

EFHOH

Published by the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

Edited by Marcel Bobeldijk, president of EFHOH and Niels-Henrik M. Hansen.

Deadline for the next newsletter is August 10. /2019.

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NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019

EFHOH



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People



EFHOH President letter

By Marcel Bodeldijk

Spring Greetings from EFHOH

Let's start by wishing you a wonderful Spring 2019! There's no better month than May to make a fresh start with spring in the air, lighter and longer days, and tulips blooming in different colors.

Traditionally, the first EFHOH newsletter of the year is to inform you about our Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year, the AGM was held in the beautiful city of Zagreb, the capital of Croatia. As a new element in the program, this year we organized three workshops about Late- Deafness, Tinnitus,

and Speech to Text. See also a nice article by Claire Saber-Landesmann (Austria). Many thanks to Zdravka Bastijan and her team at the Croatian Organisation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing for organizing the EFHOH AGM 2019 in Zagreb. THANKS!

The Audiologist of the Year 2019 competition was launched on Monday the 28th of January and will close on Monday the 1st of July. We welcome you to be as actively involved in the competition as you would like, sharing information or developing your own communications to send to your members – we will be happy to support you. Last year EFHOH board



members Aïda Regel Poulsen and I participated as judges.

It is also good for you to know that the European Disability Forum and their members (including EFHOH) launched a pledge titled "EU for Disability Rights." This document is aimed at candidates in the European Parliament elections. It asks them to commit in advance to the rights of over 80 million EU citizens with disabilities by, among others, joining the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament. Candidates can sign and send the pledge to andre.felix@edf-feph.org: Version in PDF Version in Word. Alternatively, they can sign the pledge through this form. You can also fill in this version in Word and send it to andre.felix@edf-feph.org. Also, the signatories of the pledge can be found on this page: <http://edf-feph.org/mep-candidates-eu-disability-rights>.

The World Health Organization (WHO) have launched the hearWHO app for mobile devices to help detect hearing loss. As a promotion related to World Hearing Day (3rd of March), the app is free and is available for both iOS & Android devices. The app is targeted at those who are at risk of hearing loss or who already experience some of the symptoms related to hearing loss. It allows people to check their hearing regularly and intervene early. Visit the WHO website for more information: <https://www.who.int/deafness/hear-WHO/en/>.

On Wednesday the 6th March, we had a very successful and interesting Lunch Debate during the week of World Hearing Day in the European Parliament. The theme this year was "Protect and Check Your Hearing!" This year the host member of the European Parliament was MEP Igor Soltes (Green Party) from Slovenia. The other speakers included Shelly Chadha (WHO) and her topic was Safe Listening and Early Identification at All Ages. Kim Ruberg (Hear-It) gave a presentation about the economic reasons to have your hearing checked. In his presentation, Mark Laureyns (AEA) focused on the topic How to Make Sure that Hearing Protection is Safe. Mladen Versic (Zveza) informed us about the Slovenian Hearing Awareness Campaign in his country Slovenia. Also, from Slovenia our treasurer Darja Pajk gave a very interesting presentation about the Social Aspect of Early Identification. Please note that you can find a press release in many languages (including your national language) in the link below, which you can share with your members and others: <https://www.efhoh.org/hearing-loss-numbers-and-costs-hear-it-press-release/>.

Warm regards and have a great Summertime,

Marcel Bobeldijk
EFHOH President



EFHOH in Zagreb
- an intensive but very
worthwhile EFHOH con-
ference

The host of the EFHOH conference this year was Croatia and I had the opportunity to attend the conference as a delegate for the ÖSB (Austrian Hard of Hearing Association). We arrived in Zagreb in time for the pre-conference workshop on Speech-to-Text. The workshop was given by Rocio Bernabe Caro and was to introduce a study and project on "real time intralingual subtitling" that develops a training method and curriculum, fosters greater visibility, and develops education for the digital world. The study uses "re-speaking" and "velotype writing" as methods for speech- to -text in various environments.

What is re-speaking? The re-speaker simultaneously re-speaks, modifies and translates the spoken lecture into a microphone that is connected to a software with automatic speech recognition and that then writes the text down.

Velotype is a keyboard that uses certain combinations of keyboard letters to write more efficiently and quicker. The typist can be anywhere, as long as he hears the speaker and it can be a faster and more efficient method for text writing. It can be used face

to face as well as with online and relay methods. After learning about the method and finding out how speech to text gets used in other countries it became clear that more countries use the traditional keyboard when speech to text is used. In the discussion after, it was emphasized that live speech to text interpreters can't be replaced in any situation demanding confidentiality. That could be any legal situation such as a visit to a lawyer, court appearances, as well as a medical issue or any other where using an open software translating program such as google translate may breach your right to privacy. The project is still running until 2021. It will be interesting to see how these new technologies and the study develops.

