark Lauryens therefore stressed the importance of professional health care, as hearing loss is a modifiable risk factor for dementia and that recent studies have shown that interventions against hearing loss with hearing care eliminates the increased risk.

Shelly Chadha from the World Health Organization, WHO, gave an insight into what the world is about to expect in the next 30 years when it comes to hearing loss. More and more people in the world will have a hearing loss due to an increased population and more and more elderly. In 2050, WHO predicts that around 900 million people will have a disabling hearing loss. To prepare for the future it is important to have strategies to prevent hearing loss and to address hearing loss.



Personal and societal consequences

Professor H  l  ne Amieva, Inserm, Bordeaux, gave a summary of her recent scientific article based on the findings in a longitudinal study among nearly 3,800 people who have been followed for 25 years. The findings say that untreated hearing loss to a greater extent increases the risk of becoming both dependent on others and developing dementia. At the same time, the use of hearing aids totally eliminates the increased risk of both.

Professor emerita Bridget Shield, South Bank University, London gave an introduction to her coming study about the social and economic costs of untreated hearing loss. The study will document that the costs of loss of quality of life and lost productivity due to untreated hearing loss are very substantial. To this must also be added increased healthcare costs associated with hearing loss, lost taxes due to lower incomes for people with hearing loss, more welfare benefit payments due to higher unemployment among people with hearing loss and healthcare costs associated with diseases related to hearing loss. The study is planned to be published later in 2018.

Still a sensitive topic

Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General of Age Platform Europe said that hearing loss among those aged 50+, which

Age Platform Europe represents, is still a taboo and is for many of their members associated with being old, meaning around the age 80 or so. Hearing loss is silent and invisible, and many seniors still keep it to themselves, or are not aware of it. Anne-Sophie Parent also questioned the fact that while professional hearing care to children and young people is taken care of in most EU member states, hearing loss among seniors is more or less neglected and ignored in health policies in many countries.

Appeal to member states

Co-host MEP Heinz Becker (Austria, EPP) ended the debate by summarizing the findings and conclusions and said that as health policy is taken care of by each member state the EU, the European parliament can only appeal to the member states to take the issue of hearing loss and the importance of hearing care seriously as it is a major health issue, that will only grow in the coming years.

The organizations behind the debate

The lunch debate was arranged by the European Federation of the Hard of hearing, EFHOH, Age Platform Europe, The European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals AEA and EHIMA, European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association.



World Health Organization

...and prevent hearing loss.



Protect your ears from loud sounds



Seek treatment if you have ear pain or other signs of infection



Ask your doctor if the medicines you are taking might affect your hearing

Hear the future



World Health Organization
whopbd@who.int

www.who.int/deafness/world-hearing-day/whd-2018/en

WHO calls for **action** from governments and their partners to stem the **rise in hearing loss**

Some 900 million people could suffer from disabling hearing loss by 2050, according to new estimates released by the World Health Organization on the occasion of World Hearing Day on 3 March.

Currently 466 million people worldwide suffer from disabling hearing loss, 34 million of whom are children. This is up from 360 million people five years ago.

The main reasons for this increase is a growing ageing population and the persistence of risks such as ear and vaccine-preventable infections like measles, mumps and rubella; the use of medicines that can harm hearing such as those used to treat drug-resistant tuberculosis and ma-

laria; and exposure to loud sounds through personal audio devices and in entertainment venues and workplaces.

"Past trends and future projections predict a vast increase in the number of people with hearing loss," says Dr Etienne Krug, Director of the WHO Department for Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention. "Unless appropriate action is initiated, nearly one in 10 people could have disabling hearing loss by 2050. This will considerably affect their lives and pose a significant cost to health systems. Governments must act now to prevent this rise and ensure people with hearing loss can access the services and technologies they need."



Disabling hearing loss affects people in many ways. It impacts on a person's ability to communicate, socialize, learn, work and enjoy life, contributing to poverty, social isolation and feelings of loneliness. In older people in particular, hearing loss is linked to cognitive decline, increasing the risk of depression and dementia. Unaddressed hearing loss costs countries an estimated US\$ 750 billion annually in direct health costs and loss of productivity.

Interventions can reduce hearing loss and its adverse impacts

Overall it is suggested that half of all cases of hearing loss can be prevented; in children, this figure is around 60%. This includes by immunizing children against infectious

diseases; screening and treating children who suffer from chronic ear infections; promoting safe childbirth to minimize the risk of asphyxia and neonatal infections associated with hearing loss; avoiding the use of particular drugs harmful to hearing; controlling exposure to loud sounds in occupational and recreational settings; and raising awareness about healthy ear care practices through public health campaigns.

Detecting and intervening early when people do have hearing loss helps to minimize the consequences, especially for children. This is achieved through screening programmes. In cases where hearing loss is unavoidable, it is vital to ensure access to appropriate and affordable assistive tech-

What is hearing loss?

A person who is not able to hear as well as someone with normal hearing is said to have hearing loss. It can vary in severity. A person with **mild hearing loss** may find it difficult to understand conversations in noisy places such as a restaurant. Someone with **moderate hearing loss** has difficulty understanding regular conversations unless voices are raised. Others who have **severe hearing loss** are unable to hear even very loud sounds close to their ears.

What causes hearing loss?

