



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

# **2014**

## 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, REHABILITATION, SPEECH-TO-TEXT AND MUCH MORE

During the year 2014 EFHOH was 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 NL**

In March the Dutch organization Stichting Plotsdoven hosted a conference in Egmond aan Zee in the Netherlands.

The conference had participants from several European countries and USA. To this conference Vice-President Lidia Best was invited to be a key-note speaker. Her mission was to introduce EFHOH, our advocacy work in general and our Late deafened Work group. Also President Marcel Bobeldijk attended the conference.

### **UN Zero Project Conference in Vienna**

Knut-Magne Ellingsen, Vice-President until April, attended this conference, together with several hundreds of participants from 50 countries. The Zero projects aims at being a forum for exchanging knowledge and ideas on the UN CRPD.

### **AEA General meeting and conference**

The European organization of hearing aid professionals, AEA, invited President Marcel Bobeldijk to speak their General Assembly on 12 May in Brussels. Important to put forward the users perspective in this organization.

### **HEAL 2014**

In June was the HEAL 2014, Hearing Across the Lifespan Conference in Cernobbio, Lake Como, Italy. Lidia Best was invited to be a speaker and used the opportunity to promote EFHOH and to network with delegates representing public health, researchers, doctors and audiologists. Lidia Best gave a presentation where she talked about the impact a hearing loss brings to someone's life.

Other themes in this conference was new technology like wireless Bluetooth; dementia and late uptake of hearing aids.

### **ECOS 2014**

In Helsinki in August, was the ECOS 2014, a conference of speech-to-text reporters. Topics included STT in foreign language, newest research as text on top and speech recognition and ergonomics in STT.

President Marcel Bobeldijk and board member Jaana Linna attended from EFHOH and participated in some of the work shops: Example working assignments, using tablets and mobile phones; working conditions of STT reporters and, notably, the presentation by Birgit Nofftz on the speech-to-text scene in Europe; the result of a survey conducted in European countries. The report was later in the autumn sent to all EFHOH members.

### **In-Sign Project, Brussels**

On April 9, Marcel Bobeldijk attended a presentation of the project Insign hosted by MEPs Adám Koša and Werner Kuhn in the European Parliament. Insign is a communication pilot project to enable communication between deaf and hard of hearing persons and representatives/institutions within the EU.

The Insign uses a technology called Total Conversation, a communication concept that enables you to communicate with speech, video (signing) and Real-Time text. The Insign project is lead by EUD, European Union of Deaf, with five partners from different European countries.

### **Hungarian Media Regulator Work shop on subtitling.**

In September EFHOH was invited to be a key-note speaker at this work-shop/conference. The other main participants were EFHOH General member SINOSZ, MEP Adam Kosa, Hungary, press, broadcasters, state regulator. EFHOH was represented by Vice-president Lidia Best, who talked about the UN CRPD and the EU angle on subtitling. She also provided support for the advocacy work and distributed the EFHOH State of subtitling report and Impact Report among the participants.



## **ACCESSIBILITY**

- **web accessibiity**  
Marcel Bobeldijk attended a panel discussion in Brussels about web-accessibility at the European Parliament in November. It was hosted by MEP Dita Charanzová, Czech Republic; focused mostly on people with visual impairment.
- **public transport**  
During the past year EDF brought up some initiatives concerning the EU Directives and Regulations for rail passengers and air passengers. There are problems with the implementation of these directives from 2006 and 2007.
- **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 5.***



## ORGANISATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **encouraging new federations**

EFHOH had several new contacts during the year, among them were Greece and Georgia.

We got two new organisations as members: Heyrnarhjálp, The Icelandic Association of Hard of Hearing; Udruga gluhih i nagluhih osoba "Svjetlost"- Solin, Association of deaf and hard of hearing persons "Light"- Solin, Croatia. The Greek contact became an individual member as well.

### **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. During 2014 an updated agreement was signed, where the three new organisations that had joined the Platform in the end of 2013, was finally approved. One of these is IFHOHYP, International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People.

The Platform also launched their website, operating from middle of the year. In due time for the European Day of People with Disabilities, EDPD, the Platform presented a Statement on Information.

#### **EDF**

The European Disability Forum held their Annual General Assembly in Zagreb, Croatia, in May. President Marcel Bobeldijk attended the GA for the first time as a board member. Sidsel Munkebo Hansen also represented EFHOH at the GA.

Among the activities worth special mentioning are the campaign launched in connection with the elections to the European Parliament.

#### The Womens Committee

This committee was new and had their first meeting during the year in Madrid, Spain. Vice-President Lidia Best is a member of the committee.