In the intermission there was a surprise cake for Marcel Bobeldijk, president of EFHOH, honoring his 20+years as a member of the EFHOH team. That is a lot of years of volunteer work!

The next day, the one-day conference "Understanding Accessibility" began. We were given the option of trying out a tablet using "Text on Top" which simultaneously translates the spoken lecture into whatever



A surprise cake for Marcel Bobeldijk, president of EFHOH, honoring his 20+years as a member of the EFHOH team. That is a lot of years of volunteer work!



language you need using “Google Translate”. That was interesting and I tried it out in German. I could change the lettering, the background, and the size of the letters to make it comfortable for me to read. Google Translate is not yet perfect but I found it usable. This will open the conference for many people and organizations that don’t have proficient English speakers who could attend international meetings. And it is also useful for people with visual issues.

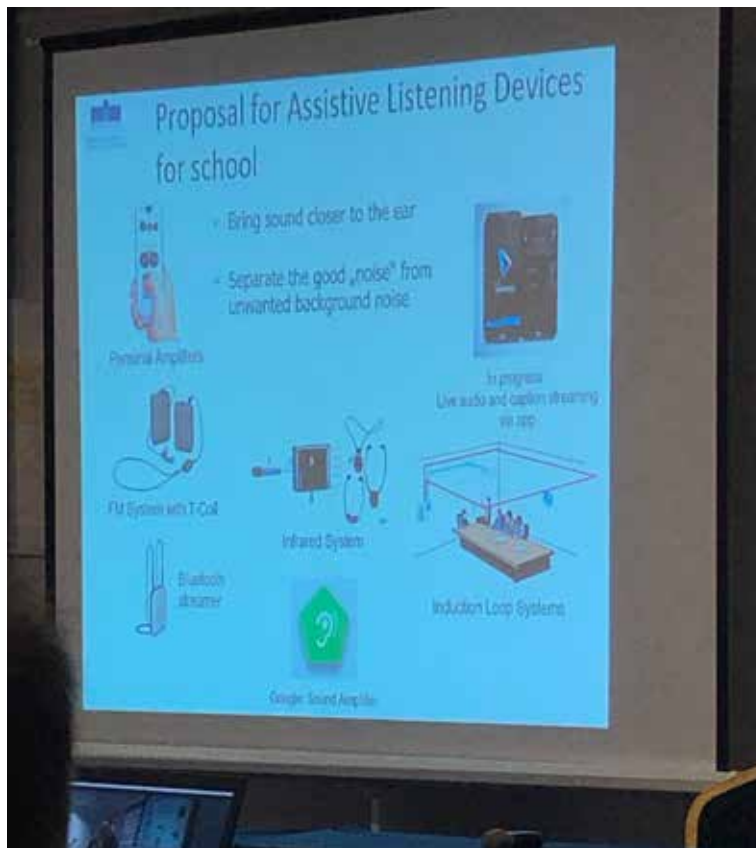
As in any conference beginning, an introduction from a few ministers as well as the president of the Croatian Association of the deaf and hard of hearing was given. The speeches highlighted for me how the struggles that our population deals with, whether it is government funding and recognition, or accessibility of services in rural areas, and educational services and technologies for children and adults, are issues we all fight for.

There was a diverse group of lectures dealing with the availability of technologies that make our lives more accessible. On the one hand we had lecturers such as Mher Hakobyan, EDF Accessibility Officer (European Disability Forum) who talked about the work of the EDF. The EDF is an umbrella Organization which has 98 members for the 80 million Europeans with disabilities, and is run by persons with disabilities. “Nothing about us without us!”

They are actively involved in the UN Convention of rights for Persons with disabilities (UNCPRD) which was ratified in 2010. And also, The European Disability Act which was adopted just now in March 2019. With the EU elections this year it is important that all of us research that our candidates are actively involved in supporting equal rights and barrier free access for all.

On the other hand, there were lecturers dealing with the available technologies and their development. These were speakers from companies such as Med-El about their cochlear implants and a company called Qlu dealing with the development of induction loops. There were presentations on available subtitling in public broadcasting and telephone relay services and methods.

