



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

The mission of EFHOH

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People exists to represent hard of hearing people at European level in dialogue with the European Union, the members of the European Parliament, and other European authorities.

Our aim is a Europe where hard of hearing people can live without barriers and have the opportunity to participate on all levels in society. EFHOH will realize this vision through our actions, contacts and campaigns, involving the EFHOH members and our partners.

■ CONFERENCES ON LATE DEAFNESS, INCLUSION, CRPD, WHO AND MUCH MORE

During the year 2015 EFHOH were able to move our positions substantially forward. We were represented at several conferences, to some of them invited as key-note speakers.

Late deafened in Tallin, Estonia

In April The EFHOH Vice President, Lidia Best, was invited to Estonia on behalf of the Nordic Council of Late Deafened (VDNR) who had the AGM and seminar in Tallinn. She presented the work of EFHOH on behalf of deafened people at the EU level. Our board member Jaana Linna was also present.

EFHOH has Late Deafened Workgroup, which prepared new survey on late deafened people situation in Europe. The survey will be ready early in 2016 to participate in.

WHO Ear Care Day theme of 2015: Make Listening Safe

EFHOH in cooperation with AEA and EHIMA (the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals and European Hearing Instrument Manufacturer's Association) campaigned on the 'Make Listening Safe' theme. On the 3rd March our President, Marcel Bobeldijk attended the launch of the 'Make listening Safe' WHO campaign in Geneva.

Later in the year, on 1st October 2015 our Vice President attended a WHO-ITU joint stakeholder meeting related to the implementation of the safe listening practices. The meeting focused on the possibilities of modern technology to promote safe listening practices and positive behavior changes.

You can find the WHO campaign material here:

http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/activities/MLS_Brochure_English_lowres_for_web.pdf.

AEA General meeting and conference

The European Association of hearing aid professionals (AEA) invited Vice President Lidia Best to speak at their General Assembly on 17 May in Brussels. EFHOH discussed the importance of putting forward the user's perspective in this organization.

14TH United Nations CRPD Committee Meeting in Geneva

EFHOH was part the EDF delegations, present at the examinations of the European Union by the United Nations expert committee on CRPD. The EFHOH delegation consisted of the President, Marcel Bobeldijk and Vice President, Lidia Smolarek-Best.

ACCESSIBILITY

Public Transport

Our President presented at two conferences related to public transport. The first one was the International Taxi Conference in Amsterdam, and the second one was the International Bus Conference in Manchester.

ICT

Our President and Vice President are members of the Expert email group of EDF. Most of the activities were around the review of the Audio-visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), European Accessibility Act and web accessibilities.

For a full view of all meetings and conferences that EFHOH has participated in during the year, see page 5.

ORGANISATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Hearing Awareness Workshop in Athens

On the invitation from the Hellenic Federation of the Deaf EFHOH held a hearing awareness workshop at the Greek Disability House. Topics included CRPD, hearing technology and subtitling. The workshop for the event was supported with speech to text in English. We also met with EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, and our Greek individual member Sofia Kolotourou.

European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness

The continuing work of the Platform involved 3 meetings a year in Brussels. The Platform also launched their website, operating from the middle of the year 2014.

EDF

The European Disability Forum held their Annual General Assembly in Warsaw, Poland. The main focus of the meeting was the preparation of the alternative report to the United Nations CRPD Committee and the implementation of the CRPD by the European Union. EFHOH President, Marcel Bobeldijk is one of the EDF board members.

The EDF Women's Committee

This committee had its second meeting in Jurmala, Latvia. Our Vice President is a member and participated via Skype.

EFHOH is represented in the e-mail expert groups of EDF:
Transport and ICT, Stereotypes Accessible Tourism and CRPD.

EDPD in Brussels

As usual EFHOH was represented at the annual policy conference to mark the European Day of People with Disabilities, EDPD. The conference was hosted by the European Commission (EC) in close co-operation with the European Disability Forum (EDF). This year the Conference focused on children and young people with disabilities. A number of young people presented along with adults and professionals.

General Secretary Aida Regel Poulson represented EFHOH and presented, together with one of her students, on the 'Growing in a barrier free Europe when you have a hearing loss'. The EFHOH board also gave input on a list of issues that our General Secretary discussed in the conference. The conference was live streamed with subtitles and International Sign.