1 Among newborns:

- Family history
- Infections suffered by the mother during pregnancy
- Premature birth
- Lack of oxygen at the time of birth
- Severe jaundice soon after birth

2 Among children and adults:

- Infections such as meningitis, measles, mumps or ear infections with discharge
- Use of certain medicines
- Injury to the head or ear
- Exposure to loud sounds in any setting
- Listening through personal audio devices at unsafe levels
- Wax or foreign bodies blocking the ear canal

3 Among older people:

- Normal ageing process
- Exposure to loud sounds in any setting
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Use of certain medicines



What can you do to avoid hearing loss?



As an individual:

- Do not insert any object into the ear
- Use earplugs and earmuffs in noisy places
- In case of any ear problems, consult a doctor immediately
- Check if medicines you take can affect your hearing
- Have your hearing tested regularly
- If advised to do so, use a hearing device as indicated

As a child carer:

- Do not insert anything into a child's ear for any reason including to clean it
- Teach children never to insert anything into their ears
- Take your child to see a doctor in case the child complains of pain or blockage or has discharge coming from the ear
- Do not allow children to swim in dirty water
- Do not hit or slap a child
- Protect children's ears from loud sounds
- Teach children to listen safely through personal audio devices

As a community worker:

- Learn about hearing loss and share information on ear and hearing care
- Know where ear care services are provided and guide people on how to access them
- Refer to a doctor people reporting with ear pain or discharge
- Learn about hearing devices and help people to use them properly
- Encourage deaf people to use sign language and organize support groups

As a teacher:

- If a child is inattentive in class, it could indicate hearing loss; consider suggesting a hearing test
- Educate children on ear care and on the risks of inserting objects in the ear and of listening to loud sounds, including music
- Respect children: hitting a child or slapping him might result in hearing loss
- Refer the child to a doctor immediately in case of discharge or pain in the ear

nologies such as hearing aids and surgically implanted electronic cochlear implants, and communication services like speech therapy, sign language and captioning.

Governments and partners have a key role to play

To stem the rise in disabling hearing loss, WHO supports governments and their partners to:

- * Integrate ear and hearing care into primary health care systems as part of universal health coverage;
- * Raise awareness among the public about the prevention of hearing loss;
- * Ensure services to treat hearing loss, including access to assistive technologies and communication services;
- * Train hearing care professionals;
- * Regulate sound exposure on personal audio devices and in entertainment venues and workplaces;
- * Empower people with hearing loss to overcome stigma and discrimination.

WHO has also initiated development of a global report and related toolkit on hearing, to provide authoritative evidence on the magnitude of hearing loss globally, as well as its prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

RELATED LINKS

World Hearing Day 2018 materials

http://www.who.int/deafness/world-hearing-day/whd-2018/en/<https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fr20.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001K8V660kXvoPp9wpkbBe2TdAmAYJ-BiT-vU7SU7qx2zOrNeSMiLEYYS9B7AwzmmAPMHEunnMu2WYEWc4m5Z-0SAuaMwflQy2G2te9Xia4yEH9cPKXlJMcEuVS97RsJZutoaYFZN3aSFjB-FoCKxJl3w3_cmaxQmQTOrFtnINPtO2R-5llinjlvBF-jjgsFb3sacgD8wNUP2AR-JhoCdkb724BKeQU1jxer6S7spwJ0pviATg%3D%26c%3Dyl8NRwVTrJ2KiTTqcOJOtDeHeu1xPBH5jy5zFVBRT6eri3wlDnrv7w%3D%3D%26ch%3D0u-4aZgq4_qr8-amYqgOoMtT7r25hl_7le9Hg5Qq5vjDjjGNGiG6Z-rA%3D%3D&data=02%7C01%7C%7C1296e6e5e3824baf765808d-57f8256ae%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaa%7C1%7C0-%7C636555120128880023&sdata=BHsRZBYIDf0NopAHyGkfAy-5lQUtnPtGJ5fdoC2kbrlw%3D&reserved=0>

WHO fact sheet on deafness and hearing loss http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs300/en/<https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fr20.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001K8V660kXvoPp9wpkbBe2TdAmAYJ-BiT-vU7SU7qx2zOrNeSMiLEYYS9B7AwzmmAPMHEunnMu2WYEWc4m5Z-0SAuaMwflQy2G2te9Xia4yEH9cPKXlJMcEuVS97RsJZutoaYFZN3aSFjB-FoCKxJl3w3_cmaxQmQTOrFtnINPtO2R-5llinjlvBF-jjgsFb3sacgD8wNUP2AR-JhoCdkb724BKeQU1jxer6S7spwJ0pviATg%3D%26c%3Dyl8NRwVTrJ2KiTTqcOJOtDeHeu1xPBH5jy5zFVBRT6eri3wlDnrv7w%3D%3D%26ch%3D0u-4aZgq4_qr8-amYqgOoMtT7r25hl_7le9Hg5Qq5vjDjjGNGiG6Z-rA%3D%3D&data=02%7C01%7C%7C1296e6e5e3824baf765808d-57f8256ae%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaa%7C1%7C0-%7C636555120128880023&sdata=iRgwIQHX3jXNf3MLrEE20Smjk-23pPMiHigEd9sOZwv8%3D&reserved=0>

http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs300/en/<https://nam01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fr20.rs6.net%2Ftn.jsp%3Ff%3D001K8V660kXvoPp9wpkbBe2TdAmAYJ-BiT-vU7SU7qx2zOrNeSMiLEYYS9B7AwzmmAPMHEunnMu2WYEWc4m5Z-0SAuaMwflQy2G2te9Xia4yEH9cPKXlJMcEuVS97RsJZutoaYFZN3aSFjB-FoCKxJl3w3_cmaxQmQTOrFtnINPtO2R-5llinjlvBF-jjgsFb3sacgD8wNUP2AR-JhoCdkb724BKeQU1jxer6S7spwJ0pviATg%3D%26c%3Dyl8NRwVTrJ2KiTTqcOJOtDeHeu1xPBH5jy5zFVBRT6eri3wlDnrv7w%3D%3D%26ch%3D0u-4aZgq4_qr8-amYqgOoMtT7r25hl_7le9Hg5Qq5vjDjjGNGiG6Z-rA%3D%3D&data=02%7C01%7C%7C1296e6e5e3824baf765808d-57f8256ae%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaa%7C1%7C0-%7C636555120128880023&sdata=iRgwIQHX3jXNf3MLrEE20Smjk-23pPMiHigEd9sOZwv8%3D&reserved=0>



SEMINAR: ACT! (Accessible Communication Today!)