It was a lot of technical information to take home from a one-day conference. For me, Mathjaz Debevic, (WFD, world federation of the deaf) condensed the information of the whole day into one lecture. The lecture was about E-Accessibility: “WFD Statement of the Adoption and Adaptation of Technologies and Accessibility and how it applies to the UNCPRD.” It summarizes the EU standard guidelines and then went into detail of what this involves. There are specific recommendations of what should be used in educational environments, such as multimedia



conferencing systems, video remote interpretation or captioning, assistive listening devices such as personal amplifiers, audio and captioning via App, FM Systems with T-coil, Infrared systems, Induction Loops Systems, blue tooth streamers, Google Sound amplifiers and many more. And he also talked about the importance of e-learning materials. He summarized the development of real time captioning at events and mobile based captioning such as Text on Top. (<http://text-on-top.com/en/>) Captioning can be now done in various ways: One can use a special keyboard such as Velotype, one can use re-speaking techniques that are keyboard based or now the relatively new automatic speech recognition (ASR) which uses the principles of dictation through Apps such as "Google Live Transcribe", "Dragon Dictation" and others such as AI (Artificial Intelligence) Assistance such as Amazon Alexia, Siri, Google AI and others. There are even newer trends being studied and they involve augmented and mixed reality assistance. Some hearing aids/cochlea companies are experimenting and/or are using self-fitting and remote-control video conferences that help adjust and keep your devices usable at all times.

The important thing to remember is that even with all the newer and very exciting developments there is a statement out from WFD and IFHOH (27.03.2019) that:

ASR should NOT REPLACE personal telecommunications and captioning services.

This concluded the daylong conference and the Croatian Association invited us to a dinner in a lovely restaurant.

The next morning, we had the EFHOH AGM. After reviewing and approving some of the past years administrative and financial decisions the election for the president of the board, the secretary, and treasurer commenced. All three board members were re-elected into office. We congratulate them and wish them a productive year.

In the afternoon we were able to participate in a tour of Zagreb, which was a pleasant ending to an intensive but very worthwhile EFHOH conference.

Written by Claire Landesmann. Photos by Claire Landesmann.

Welcome to



EUROFEST GERMANY

Registration now open

4. – 9. 8. 2019

European Family Camp –

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with hearing impairments
and facing future
challenges together

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www.bundesjugend.de



Fédération Européenne des Parents d'Enfants Déficients Auditifs

European Federation of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children

Europäischer Verband der Eltern Hörgeschädigter Kinder

Federación Europea de Padres de Niños con Discapacidad Auditiva

Registration

1. Please fill out the online form to register you and your family
<https://goo.gl/forms/C6UXekgibZQbPTpX2>.
2. Receive confirmation by FEPEDA about your reservation. Your invoice will be sent to you at the same time.
3. Your reservation can only be guaranteed after the total price has been transferred to the EUROFEST account.
4. Make sure FEPEDA knows your final travel details.

Languages and interpreting

- The general language of FEPEDA EUROFEST Germany 2019 will be English.
- Interpreters for German spoken language ↔ German sign language will support our European Family Camp from Sunday evening to Thursday evening.
- The official programme on Monday will be interpreted in English, German (spoken & sign)

Contact details

If you have further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

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mobile +358 449740795
- Project leader: Nicole Schilling nic.schilling@t-online.de mobile +49 178 9695194

Partners and sponsors

Main sponsors are

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- Schwerhörigenbund Landesverband Hessen
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Image credit: WHO

Make **Listening Safe** officially launched!

On 14 February 2019, World Health Organisation HQ in Geneva was a witness to a truly remarkable moment in history. The building main foyer rocked with great sound quality but at safe loudness levels to a live concert by Ricky Key, just few steps away from the first inaugural meeting on 1st October 2015 where ITU and WHO together with international experts in audiology, engineers, manufacturers, academics and civil society representatives have agreed on steps to tackle rising hearing loss resulting from unsafe exposure to loud music.

The concert with songs accessible to all with artistic captions gathered those who took part in consultations as well the experts who worked on the actual standard. EFHOH and IFHOH were involved in both. VIP's and experts involved joined in dance together, the message was clear:

WHO-ITU does not want us to stop listening to music. They want us to listen responsibly, so we can enjoy for longer.

During the celebrations, we had few speeches, one of them from Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General said: "Given that we have the tech-

nological know-how to prevent hearing loss, it should not be the case that so many young people continue to damage their hearing while listening to music. They must understand that once they lose their hearing, it won't come back. This new WHO-ITU standard will do much to better safeguard these young consumers as they go about doing something they enjoy."

The new global standard builds on European Union Directive on music players, see this article from Hear-it <https://www.hear-it.org/New-EU-standards-for-personal-music-players-and-mobile-phones>. Those who buy smartphones in EU are familiar with prompts with warning about prolonged listening to loud music over a time. This is because there is an automatic default in our devices which trigger those warnings.

ITU-WHO standard which was developed at ITU-T SG 16 question 28 aims to go further, the Safe listening devices and systems: a WHO-ITU standard recommends that personal audio devices include:

- "Sound allowance" function: software that tracks the level and duration of the user's exposure to

sound as a percentage used of a reference exposure.