An important part of this conference is the traditional "Access City Award", the European Award for Accessible cities. The aim of this contest is to exchange good practice. The 2015 winner was Milan, second and third came Wiesbaden and Toulouse. You can find the video of the awarded cities at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=2410&furtherNews=yes>

More about EDF at www.edf-feeph.org.

EU and the UN CRPD

The European Union itself has ratified the UN CRPD. The European Commission presented their first report to the monitoring committee in June. The EDF published an alternative report in spring 2015 ready for the constructive dialogue in April and August in Geneva. EFHOH has provided Input from the hard of hearing people perspective to the report.

PSAP's Report

EFHOH worked together with AEA (The European Association of hearing aid professionals) on research and resulting report on safety concerns related to personal sound amplification systems. We are working towards customer safety and regulation.

Other meetings, conferences and representation

Hear-It and the EUD

Hear-It held their General Assembly in Copenhagen. We were represented by our General Secretary Aida (copy and paste name). For the first time EFHOH was accepted as the 'Hear-It' general member.

EUD (European Union of the Deaf) Anniversary

The EUD celebrated its 30 years in November. To mark the occasion, they organised a Conference on Deafness in relation to 'Invisible Disabilities'. President Marcel Bobeldijk represented EFHOH.

■ TABLE OF ALL MEETINGS

During the year EFHOH as usual attended several other meetings in Brussels, as well as at other places concerning different fields of our work. A full table of all these and other meetings is found below showing the range of our advocacy work on high European level.

23-25 January	Hamburg / Germany	EFHOH board meeting
20-22 February	Riga/Latvia	EDF board meeting
3 March	Geneva	WHO event International Ear Care Day
11 March	Brussels/ Belgium	Platform meeting
28 March	Antwerpen / Belgium	Symposium 60 years Onder Ons
9 April	Essen / Germany	IFHOH board meeting
1-2	Geneva/ Switzerland	UN CRPD Committee side event
10-12 April	Essen / Germany	EFHOH Annual General Meeting (AGM)
18 April	Tallin/Estonia	Nordic Late Deafened Conference
24 April	TAXintel/ Netherlands	Amsterdam/NL
8 May	Lublin/ Poland	University of KUL conference
17 May	Brussels/ Belgium	AEA AGM/Symposium
29-31 May	Warsaw/Poland	EDF AGA
18 June	Hague/ Netherlands	Disability Matters
2 July	Manchester/ UK	EuroTaxi Conference
27 and 28 August	Geneva/ Switzerland	UN CRPD committee meeting
14-16 October	Nürnberg/ Germany	EUHA International Congress of Hearing Aid Acousticians
20 October	Copenhagen/ Denmark	Hear It AGM
29- 20 October	Copenhagen/ Denmark	Train the Trainers CRPD Workshops
22- 23 October	Copenhagen/ Denmark	Train the Trainers CRPD Workshops
30-31 November	Brussels/ Belgium	EDF board meeting
7-8 December	Brussels/ Belgium	European Day of Disabled People

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Strategy on Rehabilitation: The European Standard EN 301 549

Two Board members and a technology expert volunteer are working in the EDF ICT Expert group on implementation of the above standard, "Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services in Europe".

EFHOH GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND CONFERENCE

The EFHOH Annual General Meeting 2015 was held in Essen, Germany. 19 delegates from 19 members participated, at the meeting on April 10th. The Annual and Financial Reports and the Auditors report were all accepted.

New members

We are pleased to welcome new sponsoring member Humantechnik GmbH.

Elections

Our longstanding board members Ritva-Liisa Schäding and Jan Lamby decided to step down after 11 years of dedicated service to EFHOH. The results of the elections are as followed:

The President: Marcel Bobeldijk, Netherlands

The General Secretary: Aïda Regel Poulsen, Denmark

The Treasurer: Richard Darbéra, France

The election of the Nomination Committee 2015 was carried out. Harald Tamegger took the position as a Chair.

Petra Feinkohl, Germany was again appointed to the office of Auditor.

At the AGM our intern Ed Spragg launched 'The State of Subtitling Report 2015' and presented the results of an investigation on the statistics of Hard of hearing people in Europe and Worldwide. The State of subtitling is our second report that has had encouraging results of improvements in traditional television broadcasting but there is still room for improvement. It has also focused more on internet based services and providers such as 'video on demand' services.