Brussels- The European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness together with Microsoft hosted a seminar on 20 Feb. at the Microsoft Centre. The aim of the seminar was to raise awareness concerning accessible communication. Accessibility needs to be an integral part of the development of future products. Policy, as well as society, need to reflect this. The event was moderated by Mark Wheatley (EUD).

EFHOH was represented by president Marcel Bobeldijk and webmaster Bryan Bong as well as members Leon Carlsen (DK), Alf Lindberg (SE) and Ed Weemeas (NL).

Opening speeches included Emmanuelle Grange (European Commission), Helga Stevens MEP and Inmaculada Placencia-Porrero (European Commission) with presentations by Markku Jokinen (EUD president), Liisa Halonen (EUDY secretary general), Peter Vanhoutte (EDBU) and Wouter Bolier (SIGNAAL).

Issues, challenges, and updates regarding legislation, accessibility and the digital future were discussed.

Helga Stevens MEP stated that "In our society today access to information to communicate is paramount. A lot of the information is given auditorily, which for deafblind people is not accessible. For those who cannot hear and see, they have extreme challenges in accessing communication. We need to consider how these individuals can also be included in our society."

Wouter Bolier spoke about the accessibility of the European 112-emergency number and advocated for Total Conversation, a standardized concept where you can use video, text and speech simultaneously in a phone call. This concept is an accessible alternative to traditional voice telephone services and would be more inclusive and suitable for not only those with a disability but for everyone.

Microsoft's Senior Accessibility Evangelist, Hector Minto, gave a demonstration of Microsoft products and shared progress regarding accessibility and inclusion in upcoming technology.

EDF's New Technologies and Innovation Officer, Alejandro Moledo, spoke in length about the EAA, Audio-Visual Services Directive, and the European Electronic Communications Code. Moledo advises that we contact our ministries and try to convince them to reopen and discuss some aspects of the Accessibility Act to make sure that we have end to end accessibility in technologies.

The seminar concluded with a brief fireside chat with the presenters and representatives.

Visit our partners at the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) to learn more about this event:

<https://www.eud.eu/news/act-accessible-communication-today-european-platform-and-microsoft/>



Press Release, February 28, 2018

Hearing care and hearing aids keep you independent!

Good news on World Hearing Day: If you have a hearing loss and use hearing aids, you have a much higher chance of keeping your independence.

March 3rd is World Hearing Day and together with the World Health Organization (WHO) the undersigned organisations make the European public aware of why hearing loss should be treated early and adequately.

Today, 52 million persons in Europe live with a hearing loss. This number will increase, mainly because we are living longer than previous generations. Untreated hearing loss has a negative effect on your personal life, for example reduced social activity and the risk of becoming more dependent on others.

Professor Hélène Amieva, a neuropsychologist and epidemiologist working at Inserm in Bordeaux (FR), has recently published a study in the Journals of Gerontology, Medical Science. This study is based on data from 3,777 persons aged 65 and older who had been followed over a 25 year period.

The study shows that persons with untreated hearing loss are at a higher risk of becoming dependent on others in their daily life. According to the study, persons with hearing loss who use hearing aids have the same chance of staying independent as persons with normal hearing.

“Our members typically have taken the step to see a hearing care professional and they use amplification, hearing aids or cochlear Implants. They all value their independence and certainly want to stay dynamic, social and smart. We encourage all who experience hearing problems, to consult a professional and to take action, so they can lead a fuller, richer and much more enjoyable life”, says Marcel Bobeldijk, President of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH).

“As Europe’s population ages, the burden of untreated hearing loss is expected to increase. We must act to protect older person’s rights and promote their participation in society! Therefore, we support the World Hearing Day, and warmly welcome the initiative of the World Health Organization” says Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General of AGE Platform Europe.

“When listening to the specific needs of our clients, improving quality of life, is very high on the agenda. We nearly always hear that if they had known that using hearing aids would change their life in such a positive way, they would have taken this step much sooner. The theme of the World Hearing Day 2018, “Hear The Future... and prepare for it”, will hopefully help raise awareness among those who experience hearing problems that something can be done and the sooner the better for them, says Mark Laureyns, President the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA).

“World Hearing Day is a unique occasion to highlight the importance of good hearing for everyone regardless of age. If you think that you might have a hearing problem, get your hearing checked by a certified hearing care professional. If you have a hearing loss that must be addressed, the use of modern hearing aids can and will make a big difference to your life”, says Stefan Zimmer, Secretary General of the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA).