- Personalized profile: an individualized listening profile, based on the user's listening practices, which informs the user of how safely (or not) he or she has been listening and gives cues for action based on this information.
- Volume limiting options: options to limit the volume, including automatic volume reduction and parental volume control.
- General information: information and guidance to users on safe listening practices, both through personal audio devices and for other leisure activities.

What about hard of hearing people you may ask?

We can follow the guidance and use it in similar way. Our hearing aids and cochlear implants when fitted by audiologists or hearing aids professionals are set to max safe level of noise input.

What are the next steps? Civil society, in particular professional associations and others that promote hearing care including hard of hearing organisations also have a role to play in advocating for the standard and in raising public awareness about the importance of safe listening practices so that consumers demand products that protect them from hearing loss.

Our role is to educate and explain what it means to live with hearing loss, after all preventions is always better than cure.

The WHO-ITU toolkit for implementation of the global standard for safe listening devices provides practical guidance on how to do this <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/280086/9789241515283-eng.pdf> While we are now entering implementation of this standard, we are already preparing next steps of tackling recreational noise exposure looking at

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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



VDNR **summer week** 27.07- 3.08.2019 in **Estonia**

We are pleased to invite you to the VDNR summer week that takes place 27.07- 3.08.2019 in Haapsalu, Estonia.

Registration HYPERLINK – <https://goo.gl/forms/o30UJq7fRowKdtDo2>

Over the past 150 years, Haapsalu Resort has been highly regarded. Cultural figures and royal persons from many neighboring countries have visited the famous mud baths. Now you have the opportunity to do the same. Read more about Haapsalu: Haapsalu <http://www.visithaapsalu.com/haapsalu-laane-county/10-reasons-to-visit-haapsalu/?lang=fi>

The venue of the seminar is Haapsalu Kutsehariduskeskus (Haapsalu Vocational Education and Training Centre), Uuemõisa, Ehitajate tee 3. <https://www.hkhk.edu.ee/en/contact/>

Accommodation is available in single or double rooms and includes meals from Sunday lunch / dinner to Saturday morning breakfast. Each room has a fridge and a kitchenette.

Travel tips / How to get to Haapsalu yourself?

Participation fee info:

1.CHOICE – ONE WEEK

2. CHOICE – SOME DAYS

Registration HYPERLINK – <https://goo.gl/forms/o30UJq7fRowKdtDo2>

Contact information:

(english) Siiri Inno – siiri.inno@gmail.com

(finnish) Kristi Kallaste – kristi@think.ee



Untreated hearing loss in the EU costs more than the whole EU budget

Around 22.6 million people in the EU live with an untreated, disabling hearing loss. Untreated, disabling hearing loss in the EU costs 185 billion Euros each year. This is 25 billion Euros more than the EU budget for 2018. The costs are related to lower quality of life and higher unemployment among people with a disabling hearing loss.

A new, extensive scientific report, "Hearing Loss – Numbers and Costs", concludes that untreated, disabling hearing loss costs 185 billion Euros in the EU each year. This is 8,200 Euros each year per person with an untreated disabling hearing loss. The detailed findings and conclusions in the report will be

presented at a lunch debate at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium on the 6th of March in connection with the WHO World Hearing Day on the 3rd of March.

View or download the report "Hearing Loss – Numbers and Costs" (in English) [here](#).

Download the "Press Kit" for additional information and to find reports concerning more than 40 countries in over 30 languages [here](#).

Visit our partners @ <https://www.hear-it.org>.





#Hear2Stay Campaign Plan

Hear2Stay is the global awareness campaign aimed to showcase the abilities of people with hearing loss to lead full lives. This was created at an IFHOHYP study session where participants decided to take action on raising public awareness about hearing loss and its implications. As many of us know hearing loss is an invisible disability, which results in lack of public understanding on our access needs. Another aim of the campaign is to bridge young people with hearing loss from different countries and build a sense of unity. Together we share our stories with the world so they know we are proud and loud to be hard of hearing people and we are HEAR 2 STAY!

A committee is formed to implement the campaign plan. As of today, we have an official Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/hear2staycampaign/>. Please take a moment to like and follow us.

The committee also developed three components that will be featured regularly on the page:

- 1) Video forum – a video will be posted with discussion points for everyone to comment on the thoughts.
- 2) Poster series – a team of designers will create a series of visual posters featuring hard of hearing people. The text can be translated to different languages upon request.
- 3) Humans of HOH – similar to Humans of New York (where random people living in New York share something from their lives). Short stories about hard of hearing people will be published in a rotation format where different countries are represented.

How to Get Involved

As members of IFHOHYP we invite you to join this important cause. There are 3 ways you can support the campaign:

- 1) Send us pictures of hard of hearing people participating in various aspects of life (e.g., school, business meetings, and social activities), especially using technology.
- 2) Send us stories or videos (yours or someone that you know) of how a hard of hearing person overcame the challenges to pursue their dreams.
- 3) Join the Hear2Stay committee – we welcome representatives from our member organizations to share their ideas on growing the campaign.