#### The Youth Committee

In this committee EFHOH is represented by Sidsel Munkebo Hansen, who by the end of the year became the President of IFHOHYP. The committee met once in October. The members of the committee are all quite young, in their 20's. This first meeting dealt with a work plan.

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 "Employment and Accessibility". The President Marcel Bobeldijk and Vice-President Lidia Best represented EFHOH.

An important part of the conference was the now traditional "Access City Award", the European Award for Accessible cities. The winner this year was Borås, Sweden. On second place came Helsinki, Finland; third place Ljubljana, Slovenia.

More about the Access City Award at [www.accesscityaward.eu](http://www.accesscityaward.eu).

You find the presentations of the conference at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/events/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/events/index_en.htm).

More about EDF at [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.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 had started to make a parallel/shadow report and a first draft was published in July. EFHOH gave comments to this, a second draft was published in December. The final version is due in spring 2015.

## **Other meetings, conferences and representation**

### Hear-It and the EUHA

Hear-It held their General Assembly in connection with the EUHA, conference and exhibition of the EUHA, Europäische Union des Hörgeräteakustiker. The International federation of Hard of Hearing People, IFHOH, was not able to be present, but asked EFHOH to be their representative. Secretary Jan Lamby attended the GA and conference.

### 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.

February 10	EU Citizens Dialogue, London
February 21-23	EDF board meeting, Athens
February 27-28	UN Zero project conference, Vienna
March 14	EU Citizens Dialogue, Amsterdam

March	AEA Annual General meeting, Brussels
March 19	Platform meeting, Brussels
March 27-30	International Late Deafened Conference, Netherlands
April 4-5	Board meeting and EFHOH AGM in Jerusalem, Israel
April 9	Insign Project , Brussels
May 17	EDF AGA in Zagreb, Croatia
June 5-7	HEAL 2014, Lake Como, Italy
June 11	Platform meeting, Brussels
July 10-11	EDF Women Committee, Madrid
August 22-24	ECOS 2014, Helsinki
September 10	Platform meeting , Brussels
September 22	Subtitling conference, Budapest,
September 27	BUCODES conference , Paris
October 10-11	EFHOH board meeting , Essen
October 15-17	Hear-It GA and EUHA conference and exhibition, Hannover
October 25-26	Board meeting of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, IFHOH, in Vietnam.
November 12	Platform meeting, Brussels
November 17	Phonak meeting, Zürich
November 19	EP Panel discussion Web Accessibilty, Brussels
November 23	IFHOHYP AGM , Strasbourg
December 2-3	European Day of People with Disabilities, Brussels

## ■ FACILITIES AND SERVICES

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

### Meeting at Phonak

EFHOH had the possibility to visit the Swiss company Phonak, a major manufacturer of hearing aids and assistive listening systems. Such contacts is a valuable way of exchanging information, and for EFHOH to give a user perspective of hearing loss, hearing aids and technical solutions. Marcel Bobeldijk represented EFHOH at this meeting, the International federation IFHOH was also represented by their Vice-President Avi Blau.

### Standardization – EU Mandate M/473 ANEC-CENELEC

EFHOH was able to suggest experts to this project, Guido Gybels, earlier a technical officer at the RNID (now AoHL), UK; and Arnoud van Wijk, engineer NL. They were both accepted in different positions in the project. It involves standardization procedures for products and services to become more usable and accessible to a wider audience, following a “Design for All” approach. This of course should include people with hearing loss.

## ■ EFHOH General Meeting (AGM) and Conference

The EFHOH Annual General Meeting 2014 was held in Jerusalem, Israel. The reason for having the AGM outside Europe, was to co-ordinate with the BGM of IFHOH. 15 delegates from 15 members were participating, at the meeting on April 5. The Annual and Financial Reports and the Auditors report were all accepted. The elections followed, and to be elected were Vice-President and board member. Knut Magne Ellingsen, Norway who had been in the position as Vice-President, had declared he was not a candidate for re-election. Lidia Best, previously board member, was elected as new Vice-President. New board member became Jaana Linna, Finland.

The election of the Nomination Committee was carried out for the first time according to the amended Statutes (AGM Bergen 2012). This meant the meeting elected a Chairperson, Patrick Hennings, Belgium. He in turn is responsible for finding the other two members of the Committee. These were Harald Tamegger, Austria and Andrea Jámbor, Hungary. Patrick Hennings resigned from the Nomination Committee in October, and Harald Tamegger took the position as Chair until the next AGM in 2015.

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

The day after the AGM the Israeli organization hosted a one day conference. The theme was “Overcoming the hearing barriers” Among the presentations there was one which stood out from the others: Made by an officer from the Israeli army: Major Nir Fink explained how the military service in the Israeli armed forces also recruited people with disabilities.