You can find the full article here: <https://academic.oup.com/biomedgerontology/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/gerona/glx250/4783130?redirectedFrom=fulltext>

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) is a non-profit European non-governmental organisation consisting of and for the hard of hearing, late deafened persons, those living with tinnitus, hyperacusis, Ménière's disease and cochlear implants, as well as parent organisations and professional organisations. EFHOH's aim is a Europe where the hard of hearing can live without barriers and have the opportunity to participate at all levels in society. EFHOH membership currently represents 21 different countries and over 52 million hard of hearing people across the EU. www.efhoh.org

AGE Platform Europe is a European network of non-profit organisations of and for persons aged 50+, which aims to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. Its work focuses on a wide range of policy areas that impact older and retired persons. These include issues of anti-discrimination, employment of older workers and active ageing, social protection, pension reforms, social inclusion, health, elder abuse, intergenerational solidarity, research, accessibility of public transport and their environment as well as new technologies (ICT). www.age-platform.eu

The European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA) was founded in 1970 as the European umbrella organisation for "Hearing Aid Professionals". It is an association of national professional organisations representing a total of 22,000 hearing care professionals in 14 countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Malta, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the UK. AEA strives to improve the quality of hearing care services, ensure a transparent, fair and competitive market and safeguard freedom of choice in the interest of the end-user. www.aea-audio.org

The European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) represents the six major European hearing instrument manufacturers, producing up to 90% of the hearing aids manufactured in Europe. EHIMA was founded in 1985 and its members are among the world's largest and most advanced hearing aid manufacturers. Members of EHIMA develop, manufacture and market hearing instruments on a large scale in one or more countries in Europe as well as exporting their products worldwide. www.ehima.com



THE DUTCH YOUTH HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION SH-JONG IS PROUDLY ANNOUNCING TO HOST THE IFHOHYP SUMMERCAMP 2018 IN THE NETHERLANDS. THE PREPARATION TEAM IS VERY EXCITED AND LOOKING FORWARD TO SEE YOU ALL IN THE SUMMER OF 2018.

For Who:

Hard of hearing young people between 18 to 35 years old.

The conditions are:

a maximum of 10 persons from each country and only 25% of the participants can be above the age of 30 years. We use a first come first serve policy which means that people who are signing up later, for example as number 11 of the country will be put on a waiting list.

When:

Monday 30th of July to Sunday 5th of August 2018

Where:

The Netherlands. A country of 17 million people, known for being a tolerant, openminded nation and welcoming people from abroad. If you would like to find more information about our culture, regions or places check holland.com

Where in The Netherlands:

The Summercamp accommodation is located in the south-east part of The Netherlands. It's in Veldhoven, which is near the city of Eindhoven. The accommodation 'De Buitenjan' is located in a forest of 'De Kempen'. It has its own sports fields, sports hall, fireplace and a private organization in outdoor and event activities. There's space for 70 participants.

Price:

We've a special price for early birds registrations. Early bird date runs from 1st of November 2017 to 1st of January 2018. When you register within the early bird dates, you have a deposit to pay. The deposit has to be paid before the 1st of January. When the Early bird is closed, you have to pay the normal registration fee. Early bird registrations by deposit have to pay the remaining amount between 1st of January 2018 and 1st of April 2018.

There will be no deposit for the normal price after January 1st 2018. If you want to ensure a cheaper spot for the Summercamp registrate soon as possible.

We offer different options of registration and payment.

IFHOHYP members pay:

Early bird deposit: **100 euro**
and pay **150 euro later**
Early bird price: **250 euro**
Normal price: **285 euro**

Non-IFHOHYP members pay:

Early bird deposit: **100 euro**
and pay **200 euro later**
Early bird price: **300 euro**
Normal price: **335 euro**

This is excluding your own travel expenses and booking fee.

Practical information – how to get there:

The Netherlands in general is very accessible and convenient in (public) transport.

Eindhoven train station and Eindhoven Airport are the closest transfer hubs near the Summercamp location and we will have a pick up service for both, the train station and the airport. This will be provided by our own preparation team. The exact pick up times will be announced before the Summercamp will start.

Bus: From Eindhoven train station there's a bus station. Bus line 150 runs every 30 minutes. The bus stops directly in front of the Summercamp location.

Train: There are trains from Schiphol Airport (Amsterdam) and Düsseldorf Airport (Germany) to Eindhoven train station. The trains driving on a frequent and regular basis.

All participants will receive detailed information about how to get to the Summercamp location e.g. pick up request etc. If you have questions already, such as other airports or transport possibilities, don't hesitate to ask and send an [email](mailto:info@summercamp2018.nl).

Activities:

Our Summercamp program offers several activities to fulfill your needs include sports, daytrips, workshops, presentations and learning something about the dutch culture. Of course there's plenty of free time to get to know each other.

Further information:

A reminder: all the presentations, activities, workshops, social engagement and communication are in English. We do not want discourage people to come, because we want to be as open and tolerant as possible for all participants and all nationalities. But it's strongly recommended to have the intention to improve your English language and communication skills.

Contact details

If you have any questions, please send an email to nlsummercamp2018@gmail.com we are happy to answer all your questions. Please notice it take some days for instant reply and we will answer your question(s) as soon as possible.

How to register?

Press the button below and buy your place at the Summercamp now!
More information check: summercamp2018.nl

REGISTER NOW

EFHOH website - redesigned and relaunched

The EFHOH website was relaunched and redesigned in 2017 by EFHOH volunteer Bryan Bong and Søren Petersen of Hear-It AISBL. The project was overseen by Board Member Juha Hietala. The new website is sponsored by www.hear-it.org. Bryan Bong (The Netherlands) is the EFHOH webmaster. Visit us @ <https://www.efhoh.org>.

Hire an EFHOH speaker!

Invite us to talk. We can travel to your event to present and share our work and lobbying experiences.

We may present about IFHOH Human Rights Toolkit and Prague Declaration, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including our subtitling lobbying work.

EFHOH representatives will never charge for their presentations, however we may request for travel and accommodation to be covered by the inviting party.

Please contact us at office@efhoh.org



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With 60 years' experience and more than 5,700 specialist centres in 20 countries, we're the world's leading dedicated hearing aid specialist.

All our hearing care is tailored to each person's hearing and life-style needs and is delivered by professionally qualified hearing aid audiologists.

From our comprehensive hearing assessment to your programme of Free Lifetime Aftercare, we are committed to help you get the very best from your hearing.

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Mr Emmanuel MACRON
President of the French Republic



XVIII WORLD CONGRESS
of the World Federation of the Deaf
PARIS 2019

SIGN LANGUAGE RIGHTS FOR ALL

23-27 July 2019
Palais des Congrès de Paris

www.wfdcongress2019.org

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International Federation of
Hard of Hearing People – IFHOH Conference:

ACCESSIBILITY REMOVES ALL BARRIERS

Friday, 11 May 2018, at 09:00 AM in M Hotel, Ljubljana, Slovenia

08:00 – 09:00 Arrival and registration

09:00 – 09:30 Welcome and introduction

- **Boris Horvat**, Vice president of ZDGNS
- **Ruth Warick**, President of IFHOH
- **Marcel Bobeldijk**, President of EFHOH
- **Karina Obro**, Board member of IFHOHYP
- **Jani Möderndorfer**, Member of the Slovenian Parliament
- **dr. Igor Šoltes**, Member of the European Parliament
- **Anja Kopač Mrak**, Minister, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

09:30 – 11:15 Legal bases in Slovenia and the world

- 09:30 – 09:50 Global Frameworks including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, **Ruth Warick**, President of IFHOH, Canada
- 09:50 – 10:10 Accessibility for people with hearing loss in Slovenian legislation, **Dragica Bac**, Director-General of the Disabled, Veterans and War Victims Directorate at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- 10:10 – 10:30 Ensuring the right to hearing aids covered by compulsory health insurance in Slovenia, **Drago Perkič**, Head of the Department for Medical Devices at the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia
- 10:30 – 10:50 Legislation and accessibility of the built environment for people with hearing loss, **Pavli Koc**, *Secretary of the Spatial Planning, Construction and Housing Directorate at the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning*

- 10:50 – 11:15 Discussion

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 Psychological aspects of hearing loss:

- 11:30 – 11:50 Hearing and speaking in formation of personality, **Viljem Ščuka, M.D.**
- 11:50 – 12:10 Hearing Loss and Working memory, **Aida Regel Poulsen**, General Secretary of EFHOH, Denmark
- 12:10 – 12:30 Psychological and social aspects of people with hearing loss, **Matjaž Juhart**, Faculty of Education, University of Primorska,
- 12:30 – 12:50 Environmental noise and public health, **Sonja Jeram**, National institute of Public Health
- 12:50 – 13:00 Discussion

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch break

15:00 – 16:30 Accessibility removes all barriers

A (Medical rehabilitation):

- 15:00 – 15:15 Causes of hearing loss and deafness, **Saba Batellino, M.D., Ph.D.**, UMC Ljubljana
- 15:15 – 15:30 Cochlear implantation in adults: indications, surgery and rehabilitation, **Janez Rebol, M.D., Ph.D.**, UMC Maribor
- 15:30 – 15:45 Logopedic-surdopedagogic treatment of people with hearing loss, **Damjana Kogovšek, Ph.D.**, Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana

B (Psychosocial rehabilitation):

- 15:45. – 15:55 Accessibility removes all barriers, **Adem Jahjefendić**, ZDGNS
- 15:55– 16:05 Support for users of hearing aids at a local level, **Marko Štanta**, ZDGNS
- 15:05 – 15:20 Raising awareness of employers about the adjustments for people with hearing loss, **Darja Pajk**, ZDGNS

16:20 – 16:30 Discussion and conclusions, Boris Horvat and Adem Jahjefendić

More information at: <http://www.zveza-gns.si/ifhoh-conference/>



European Conference of Speech to text Reporters ECOS 2018 in Stockholm, Sweden 17-19 August 2018

Welcome to a conference with lectures, discussions and workshops on current issues in speech-to-text interpreting such as distance interpreting, the interpreters silent power, the newest reserach in the field and more.

The conference will be held in in Scandic Hotel Klara in Stockholm.
For more information about the hotel and the location, please visit the website:
<https://www.scandichotels.se/hotell/sverige/stockholm/scandic-klara>

The conference begins on Friday 17 August at 13:00 and ends on Sunday 19 August at 12:00.

The conference cost 350€ if the fee is paid before April 30th.
After that, the fee is 450€ and final payday is June 1st.
The fee includes the programme and meals – from coffee on Friday afternoon to lunch on Sunday. The conference fee will be charged after registration.

Accommodation in Scandic Klara costs 1550 SEK per person and per night in a double room and 1250 SEK per person per night in a single room.

To report participation to the conference, please send an e-mail to:
ecos2018stockholm@gmail.com

We need your name, adress, e-mail and information if you want to book a double- or singleroom at Scandic Hotel Klara. If you want to book a double room, please let us know who you want to share the room with.

You can check with following websites if you are looking for other accomodation options:
booking.com, trivago.se, vandrarhemstockholm.se (hostels), cityhostel.se

If you wish to give a presentation or present a poster in the conference, please submit an abstract of the proposed presentation or the poster to ecos2018stockholm@gmail.com by March 1.

The conference is organized by Föreningen för skriv- och TSS-tolkar.
We have a page for the conference on Facebook: Ecos Stockholm 2018

If you have questions, please contact us on Facebook or e-mail,
ecos2018stockholm@gmail.com

Best regards,

ON WORLD HEALTH DAY 2018, EQUAL ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE IS STILL DENIED TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN EUROPE

More than 80 million persons with disabilities in Europe are still unable to fully access healthcare. Good quality health services are still not a reality due to a host of issues from inaccessible facilities to lack of appropriate training for healthcare professionals and health policymakers. This is why, today, we call on EU Member States to implement policies that allow everyone to access healthcare on an equal basis with others.

Persons with disabilities still have worse access to healthcare than the average European. It's a life or death issue: a study in the United Kingdom asserted that persons with learning disabilities are four times more likely to die of preventable causes than the average person.

Politically the European Union and Member States committed to provide the highest standard of healthcare to persons with disabilities in several ways. It is an area of action in the European Disability Strategy. It is explicitly stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by the EU and all member states. It is one of the Sustainable Development Goals that the EU committed to.

But, in reality, many issues still prevent persons with disabilities to have the same standard of healthcare as the average citizen. This disparity is still costing lives. This is why the European Disability Forum calls on the EU and Member States to:

- Ensure equal access to mainstream (such as dental and eye care, maternal, reproductive and sexual health, etc) and disability specific healthcare services for persons with disabilities, including telemedicine;
- Ensure that persons with disabilities travelling to another EU Member State can rely on a European cross-border benefit package that allows full reimbursement of healthcare costs on an equal basis as other people.
- Promote the development of guidelines on free and informed consent and training of healthcare professionals on disability awareness and provision of reasonable accommodation.
- Ensure that e-health services, as well as mobile health devices and services, are fully accessible and safe to use for patients with disabilities, family members, personal assistants and healthcare staff;
- Develop prevention and health promotion campaigns in accessible formats, with special efforts to reach specific groups of persons with disabilities with evident health disparities, such as women with disabilities and persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities;



For more information, please contact André Félix, External Communications Officer, European Disability Forum, andre.felix@edf-feph.org, tel +32 2 282 46 04

EDF POSITION PAPER ON THE RECAST OF THE RAIL PASSENGERS' RIGHTS REGULATION

EDF has recently published its position paper on the Commission's proposal for a revised Regulation on Rail Passengers Rights (Regulation 1371/2007). According to our assessment, the new proposal strengthens the rights of persons with disabilities and of persons with reduced mobility (PRMs), notably by aligning more closely with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

EDF welcomes the recast of this Regulation and in particular supports the introduction of the following points:

- A clear reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has been introduced
- There are no exemptions for disability-related provisions (Art. 2)
- If ticketing machines are not accessible the tickets can be purchased free of charge on board of the train (Art. 10)
- re-routed and alternative transport services have to be accessible (Art. 16)
- contingency plans for bigger stations have to be drawn up and include persons with disabilities (Art. 18)
- assistance has to be available at all times when trains are operating (Art. 23 – 24)
- staff has to be trained on disability issues (Art. 26)

- the competences of the National Enforcement Bodies are better defined and include specific tasks (Chapter VII)

However, EDF regrets deeply that:

- The 48-hour rule to book assistance remains (Art. 24)
- It has not been clarified that the booking of assistance needs to be free of charge (Art. 22)
- The requirements for staff training are not more comprehensive and detailed
- The enforcement powers of National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs) for individual complaints have not been significantly strengthened and/or harmonized

The next step for EDF will be to lobby the European Parliament and the Council of Europe to ensure that our position is fully taken into account in the next step of the legislative procedure. A vote on the text is scheduled in the Transport Committee of the European Parliament (TRAN) on 07 June 2018. For any further questions feel free to contact the EDF secretariat (marie.denninghaus@edf-feph.org).

EDF CONTINUES TO WORK ON THE EUROPEAN STANDARD ON DESIGN FOR ALL

Last week, EDF Secretariat participated in the final face-to-face meeting concerning the European Standard on Design for All. All the comments, except for the ones regarding the introduction were solved, but some general concerns still need to be addressed. Among these open issues for discussion, EDF volunteered to prepare an informative annex to make this standard easier to follow by all kind of organisations. Therefore, more online meetings will be arranged to ensure that these concerns are addressed with the goal of sending this standard for adoption by the end of this year as planned.

Feel free to join the standardisation expert group, should you want to get involved in the final stage of this standardisation mandate. If you have questions, please contact Alejandro Moledo: Alejandro.moledo@edf-feph.org

DISABILITY INTERGROUP & EDF AGREE ON 2018 PRIORITIES: A DECISIVE YEAR FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On 24 January 2018, the EDF Executive Committee met the Bureau of the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament. The members of EDF Executive Committee represent both the EU and the national umbrella organisations of persons with disabilities. They discussed with Adam Kosa (EPP), Olga Sehnalova (S&D), Helga Stevens (ECR), Brando Benifei (S&D) and Marian Harkin (ALDE)

about common priorities and challenges for 2018. The 2-hour discussion in the Parliament focused on:

- The role of the European Parliament in the follow up of the UN's Concluding Observations on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the report that the European Parliament is preparing
- A plan to declare 2021 as the next European Year for Disabled Persons
- The next European Disability Strategy 2020-2030
- The Sustainable Development Goals
- The EU Pillar of Social Rights
- European Structural Funds
- Passengers' Rights
- Campaigns focusing on drawing up local support for such measures.