If you have any questions about the campaign please contact Cathy Geurts, the IFHOHYP Board liaison for Hear2Stay committee: boardmember@ifhohyp.org.

European Accessibility Act

The European Accessibility Act aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services by removing barriers created by divergent legislation. This will facilitate the work of companies and will bring benefits for persons with disabilities and elderly people in the EU.

Businesses will benefit from:

- common rules on accessibility in the EU leading to costs reduction
- easier cross-border trading
- more market opportunities for their accessible products and services
- Persons with disabilities and elderly people will benefit from:
- more accessible products and services in the market
- accessible products and services at more competitive prices
- fewer barriers when accessing education and the open labour market
- more jobs available where accessibility expertise is needed
- The European Accessibility Act covers the products and services listed below that have been identified as having the highest risk of being concerned with diverging accessibility requirements across the EU countries.

Moreover, these were seen as the most relevant after consulting stakeholders and experts on accessibility and taking into account the obligations deriving from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

- computers and operating systems
- ATMs, ticketing and check-in machines

- smartphones
- TV equipment related to digital television services
- telephony services and related equipment
- audiovisual media services such as television broadcast and related consumer equipment
- services related to air, bus, rail and waterborne passenger transport
- banking services
- e-books
- e-commerce

Please note that the European Accessibility Act includes three Annexes and an Implementation Plan.

Further information

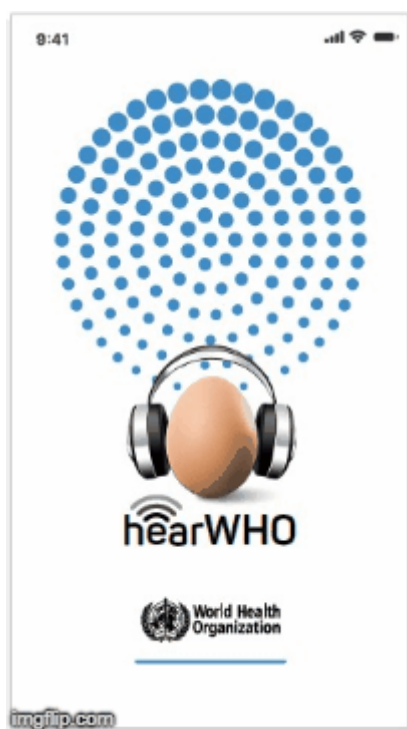
The European Parliament and the Council came to a provisional agreement on the Commission's proposal for a European Accessibility Act on 8 November 2018. Final adoption by EP is expected by April 2019. Read more about this topic in the European Accessibility Act brochure. For further information, please consult the preparatory work of this initiative, including the Impact Assessment Report, its Executive Summary and its Annexes and the results of stakeholders' consultations, such as a general public consultation, a targeted one with SMEs and a Eurobarometer (Ref. 345).

The Impact Assessment Report is supported by studies addressing the EU legislative situation on accessibility and the market impact analysis for the relevant products and services.



WHO launches the hearWHO app for mobile devices to help detect hearing loss

1 March 2018: GENEVA - Ahead of the annual World Hearing Day (3 March), the World Health Organization (WHO) has launched "hearWHO", a free application for mobile devices which allows people to check their hearing regularly and intervene early in case of hearing loss. The app is targeted at those who are at risk of hearing loss or who already experience some of the symptoms related to hearing loss.



Among those who will particularly benefit from this new tool include people who are often exposed to high levels of sound, such as those who listen to loud music or work in noisy places; people who use medicines that are harmful to hearing; and people aged above 60 years. Symptoms indicating the onset of hearing loss include a ringing sensation in the ear, known as tinnitus; frequently missing parts of a conversation; or a tendency to increase the volume of television, radio or audio devices.

Early detection of hearing loss is crucial to identify risky behaviors that need to be changed and ascertain the most appropriate intervention needed to address hearing loss. Such interventions are identified by hearing care professionals and can range from captioning and sign language to hearing aids and cochlear implants. Interventions to prevent, identify and address hearing loss are cost-effective.

"Many people with hearing loss are unaware of it and as such they miss out on educational, professional and everyday-life opportunities," said Dr Etienne Krug, Director of the WHO Department for the Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, and Violence and Injury Prevention. "Regular hearing checks ensure that hearing loss is identified and addressed as early as possible."

The hearWHO app is based on a validated digits-in-noise technology: users are asked to concentrate, listen and enter into their mobile devices a series of three numbers

when prompted. These numbers have been recorded against varying levels of background sound, simulating listening conditions in everyday life. The app displays the users' score and its meaning and stores the outcome of the test so that the user can monitor hearing status over time. Reminders to take the test regularly can be set by users. The app can be used by individuals as well as health providers with a view to facilitating hearing screening especially in low-resources settings.

"Above all, this app will help us increase awareness of the importance of ear and hearing care," said Dr Shelly Chadha, WHO Technical Officer. "Once lost, hearing does not come back. Through World Hearing Day, and with the support of this app, we encourage people to 'Check your hearing!' in order to help preserve this valuable gift that helps us to enjoy life."

Over 5% of the world's population - or 466 million people - have disabling hearing loss (432 million adults and 34 million children). It is estimated that by 2050 over 900 million people - or one in every ten people - will have disabling hearing loss. Globally, hearing loss which has gone unaddressed poses an annual cost of US\$ 750 billion.

RELATED LINKS

hearWHO App

<https://www.who.int/deafness/hearWHO/en/>

World Hearing Day 2019

<https://www.who.int/deafness/world-hearing-day/2019/en/>

Prevention of deafness and hearing loss

<https://www.who.int/deafness/en/>

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EUROPEAN ACCESSIBILITY ACT: A BIG STEP ON A LONG JOURNEY

European Parliament's approval of the Act is positive – but more legislation is essential

Demonstration for a strong Accessibility Act outside the European Parliament in Brussels, in 2017. Credits: David Hay/European Union of the Deaf

The European Accessibility Act is a landmark agreement. However, while it will ensure that many products and services are more accessible for persons with disabilities, it will not make the EU (institutions and single market) fully accessible. It still excludes many essential areas such as transport, built environment and household appliances.

The new accessibility Directive is an important step, but the EU's work is far from being complete: we need legislation that ensures equal access in all areas of life.

Improvement in some areas

The Directive will improve the accessibility of a set of products and services for persons with disabilities, such as computers, smartphones, tablets, TV sets, banking ATM and services, payment terminals, e-books and e-readers, e-commerce websites and mobile apps and ticketing machines. It will also ensure that national market surveillance authorities have the competence to hold private entities accountable.

The European Accessibility Act also fulfilled two important demands from the disability movement: electronic telecommunications and the 112-emergency number will become accessible to everyone throughout the EU.

The requirements of the Act will also support the public procurement rules for accessible products and services, so public authorities do not anymore use tax payers' money in products, services and facilities that are discriminatory of persons with disabilities.

Built environment and transport – a flaw in the Act

However, the Act still does not satisfy our key demands. It is misleading to say that the Act will ensure full accessibility of buildings and means of transport, which were at the heart of our campaign. This means



that millions of persons living in the EU will still face daily struggles to leave their homes.

The Act does not include household appliances (such as washing machines or microwaves). This means that millions of persons with disabilities will still face daily difficulties to use these appliances and live in their own homes.

Finally, we regret that microenterprises providing services are exempt from complying with the requirements of the Act. This exemption will significantly reduce the Act's impact.

Our campaign continues

The European Disability Forum thanks its members and allies for their commitment to making the Act become a reality, and it not being ignored and shelved, as it happened to other equality initiatives.

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum stated "It is shameful how Member States managed to reduce the scope of the Act. Governments now must redeem themselves and be very ambitious when incorporating the Act in national legislation."

After today's approval by the European Parliament, two steps remain to be made: the Council of the EU needs to give its formal approval and the Act has to be published in the EU's Official Journal. Member States will then have 3 years to transpose the Directive (translate the Directive into national legislation). We will continue fighting to ensure that the EU

becomes a worldwide example of full accessibility for persons with disabilities.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2018 AND WISHES FOR 2019 FROM EDF'S STAFF

In the following issues, the EDF secretariat will share their achievements and wishes. We hope you enjoy them!

Marine Uldry - Human Rights Officer

Achievements

- The finalisation of EDF's third human rights report on equality and non-discrimination
- The organisation for the first time of a session of the EuroNGO's annual conference on sexual and reproductive health and rights
- The joint action against the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention on involuntary treatment and placement of persons with psychosocial disabilities

Wishes

- More impactful work of the EU monitoring framework
- The resurrection and revision of the proposed EU horizontal directive to protect equally all persons with disabilities against discrimination!
- A non-exclusion policy and better inclusion of pupils with disabilities in European schools
- The development of a study on alternatives to coercion by the Council of Europe and withdrawal of the draft additional protocol to the Oviedo Convention

Haydn Hammersley - Social Policy Officer

Achievements

- Stakeholders from across Europe learned about the issues and methodologies surrounding quality, disaggregated data on disability during EDF's conference on statistics and data in Vienna, November 17th.
- Significant progress was made in EDF's advocacy towards the European Parliament and Council of the EU to reinforce accessibility requirements, the need for transition to community-based services and investment in social inclusion through in the post-2020 EU Multiannual Financial Framework.