The day after the AGM the German Schwerhoerigen Bund, DSB, hosted a one day conference with the themes of:

- CRPD
- Health Care Systems and patient involvement
- Communication and assistance
- Accessibility
- The inclusive labor market

The links to the conference can be found at schwerhoerigen-netz.de

Essen Declaration

The delegates were presented with the Essen Declaration 2015 "Access to hearing aids is access to opportunity'. Following the short discussion and minor amendments, the declaration has now been accepted and signed. The declaration has also received support from AEA (The European Audiology Association).

Motions

There was a motion from the Swedish member HRF to increase the Board by an additional two members. The rationale behind this was the increased work load of the existing board members. The board has responded that while they welcome the initiative it was not financially viable. Following a short discussion the motion was denied by delegates.

Action Plan 2015-2016 and Budget plan

The action plan for the following two years and the budget plan were accepted.

IFHOH

EFHOH has close co-operation with the **International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, IFHOH**. The president of EFHOH (Marcel Bobeldijk) is by the constitution of IFHOH, a permanent member of the IFHOH board.

EFHOH together with IFHOH organised UN CRPD 'train the trainer' workshops, held at the Danish Disability House in Copenhagen. The trainers were Louise Carrol (IFHOH Human Rights Officer) and Marcel Bobeldijk (EFHOH President). As we had a high level of interest for these sessions we decided to increase the intake with 2 workshops. The impact of the workshop has already been demonstrated with participants Holding CRPD sessions in their respective countries.

More information about IFHOH at the website: www.ifhoh.org

IFHOHYP

IFHOHYP, the International Federation of the Hard of Hearing Young People held their AGM in Amsterdam, Netherlands in November, in conjunction with their annual study session. EFHOH Vice President attended as a delegate. During the AGM the motion was discussed and accepted that EFHOH as well as IFHOH will lose the status of their delegates with voting rights and instead, from on, will participate as observers. The EFHOH board discussed this motion prior to the AGM and agreed and supported the decision.

More information about IFHOHYP at the website www.ifhohyp.org

■ EFHOH MEDIA AND INFORMATION

Newsletter

Four issues of the Newsletter were published in 2015. The Editor (volunteer) is Niels-Henrik M. Hansen, Denmark.

There were close to 460 receivers on the mailing list during 2015. The Newsletter remains the best source for reports and information of events and advocacy work. Most of the events covered in this report can be found in the Newsletters.

Information and PR

EFHOH published the Impact Report 2014 in May 2015. This covers the most important events and conferences where EFHOH was able to make a substantial contribution/impact. It turned out to be a great success, and it was distributed at several events and became an appreciated channel of gaining information of EFHOH's work.

Website

EFHOH has a modern website, recently updated with a new design. Vice-President Lidia Best has been managing it. Though still under development and improvement, we are currently looking to recruit a new volunteer to manage the website.

Facebook:

EFHOH has a Facebook group with 640 members and this group keeps attracting more members. We plan to increase the outreach by setting up an official Facebook page, which will increase our social media presence.

Twitter

EFHOH also has a Twitter account with over 300 followers. As with Facebook, it's increasingly important to be visible on these social media platforms. You can follow us @EFHOH, @marbob32 or @best_lidia.

MEMBERS, THE BOARD AND OFFICE

Members

EFHOH consists of 29 general members, 3 associate members, and 4 gold sponsors and 7 supporting members; we also have one individual member in Greece. In addition to the members, EFHOH has several contact persons from countries where a hard of hearing organization has not yet been fully established.

The Board

The following persons were members of the board in the year 2015:

President: Marcel Bobeldijk, the Netherlands (elected 2015)

Vice-president: Lidia Best, UK (elected 2014)

General Secretary: Aida Regel Poulsen, Denmark (elected 2015)

Treasurer: Richard Darbéra, France (elected 2015)

Member: Jaana Linna, Finland (elected 2014)

The Board had three meetings during 2015:

January: Hamburg, Germany

April: Essen, Germany

September: Athens, Greece

Office

During 2015 EFHOH managed to set up an intern position to support the joint work of EFHOH and Action on Hearing Loss (AOHL), in The United Kingdom. Throughout the whole of 2015 we had three interns, which were: Ed Spragg, Jevan Vipinachandran and Sophie Kleanthous.