The proposal for an Accessibility Act triggered an intensive discussion between the EDF Executive committee members and MEPs. EDF members outlined the key aspects to be addressed during the upcoming negotiations between the Parliament and the Council, acknowledging that the starting point is not by any means as ambitious as EDF and its members expected. Nevertheless, the Disability Intergroup MEPs also committed to do their utmost to push for the best outcome possible and encouraged EDF representatives to advocate as much as possible at national level as well.

EDF, as the umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities, and the Disability Intergroup, as the oldest and largest group of MEPs promoting disability rights, have a strong and lasting partnership. It is the intention of both sides to continue intensive cooperation and to continue to discuss our shared political priorities, at least on an annual basis.

ACCESSIBILITY ACT: NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN EU INSTITUTIONS STARTING

This final stage of the procedure is called "trialogues" because it involves the three main EU-institutions: the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the EU. The Bulgarian Presidency of the Council has announced that they are aiming at adopting the Accessibility Act before the summer - this is certainly ambitious but we hope for the best! Following the adoption of the Council position, the so-called "General Approach" on 7 December 2017, the EU institutions are now ready to enter into the next stage of the legislative process where they will discuss the final text of the Accessibility Act. However, as we wrote in a previous newsletter item, EDF is everything but happy with the Council position. It has many shortcomings and needs substantial improvement. Therefore, EDF will support the positive points of the Parliament's position to ensure the best possible outcome.

Several meetings with the relevant representatives of the European Parliament, the so-called “Rapporteur” and the “Shadow Rapporteurs” have already been organized to support them in their work.

At the same time, it is absolutely crucial to start lobbying the Council of the EU to give a clear signal to the decision-makers that EDF will not just accept any text but that certain priorities such as the built environment, public procurement, transport services, audiovisual media services, or electronic communications have to be included to a maximum level. The EDF secretariat will do this by arranging meetings with the representatives of the national governments in Brussels, the Permanent Representations. But at the same time, it is very important that you also contact your national ministries and tell them that they need to be ambitious in the negotiations and listen to those that are supposed to benefit from the Accessibility Act, i.e. persons with disabilities!

ANA PELAEZ IS RUNNING FOR ELECTION TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

EDF's Vice President, Ana Pelaez Narvaez, is running for election to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. You can now support her nomination in the following ways:

- Send a letter in support of the nomination and the leaflet to your government, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- From now and until June 7th, show your support for the nomination on social media using the hashtag #disabilityforCEDAW and the link of the web site.
- Record a short video message or send photographs highlighting your support for the nomination, if possible using a poster that shows #disabilityforCEDAW.

REPORT ON ENDING FORCED STERILISATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE!

EDF and CERMI Women's Foundation have released a comprehensive report which raises awareness on how to prevent and end forced sterilisation of women and girls with disabilities. It explains the negative consequences of forced sterilisation on the enjoyment of all human rights for all women and girls with disabilities. It highlights the close relationship between this practice and the deprivation of legal capacity, and describes the current situation in Europe and beyond. Finally, it gives an overview of the current human rights standards and jurisprudence on the topic.

This joint report of the CERMI Women's Foundation and the European Disability Forum was adopted by the EDF

General Assembly in Madrid, Spain, in May 2017 and presented at a public hearing in the European Parliament on the 5th of December 2017.

ACCESS CITY AWARDS

Each year, EDF collaborates with the European Commission for the Annual Access City Awards. EDF National Council members identify jury members and make selection of cities at the national level, and EDF also provides input to the European Jury which selects the winners and special mentions.

Are you, or any of your members avid fans of the cultural heritage in your city? Would you like to appear in the promotional video? If so, please contact us and we will send a list of potential candidates to the EC. Contact: Andre. Felix@edf-feph.org

ENDING FORCED STERILISATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES IN SPAIN AND OTHER COUNTRIES

On February 6th 2018, the joint CERMI Women's Foundation (FCM in Spanish) and EDF report on putting an end to forced sterilisation was presented at the headquarters of the Spanish Bar Association (association of Spanish lawyers).

During the presentation, FCM denounced forced sterilisation, based on the figures made public by the General Council of the Spanish Judiciary covering the years 2005-2016, which amount to more than 1000 women and girls with disabilities in just over one decade. These figures shocked many of those attending.

The presentation was a great success and CERMI achieved their aim of spreading the message to a large part of the Spanish public. They had great coverage in the media, including articles in many of the leading newspapers and television and radio reports.

As a result, just one day after the presentation the mixed group in the Spanish parliament (comprised of members of parliament from several smaller parties) presented a non-binding initiative calling on the chamber to urge the Spanish government to adopt all necessary measures to outlaw the forced sterilisation of people with disabilities.

THE EU DISABILITY CARD IN PRACTICE: AN ENIL REPORT

The European Disability Card is an initiative that EDF and its members have been long campaigning for. In 2017, it

was finally launched in eight EU Member States as part of a pilot project of the European Commission. But how does it actually work in practice? Can you already use the Card? Can you find the relevant information? And where is it accepted?

Frank Sioen of our member organisation ENIL has made the test and written a report about the practical use of the Disability Card. It turns out that it is not that easy to make use of it and that the project still needs some improvements. You can find this report on the ENIL website.