- EDF's Social Policy and Inclusion Committee defined its initial approach to working on social security and disability assessment, leading the way for future activities in this domain.

Wishes

- Action to turn the Social Pillar into a reality: adoption of a meaningful Work-Life Balance Directive and the reinvigoration of the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.
- Commitment by the EU and Member States to fill the gaps with regards to other principles within the Social Pillar, through concrete policy proposals.
- To reach our objectives in having a future EU Multiannual Financial Framework that does not leave persons with disabilities behind.
- National Statistics Offices across the EU, as well as EU-level statistical offices such as Eurostat, to engage in the collection of disaggregated data on disability

André Felix - External Communications Officer

Achievements

- The impact of our social media and web presence increase significantly, with 35% more visitors to the website than in 2017.
- The European Elections petition brought awareness to the challenges in political participation to the mainstream EU media.
- The increased profile of the Disability Intergroup, with new web presence, social media and PR campaigns.

Wishes

- Accessible European Parliament Elections with a big turnout from voters with disabilities.
- A stronger, more numerous Disability Intergroup after the elections.
- That the next Commission considers human rights as a political priority.

DISABILITY DATA ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP

The Stakeholder Group of Persons with Disabilities has established a Disability Data Advocacy Working Group to provide a global platform for information exchange, learning and dialogue, sharing of good practices, and collaboration on disability data col-

lection, disaggregation, and analysis. The Working Group was created after an assessment of disability data at the national level in 2018. For details on the study, click [here](#).

Membership in the Disability Data Advocacy Working Group is open to all persons with disabilities, organizations of persons with disabilities (DPOs), non-governmental and other organizations working on the rights of persons with disabilities, and non-governmental donors.

DISABILITY INTERGROUP EVENT: EU ELECTIONS ARE KEY TO ADVANCE THE VOTING RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

On the 30 January, disability advocates, politicians, and policymakers from several institutions discussed the challenges to political participation of persons with disabilities, during a seminar in the European Parliament.

MEPs Helga Stevens, Ádám Kósa and Marek Plura hosted this seminar, which was followed by the Intergroup's New Years reception.

THE DISABILITY CARD PROJECT - WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

EDF has published a report on the European Disability Card summarizing the results of a survey among EDF members in the participating Member States on the pilot project of the Card.

NEW UN JOINT STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

On Wednesday 6 February in Geneva, Catalina Devandas, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, officially presented the joint statement "Towards Inclusive Social Protection Systems Supporting Full and Effective Participation of Persons with Disabilities" at the UNICEF, International Labour Organization (ILO), Overseas Development Institute (ODI) conference on universal child grants.

The joint statement has been officially endorsed by EDF. As well as focusing on the importance of inclusive social protection systems for persons with disabilities, the statement also explores the issue of disability assessments and eligibility criteria for disability allowance.

You can re-watch the livestream [here](#) of the presentation in English, French, Spanish or Russian. You can discover more about the International conference on Universal Child Grants, co-organized with UNICEF and ODI.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTS DISABILITY-FRIENDLY STRUCTURAL FUNDS SPENDING

On Wednesday 13 February, the European Parliament adopted its position on the Common Provision Regulation. The Parliament's position takes into account many of EDF's suggested amendments, particularly with regards to the need for EU-funded actions to be accessible to persons with disabilities, non-discrimination against persons with disabilities and the transition from institutional care to community-based services.

NEW COUNTRIES FOR REVIEW BY THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities announced which countries will be reviewed at its fall session and pre-session scheduled from 26 August to 27 September 2019.

During these sessions, it will adopt recommendations on Albania, Estonia and Greece, start the review of France and Switzerland, and adopt list of issues for the second review of Slovakia. More information will be published on the website of the Committee in the next months.

A NEW REPORT ON THE REAL VOTING RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS THE EU WILL BE PUBLISHED BY THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE.

The report is based on extensive surveys conducted with governments and disability organisations. Several of our members provided input.

The reports' conclusions include:

- About 800 000 EU citizens from 16 Member States are, on account of national rules, deprived

of the right to participate in EP elections because of their disabilities or mental health problems;

- In eight (8) EU countries, anyone who cannot to get to a polling station is not able to vote, as they do not have the option of an alternative form of voting;
- In eighteen (18) EU countries, blind voters have no way of voting independently; they can only entrust somebody accompanying them to cast their vote on their behalf.

Call to action

This is an extremely important report. We would like to ask your help to share it among your networks and also with the press. If the report is popular, it will also give us an important argument to increase the work of the European Economic and Social Committee in disability issues.