Other presentations included "Listening to the silence: HoH People in Arabic Society", about the situation of hearing loss in the Arabic societies which is different compared to other societies in Israel.

## Motions

There was a motion from the Swedish member HRF, about the lack of standardisation of hearing aids and their accessories. Which means a hearing aid user is often facing problems when he/she changes the brand of the hearing aid.

The motion was adopted by the meeting.

## Action Plan 2014-2015 and Budget plan

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

## ■ FINANCIAL REPORT 2014

This short report gives an overview of the financial situation of the year 2014. Incomes during the year were **EUR 15.460**; the amount of membership fee from our members including sponsors were EUR 15.100

The amount of all our expenses was total **EUR 14.951**

The largest costs were: EFHOH AGM in Jerusalem in April 2014 for EUR 5.169; and different Conferences for EUR 5.501.

The costs for conferences increases every year, naturally because EFHOH participate in more frequently in different conferences, many of them hosted by EU bodies: The Parliament, the Commission and others like EDF.

The surplus for the year 2014 was **EUR 509**.

## ■ 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.

IFHOH held their Biennial General Meeting, BGM, in Jerusalem, [on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, on the same weekend as the EFHOH AGM.](#)

After a period of preparatory work with a Human Rights project, IFHOH received a grant of appr. \$100.000 USD from the Oticon Foundation Denmark. The prime purpose to provide training on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to IFHOH member organisations through the provision of Human Rights Training of Trainers Forums in America; Africa/Asia and Europe. The aim of the Forums is to provide participants with sufficient skills and knowledge to be able to deliver CRPD/human rights training to the hard of hearing sector in their country.



For the first time the board had a meeting in Asia, in Ho Chi Minh City, home town of the Secretary Hanh Duong Phuong, from October 24 & 25, 2014. Marcel Bobeldijk as board member participated in the meeting.

More information about IFHOH at the website: [www.ifhoh.org](http://www.ifhoh.org)



## IFHOHYP

**IFHOHYP**, the International Federation of the Hard of Hearing Young People. Their AGM was held in Strasbourg, France in November, in conjunction with their annual Study session. EFHOH was represented by President Marcel Bobeldijk.

A completely new board was elected, the new President became Sidsel Munkebo Hansen, Denmark. She represents EFHOH at the EDF Youth Committee. At the same time Karina Chupina, who had been the President was for almost ten years, was leaving. She had done an incredible amount of work during her time as President, and the participants all showed their appreciation. IFHOHYP is since 2014 formally a member of the European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness.

More information about IFHOHYP at the website [www.ifhohyp.org](http://www.ifhohyp.org)



## EFHOH Media and information

### Newsletter

The Newsletter was published in five issues 2014. Editor was as previous year Niels-Henrik M. Hansen, Denmark.

There were close to 450 receivers on the mailing list during 2014.

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

For the first time ever, EFHOH published an Impact Report 2013 in May 2014. 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. Still under development and improvement. Vice-President Lidia Best has been managing it, plans are to find a webmaster who can take this responsibility.

### Facebook:

There is since 2008 an EFHOH friends group at the Facebook site, and this group has attracted more and more members. There are currently (January 2015) 555 friends in the group.

### **Twitter**

EFHOH also has a Twitter account. As with Facebook, it's increasingly important to be visible at these social media. You can follow us @EFHOH, @marbob32 or @best\_lidia.



## **MEMBERS, THE BOARD AND OFFICE**

### **Members**

EFHOH consists of 29 general members, 4 associate members, and 4 gold sponsors and 5 ordinary sponsors as 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.

In the autumn of 2014 we got three new members: The Icelandic Association of Hard of Hearing People, General member; Association of deaf and hard of hearing persons "Light"- Solin, Croatia, Associate member; Sofia Kolotourou, Greece, individual member.

### **The board**

The following persons were members of the board in the year 2014:

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

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

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

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

Member: Jaana Linna, Finland (elected 2014)

The Board had two meetings during 2014:

1<sup>st</sup> time: 5 April, 2 February in Jerusalem, Israel

2<sup>nd</sup> time: 10-11 October Essen, Germany

### Office

EFHOH worked without any office support for the main part of the year. In the middle of the year, we finalized talks with the British organization Action on Hearing Loss, AoHL. It involved setting up an intern position to support the work of EFHOH and AoHL. The intern, started on December 1, and the first period will be a trial under review for 6 months.

***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*

*Jan Lamby*

*Ritva-Liisa Schädling*

*Jaana Linna*

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1

#### GENERAL MEMBERS (29)

as per 31 December 2014

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 Nedoslychavah 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
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**Annex 2**

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**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 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.

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