WORRYING SCENARIOS FOR THE NEXT EU BUDGET

On the 14 February the European Commission published a Communication to the Parliament, the European Council and the Council on A new, modern Multiannual Financial Framework for a European Union that delivers efficiently on its priorities post-2020

The Communication aims at stimulating the debate among political leaders by presenting different scenarios on the basis of how much money every Country will be ready to allocate to the EU budget. Priorities identified include: security and safety, defence, mobility of young people (Erasmus +), climate change, Digital Single Market, Research and Innovation, Cohesion Policy, International goals. The European Pillar of Social Rights is briefly mentioned but without proposals for any budget allocation. Particularly worrying are the options for financing cohesion policy (European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund). These options do not include increase of the budget but either to keep the same amount and support all EU regions or to reduce the budget drastically by reducing the countries and regions eligible for support. After the discussion at the Board EDF will agree on recommendations against these scenarios and will answer the public consultations on the European Funds. For more information please contact Simona Giarratano at simona.giarratano@edf-feph.org

CRPD COMMITTEE'S ELECTIONS

You will also be aware of the severe gender imbalance in the committee, with only one out of 18 members a woman. After the last election at the COSP in 2016, the EDF President referred to this issue in his address to the conference. It is essential that strong European candidates are nominated and supported and that we think especially of the nomination of qualified women.

The CRPD Committee Secretariat has sent a note verbale to States Parties to the CRPD and updated its website on the 2018 CRPD Committee elections process, initiating officially the call for nominations of candidates. This is a very

important moment that calls for active engagement of organizations of persons with disabilities at the national and international levels!

States Parties have until April 12th to nominate a candidate if they wish to do so.

For more information, please contact EDF Human Rights Coordinator, An-Sofie Leenknecht (Ansofie.leenknecht@edf-feph.org).

OPENING OF THE 19TH SESSION OF THE CRPD COMMITTEE

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities opened its 19th session on 14th February during which it will review Haiti, Nepal, Oman, Sudan, Slovenia, Seychelles and the Russian Federation. It will also initiate the second cycle of review under the simplified reporting procedure by adopting list of issues prior to reporting on Costa Rica, New Zealand, Paraguay and Republic of Korea. The Committee also plans to make advances with the draft General Comment on Article 5.

This 19th session immediately will be followed the CRPD Committee's 9th pre-session which took place from 04 to 08 September 2017 during which it will adopt the list of issues on Algeria, Cuba, Malta, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. All States reports and public written contributions by organizations of persons with disabilities, and other documents relevant to States review processes are available at the website of the Committee on its 19th session and on its 9th pre-session.

The following public sessions of the CRPD Committee, including State party reviews of Haiti, Nepal, Oman, Sudan, Slovenia, Seychelles and the Russian Federation, will be webcast live by the United Nations Office of Geneva on UNTV at this link.

EDF is supporting its members that are going through review during this 19th session and 9th pre-session. For more information, please contact EDF Human Rights Coordinator, An-Sofie Leenknecht

Self-Expression & Congenital Deafblindness

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- TIN-ACT research projects investigate the
 1. Neural mechanisms of tinnitus.
 2. Development of new and improved tools for the assessment of tinnitus.
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- TIN-ACT is a collaboration between 5 leading European universities, 3 companies and 7 partner organizations who together contribute to the intersectoral and international training of PhD students.

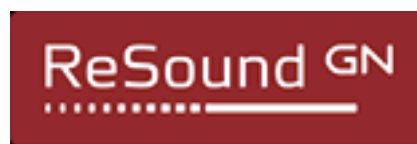
Recruitment starts: 1 February 2018

For more information and application please visit: www.tinact.eu

Email: info@tinact.eu



EFHOH would like to acknowledge our sponsors generosity in helping us continue our efforts' in European advocacy



EFHOH MEETINGS 2018

2018	2018	2018	2018
30 April	Geneva	ITU meeting on Safe Listening Standard	Lidia
4-5 May	Athens	EDF Youth Committee (IFHOHYP president in behalf of EFHOH)	Victor Rehn
11-12 May	Ljubljana	EFHOH AGM	All board members
25 May	Vilnius	Platform meeting	Aida and Marcel
26-27 May	Vilnius	EDF AGA	Aida and Marcel
5 & 6 June	Barcelona	Understanding Quality in Media Accessibility (UMAQ) Conference	Marcel
7-9 June	Lake Como/Italy	Hearing Across the Lifespan (HEALs) conference	Aida and Darja
July	Geneva	WHO stakeholder meeting	Lidia & ?
9-20 July	Ljubljana	ITU standardisation meetings	Lidia
17-18 Aug	Stockholm	European Conference of Speech to Text Professionals (ECOS)	Aida
31 Aug- 2 September	Island	NHS seminar (Nordic HOH organisations/countries)	Aida and Marcel
14 September	Milan	6 th International Symposium on Accessibility and live Subtitling	Marcel
25-28 September	Marseilles	TIN-ACT (Tinnitus project) meeting no 2.	Marcel
26- 28 September	Milan	EVOTION experts meeting	Lidia
17 October	Hannover	Audiologist of the year 2018	Aida and Marcel
17-19 October	Hannover	Heat-It AGM and 63rd International Congress of Hearing Aid Acousticians	Aida and Marcel
October	Zagreb	EFHOH board meeting	All board members
8-9 November	Geneva	European Broadcasting Union meeting of access services experts.	Lidia & ?
17 and 18 November	Vienna	EDF board meeting + EU conference	Marcel
3-4 December	Brussels	European Days of Disabled People	Aida and Marcel
2019	2019	2019	2019
17-19 June	Stockholm	Media for All conference	Marcel and/or Aida

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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.