COMMISSION FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT TIMMERMANS SUPPORTS EUROPEAN DISABILITY MOVEMENT

European Commission Vice-President Timmermans and European Disability Forum President Yannis Vardakastanis. Credits: European Disability Forum

On Wednesday, the 20 March, representatives of the European Disability Forum met with Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the European Commission.

The EDF delegation was led by Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum and presented 4 key demands from the disability movement:

- An EU legislation to ensure persons with disabilities can vote and have the accessible means to do so.
- An ambitious European Disability Strategy 2020-2030, that involves persons with disabilities in all its phases and with a significant budget allocated. The strategy should be followed by all EU institutions, bodies and agencies.
- The next EU budget, post 2020 needs to fully comply with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- An accessible Europe: implementing existing accessibility legislation, assuring all new EU initiatives consider accessibility for persons with disabilities and guarantee that EU Commission

makes sure all its web tools and infrastructure is accessible.

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum stated

"We represent over 80 million persons with disabilities living in Europe, more than 15% of the population.

It is essential that the EU focuses on actions that change our lives.

Years of austerity have increased the barriers that persons with disabilities face in all areas of life.

We have seen the EU and every member state has ratified the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, but this does not translate into improved quality of life- people are not being reached and this is feeding the populist agenda in Europe.

Leaders of the EU should take a strong stand to ensure real social investment, innovation, forward looking initiatives, law and policy making to bridge this gap, and guarantee that rights do not remain abstract constructions but make a real difference in people's lives."

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, stated "The European Union, founded on the principles of equality and inclusiveness, is there to serve the well-being of all its peoples.

Progress has been made but more needs to be done to ensure that people with disabilities are guaranteed the opportunities and conditions to live in dignity, pursue their aspirations and participate in today's rapidly changing world.

The socio-economic challenges people with disabilities face, such as unemployment and risk of poverty or social exclusion, are still too big and the gap with people without disabilities unacceptably wide. The European Union and its Member States have to continue working hard to address these challenges and fulfil the promise of leaving no-one behind."

Material from the World Hearing Day 2019

We are happy to share with you the materials for the World Hearing Day 2019, which will be observed with the theme Check your hearing!

The materials are currently available in English and will be made available in other UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) shortly through the World Hearing Day webpage. These include:

1. Two posters
2. Two banners
3. Infographic (based on 2018 data, this data and infographic was released in March 2018)
4. Information flyer (this flyer was also released in 2018)
5. Ideas and designs for World Hearing Day souvenirs
6. Social media materials will be shared later during the month

You can download the materials from here. Language versions will also be available in high-resolution through the same link in coming days.

- Launch and use of the hearWHO app: WHO will launch its hearing testing app based on the digits-in-noise technology on this day. The app will be available for free download and use on Apple and Google app stores
- Wiki4WorldHearingDay2019: This year you can join us in making information about hearing freely available for everyone to celebrate World Hearing Day 2019. You can help improve Wikipedia content related to hearing, hearing health services, hearing testing, preventive and treatment interventions. Participants can translate pages from the English Wikipedia into other languages. This activity has been initiated by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health of USA.

Karen Reyes
World Health Organization/ Geneva, Switzerland
#safelistening #worldhearingday #WorldHearingForum #hearingcare

Rolling Plan for ICT Standardization

The European Commission has now published the 2019 edition of the Rolling Plan for ICT Standardization. The rolling plan aims at identifying ICT standardisation activities in support of EU policies.

Every year the rolling plan is updated and extended to reflect new EU policies and new technologies. In this edition, you will find 4 new chapters: 'Artificial intelligence' and 'European Global Navigation Satellite System (EGNSS)' have been added to the 'Key enablers and security' chapter and 'Water management digitisation' and 'Single European sky' have been added to the 'Sustainable growth' chapter.

Please note that the Rolling Plan for ICT Standardization can be used as a basis for standardisation proposals to CEN-CLC-ETSI to be financially supported by the EC, you can find a pdf version attached.

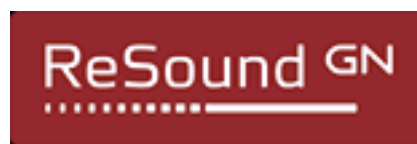
More information are available at the following link:
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/2019-rolling-plan-ict-standardisation-released_en

EFHOH Impact Report

Please find forwarded link to EFHOH Impact Report 2018 which can now be found on our website.

<https://www.efhoh.org/available-now-efhoh-impact-report-2018/>

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



Support our sponsors! They support us!



WORLD WITHOUT BARRIERS

28-29 May 2020 IFHOH World Congress

Organiser: SINOSZ

Budapest – HUNGARY / Hotel Héliá Danubius

The focus of the 2-day congress is on the INDIVIDUAL.

What does

- it mean to be hard of hearing?
- the future hold us?
- it mean the harmonious communication?



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.