Contact information, see Annex 2.

FINAL WORDS

Finally, the board members want to thank everyone; individual persons, members, member organizations, co-operating organizations and, last but not least, the sponsors who in different ways have given support to EFHOH in the work to make a create a barrier-free Europe for all hard of hearing citizens.

February 2015,
The EFHOH Board

Marcel Bobeldijk

Lidia Best

Aida Regel Poulsen

Richard Darbéra

Jaana Linna

ANNEXES

Annex 1

GENERAL MEMBERS (29)

as per 31 December 2015

Austria	Österreichischer Schwerhörigenbund - ÖSB
Belgium	Vereniging vor Hardhorenden "Onder Ons" Hörgeschädigte Ost Belgiens VoG
Croatia	Hrvatski Savez Gluhih I Nagluhah - HSGN
Czech Republic	Svaz Neslysicich a Nedoslychavyh v CR - SNNCR Ceska Unie Neslysicich - CUN
Denmark	Høreforeningen
Estonia	Eesti Vaegkuuljate Liit
Finland	Kuuloliitto r.y.; - FFHOH Svenska Hörselförbundet rf
France	Bureau de Coordination des Associations de Devenus-Sourds et Malentendants - BUCODES
Germany	Deutscher Schwerhörigen Bund e.V. – DSB Deutsche Tinnitus-Liga - DTL
Hungary	Siketek es Nagyothallok Országos Szevetsege -SINOSZ Nagyothallók és Barátaik Osszágos Közhasznú Egyesülete – NABOKE
Iceland	The Icelandic Association of Hard of Hearing People
Ireland	Irish Hard of Hearing Association- IHHA
Netherlands	Nederlandse Vereniging voor Slechthorenden - NVVS Federatie van Ouders van Slechthorende en Spraakgebrekkige Kinderen - FOSS
Norway	Hørselhemmedes Landsforbund – HLF
Poland	Polska Fundacja Osób Słabosłyszących - PFOS
Slovakia	Slovensky Zväz Sluchovo Postihnutých
Slovenia	Zveza Drustev Gluhih in Naglusnih Slovenije
Sweden	Hörselskadades Riksförbund - HRF
Switzerland	Pro Audito Schweiz
Turkey	Türkiye Isitme ve Konusma Rehabilitasyon Vakfi
United Kingdom	Hearing Concern Link Action on Hearing Loss - AoHL (formerly RNID, Royal National Institute for Deaf) National Association of Deafened People - NADP

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS (3)

Croatia	Association of deaf and hard of hearing persons "Light"- Solin
Germany	Internationaler Verband für Schwerhörigen- Seelsorge e.V.- IVVS
Switzerland	FoRom écoute, La Fondation Romande des Malentendants

GOLD SPONSORS (4)

Amplifon	Belgium
Bernafon AG	Switzerland
Siemens Audiologische Technik GmbH	Germany
Widex A.P.S.	Denmark

SPONSORING MEMBERS (4)

GN Resound A/S	Denmark
Oticon A/S	Denmark
Phonak AG	Switzerland
Pro Audito Winterthur	Switzerland

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER (1)

Sofia Kolotourou,	Greece
-------------------	--------

Annex 2

EFHOH facts and history

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing – EFHOH - was created as a legal entity and as an independent organization on 31 March 2001 in Budapest, Hungary.

EFHOH is a benevolent federation of the European national organizations of hard of hearing people. The organization was registered in the Register of Commerce of Utrecht, the Netherlands, on the 18 November 2001. EFHOH is the only European organization that represents all the 81 million hard of hearing adults (one in seven Europeans) in geographical Europe.

Its mission is to promote accessible communication, accessibility to travel and the built environment and to raise awareness of the problems of hard of hearing people in society.

EFHOH has full membership as a European Non-Governmental organization (NGO) in the European Disability Forum – EDF with the right to representation in the Annual General Assembly.

Contact information

Address EFHOH
c/o Action on Hearing Loss
19-23 Featherstone Street,
London EC1Y 8SL
United Kingdom

E-mail office@efhoh.org

Website www.efhoh.org

Newsletter Niels-Henrik M. Hansen
Editor E-mail: nhmh@learning.aau.dk

: