



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

ANNUAL REPORT

2013

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.

HEARING AWARENESS WEEK

The most important event last year was the Hearing Awareness Week in Brussels, hosted by Adám Koša, MEP from Hungary. Focus was on two days in the European Parliament where EFHOH together with **EHIMA**, European Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association, and **AEA**, the European Association of Hearing Professionals, promoted and performed over 200 hearing tests. At two stations MEPs, staff of EP and interpreters had the possibility to do a simple hearing test. According to the results, some of the test persons could return to their duties without any concern, while others were recommended to visit an audiologist to do a real professional test.

On Wednesday April 10th EFHOH representatives (President, General Secretary and Board Member) took part in the Breakfast Reception with 8 MEP's in attendance. Lidia Best presented on behalf of EFHOH the needs of Hard of Hearing People in EU together with news of the Prague Declaration 2013. Adám Koša MEP and Lidia Geringer de Oedenberg added their signatures to the Prague Declaration. This Prague Declaration that was signed at the EFHOH AGM by all attending members.

ACCESSIBILITY

- **subtitling**

We continued working in close co-operation with Digital Commission after successful contact was made and a presentation during Contact Group meeting in Brussels.

We continued supporting our member's enquiries in relation to implementation of Audio Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). Members are now able to download toolkit on transposition of the Directive the national level.

Marcel Bodeldijk, Lidia Best and a volunteer Arnoud van Wijk are also members of the email Expert ICT Group at EDF.

- **public transport**
EFHOH has participated in the EDF e-mail expert group. The work was focused on accessible railway.
- **built environment**
In this e-mail expert group of EDF, the Secretary Jan Lamby is a member. No particular activities in this group during the year.

For a full view of all meetings and conferences that EFHOH has participated in during the year, see page 4.



ORGANISATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **encouraging new federations**
We continued with the "Eastern Europe project" following our success in awareness rising in Poland and establishment of new organisations in Poland and Hungary. One of the aims for that project is to encourage new associations in this part of Europe. Knut Magne Ellingsen and Lidia Best from the board have been responsible for the next stage: Making contacts with possible supporting organisations and the taking the very first step to plan a conference in Eastern Europe, preferably in one of the Baltic countries.
- **partnerships and co-operation with other hard of hearing or deaf organisations**

European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness

The continuing work of the Platform involves about 3 meetings a year in Brussels.

In preparation for the EDF elections in May, Platform Members have put forward candidates to EDF Board. All in all four persons with connections to the deaf or hard of hearing movement were elected to the new board of EDF:

Yannis Yalouris, **EUD**; Marcel bobeldijk, **EFHOH**; Ricardo Lopez, **EdBN**; Knut Magne Ellingsen for **Norwegian Disability Federation** and also Vice President of EFHOH.

The Platform is seen as a great way forward in uniting different efforts made by its members to make a stronger, positive impact on EU policies

At the last meeting of the Platform in November, three new organisations joined the Platform: EUDY, European Union of Deaf Young People; EDBU, European Deaf Blind Union; and IFHOHYP, International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People.

During 2014 the Platform is expected to launch their own website.

EDF

The European Disability Forum held their Annual General Assembly in Athens, Greece, in May. EFHOH was represented by President Marcel Bobeldijk. Also Vice President Knut Magne Ellingsen participated as a representative of the Norwegian Disability Federation.

The Womens Committee

This committee was completely re-shaped and EFHOH had nominated Lidia Best as a member. She was elected to the EDF board meeting in November for a two year term.

The Youth Committee

Also this committee was re-shaped with new members. EFHOH had nominated Sidsel Munkebo Hansen, a young hard of hearing woman from Denmark. She is former Secretary of IFHOHYP, and to our pleasure she was elected.

EFHOH is still represented in the e-mail expert groups of EDF: Built Environment; Transport and ICT; Persons with High Level of Support, Stereotypes and Accessible Tourism.

EDPD in Brussels

As usual EFHOH was represented on the annual policy conference 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). The theme this year was "Accessible tourism". The President Marcel Bobeldijk and board member Lidia Best represented EFHOH. From the users perspective there were good examples as well as often encountered obstacles.

Now established as a tradition (for the fourth year), an important part of the conference was the "Access City Award", the European Award for Accessible cities. The winner was Gothenburg, Sweden; with Grenoble, France and Poznan, Poland as runners-up. More about the Access City Award at www.accesscityaward.eu.

You find the presentations of the conference at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/events/index_en.htm.

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

Other meetings, conferences and representationArab Regional Conference

The President Marcel Bobeldijk represented EFHOH and IFHOH at the first Arab Regional Conference of Arab Deaf Persons in Tunis, Tunisia. This conference was organized with the support of European Disability Forum (EDF). Participants came from ten Arab countries: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and host country Tunisia. 1/3 of the participants were also hard of hearing themselves and

were very interested in EFHOH and in the topics of the EFHOH accessibility guidelines.

EU and the UN CRPD

The European Union itself has ratified the UN CRPD. In order to compile their first report the UN Commission on CRPD, the European Commission hosted a Work Forum in October, to which they invited representatives of the disability movement. Secretary Jan Lamby represented EFHOH. The conference presented examples of national reports, both issued and planned ones. Also representatives from the UN Commission office presented guidelines how to write reports; how persons who believe they have been discriminated can make their complaint.

In parallel to the EU official report, the EDF plan to issue a shadow report from the disability movement. The EDF hosted a Civil Society meeting, to gather representatives from the movement and other NGOs to contribute to that report.

Overview

During the year EFHOH as usual attended several other meetings in Brussels, 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.

February 1-2	EFHOH Board meeting in Stockholm, Sweden
March 1-2	IFHOH Board meeting, Helsinki
April 5-6 April 9-10	EFHOH board meeting and AGM in Prague, CZ Republic, Hearing Awareness Week in Brussels with EHIMA
May 8 May 26	EP Disability Intergroup meeting about a European study on Vocational Education and Training EDF AGA in Athens; Marcel Bobeldijk elected in the board of EDF
September 6-7	First Regional Conference of Arab Deaf Persons in Tunis; Marcel Bobeldijk represented IFHOH/EFHOH
October 5 October 6-7 October 14 October 24-25	IFHOH board meeting in Eastbourne, UK 3 rd Int. Hearing Loops Conference in Eastbourne, UK Civil Society meeting EDF on UN CRPD, Brussels European Commission Work Forum on UN CRPD
November 1-2	Board meeting in London, UK
November 15-16 November 27	EDFBoard meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania European Platform on Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness meeting in Brussels
December 3-4	European Commissio and EDF Conference on Accessible Tourism / Int Disability Day

■ FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- **Support better quality of induction loops and other assistive listening systems**

EFHOH has supported the 3rd International conference on Hearing Loops, to be held in Eastbourne, UK, on October 6-7, 2013. The conference was hosted by Hearing Link, UK (member of EFHOH) and very successful. It attracted over 200 participants from the whole world.

The conference clearly showed that the loop technology is still the best solution for many situations, and the manufacturers are continuously developing the equipment such as amplifiers and wires.

■ EFHOH General Meeting (AGM) and Conference

The EFHOH Annual General Meeting 2013 was held in Prague, Czech Republic. 18 delegates from 17 members were participating, at the meeting on April 5. After the usual formal points like acceptance of the Annual and Financial Reports and the Auditors report, elections were performed. The President Marcel Bobeldijk, Treasurer Ritva-Liisa Schaeding and Jan Lamby, were re-elected.

In the Nominating Committee, the Chairperson Eija Isaksson, Finland, was re-elected. The other members in the Committee are Harald Tamegger, Austria, re-elected; Søren Dalmark, Denmark, new election.

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

Two new members were introduced, see section **Members** below for more information.

The day after the AGM the Czech organization hosted a one day conference. Among the presentations were two about subtitling the in the Czech Republic; other examples include a survey among hearing aid users in seven European countries, conducted by EHIMA, European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association. Two representatives of a new European organization for speech-to-text reporters introduced themselves. A MoU, Memorandum of Understanding, or preliminary agreement was signed between this organization and EFHOH.

Finally, and not the least important: The signing of the Prague Declaration. This is a document that describes the most important measures for hard of hearing persons when implementing the UN CRPD, Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities. As written above, the Declaration is intended to be used both on the European level and nationally to influence governments and members of national parliaments. All attending members were invited to sign the Prague Declaration, and all did this with no exception.

Motions

No motions for the AGM.

Action Plan 2013-2014 and Budget plan

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

FINANCIAL REPORT 2013

This short report gives an overview of the financial situation of the year 2013. Incomes during the year were **EUR 13.241,27**; the amount of membership fee from our members was EUR 12.850,00.

The amount of all our expenses was total **EUR 12.823,92**.

The largest costs were: EFHOH AGM in Prague in April 2013 for EUR 1.414,83; EFHOH Board meetings in February and in November 2013 for EUR 4.871,07 and different Conferences for EUR 4.826,37.

The costs for conferences were substantially higher, since EFHOH now has more contact with the EU Parliament and EDF.

The surplus for the year 2013 was **EUR 417,35**.

IFHOH

EFHOH is closely connected to 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.

For IFHOH a milestone passed as they from April 2013 has a Human Rights officer, Louise Carroll from New Zealand. She works part time with topics like the implementation of the UN CRPD.

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

IFHOHYP

IFHOHYP, the International Federation of the Hard of Hearing Young People. Their AGM was held in Stockholm, Sweden in April. EFHOH Secretary Jan Lamby represented EFHOH at this AGM. Several new board members were elected, and EFHOH has made efforts to increase the co-operation with IFHOHYP. As reported above, IFHOHYP is now a member of the European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness.

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

EFHOH Media and information

Newsletter

The Newsletter was published in five issues 2013. Editor was as previous year Niels-Henrik M. Hansen, Denmark.

At the release date, every member and contact-person etc. get an e-mail link direct to the website and then new issue.

There were close to 450 receivers on the mailing list during 2013.

Despite the development of our website, the Newsletter remains the best source for reports and information of events and advocacy work. On most of the events covered in this report, you find more extensive reports in the Newsletters.

Information and PR

In due time for the Hearing Awareness Week in Brussels EFHOH published the EFHOH Hearing Aid Re-imbusement Report. This document describes the situation for hearing aid users in our member countries. How much or little they will have to pay for getting their hearing aids and/or other assistive devices.

We hope to be able to update this report, and add more countries. The report is important for us as a base for advocacy work in EU.

Website

Our website with a new design was put into operation in the beginning of the year. Board member Lidia Best has been managing it and has started training a new webmaster in the Netherlands.

Facebook:

There is since 2008 an EFHOH friends group at the Facebook site, and this group has attracted more and more members. By the end of the year 2013, 425 friends had joined this group.

Twitter

Late in 2013 EFHOH opened a Twitter account. As with Facebook, it's increasingly important to be visible at these social media. You can follow us @EFHOH.

MEMBERS, THE BOARD AND OFFICE

Members

EFHOH consists of 28 general members, 3 associate members, and 2 gold sponsors and 5 ordinary sponsors as supporting members.

In addition to the members, EFHOH has several contact persons from countries where a hard of hearing organization has not yet been fully established.

At the AGM in Prague we had the pleasure to welcome two new members: Hörgeschädigte Ost Belgiens VoG, Hearing Impaired of East Belgium; an organization working in the eastern, German-speaking part of Belgium. The second new member is Nagyothallók és Barátaik Osszágos Közhasznú Egyesülete, in short NABOKE, Hungary; Hungarian Hard of Hearing Association.

The board

The following persons were members of the board in the year 2013:

President: Marcel Bobeldijk, the Netherlands (elected 2013).

Vice-president: Knut Magne Ellingsen, Norway (elected 2012).

General Secretary: Jan Lamby, Sweden (elected 2013).

Treasurer: Ritva-Liisa Schädling, Germany (elected 2013)

Member: Lidia Best, United Kingdom, (elected 2012)

The Board had three meetings during 2013:

1st time: 2 February in Stockholm, Sweden

2nd time: 5 April, in Prague Czech Republic

3rd time 1-2 November in London, UK

Office

For the first year since 2006, EFHOH has worked without the assistance from the office of the Swedish Hard of Hearing Association, HRF. That meant more work for the members of the board, carrying out more routine activities involved with distributing documents and the Newsletter.

Originally the assistance from the HRF was set up through a six year agreement. Due to different circumstances the agreement was not renewed by HRF.

At the end of the year, discussions started with the British organization Action on Hearing Loss, AoHL, with the goal to make an agreement for a similar or maybe extended support.

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 2014, The EFHOH Board

Marcel Bobeldijk

Knut Magne Ellingsen

Jan Lamby

Ritva-Liisa Schädling

Lidia Best

ANNEXES

Annex 1

GENERAL MEMBERS (28)

as per 31 december 2013

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
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)

Germany	Internationaler Verband für Schwerhörigen-Seelsorge e.V.- IVVS
Italy	Associazione Luca Coscioni Per la libertà di ricerca scientifica
Switzerland	FoRom écoute, La Fondation Romande des Malentendants

GOLD SPONSORS (3)

Amplifon	Belgium
Bernafon AG	Switzerland
Widex A.P.S.	Denmark

SPONSORING MEMBERS (5)

GN Resound A/S	Denmark
Oticon A/S	Denmark
Phonak AG	Switzerland
Pro Audito Winterthur	Switzerland
Siemens Audiologische Technik GmbH	Germany

Annex 2

EFHOH facts and history

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing – EFHOH - was created as a legal entity and as an independent region of IFHOH, the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, on the 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 Europe (member and non-member states of the European Union).

Its mission is to promote accessible communication, accessibility to travel and 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 in the European Disability Forum – EDF with the right to representation in the Annual General Assembly.

Contact information

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