

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

Deadline for the next
newsletter is May 15.th
/2016.

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NEWSLETTER

EFHOH

MARCH 2016

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European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

World Hearing Day:

Brussels, 1 March 2016. The AEA, EFHOH, and EHIMA Lunch Seminar at the European Parliament was a big success. The seminar was overbooked and we are happy to report that 16 members of the European Parliament and other representatives of different organisations were present. We are also pleased that some of our members such as AOH and NADP from the UK, NABOKE from Hungary, and CUN from the Czech Republic were also in attendance at this seminar.

Special thanks to our hosts MEPs Helga Stevens (Belgium) and MEP Adam Kosa (Hungary) and also a special thanks to the speakers:

- Dr. Shelly Chadha, WHO Hearing Officer;
- Laszlo Gabor Lovaszy, The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Professor Héllene Amieva, Université Victor Segalen Bordeaux, France;
- Paul Breckell, director of Action on Hearing Loss, United Kingdom;
- Sue Archbold, director of Ear Foundation, United Kingdom;
- Mark Lauryens, president of AEA;
- Lidia Best, vice-president of EFHOH.

The theme of the seminar was 'Professional Hearing Care can make 40 million Europeans with hearing loss healthier and smarter'.

On the third of March, The World Health Organization (WHO) organized an event with the theme: Childhood hear-

ing loss, act now, here's how! Our vice president Lidia Best represented the EFHOH at this event in Geneva.

The theme for World Hearing Day 2016 is 'Childhood hearing loss: act now, here is how! This aims to draw attention to the fact that the majority of causes which lead to hearing loss in children can be prevented through public health measures. Furthermore, those who have hearing loss can benefit greatly from early identification and suitable, timely interventions. The day aims to raise awareness about public health strategies to reduce the prevalence and impact of hearing loss.

<http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/2016/en/>

It is nice and also interesting to see examples of the actions and events taking place in different countries all over the world on social media.

EFHOH AGM 2016:

We as the EFHOH board hope to meet all of you

EFHOH President letter



very soon at the next EFHOH AGM 2016 in Paris. In co-operation with our member organization, BUDCODES, in France. We have made an engaging and informative conference program with different speakers not only from France, but also from our partner organisations such as the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA) and the European Hearing Instruments Manufactures Association (EHIMA).

UN CRPD:

Our vice president Lidia Best and our intern Sophie Kleanthous participated in the public hearing at the European Parliament about the implementation of the UN's human rights recommendations to the European Union. We do this together with the European Disability Forum. EFHOH is pleased to share the news of the CRPD ratification in the Netherlands! On 21 January 2016, the Dutch Parliament took an important step forward and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This is a great achievement and the Netherlands are now the 26th EU Member State to have ratified the UNCRPD. This is also a great start of the Dutch Presidency to the Council of the EU. EFHOH hopes that the

last two EU Member States left, Finland and Ireland, will ratify the UNCRPD soon.

Follow us:

We invite you to follow EFHOH via Facebook and Twitter. Our Twitter addresses are:

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

Call for the EFHOH Newsletter:

If you have an article for one of the next EFHOH newsletters that we will publish in 2016, please send it to us. You can also send your article to our EFHOH newsletter editor Niels-Henrik, his email address is nhmh@learning.aau.dk Warm regards,

Marcel Bobeldijk
President of EFHOH.





Hearing Awareness Day

THE “TRIANGLE” DID IT AGAIN!

On the 1st March 2016, a lunchtime seminar took place in the run up to the World Hearing Day activities. The “triangle” is the joined co-operation of EFHOH – EHI-MA - AEA, which has produced the first Hearing Awareness Day in the European Parliament in 2013. Due to security issues in 2015 we were not able to hold any event, however this year, we have succeeded!

This year’s event was short but highly charged with presentations ranging from dementia research, cost of untreated hearing loss to society and the persons affected, national adult screening and finally users perspective based on the Essen Declaration 2015.

I was very pleased to see EFHOH members attending our Seminar, despite the short notice. Many thanks for your time and effort to support such an important event! Even more importantly, the attendance MEP’s including our hosts MEP Helga Stevens and MEP Adam Kosa. Despite short notice, we have also seen many MEP’s assistants attending the events. It was very important that we could influence MEP’s to speak with their National Health Ministers about the issue of hearing loss.

This is not a one-off; we will co-operate again to achieve better outcomes and access to hearing care including accessible hearing aids with state support. The Essen Declaration sets clear goals forward to achieve this. Our job is



not finished here, I urge all our members to use the Essen Declaration when campaigning for access to opportunity. Combining this with the Prague Declaration, which refers to right of access to society for all hard of hearing people, we have the right tools to achieve so much better equality for us all.

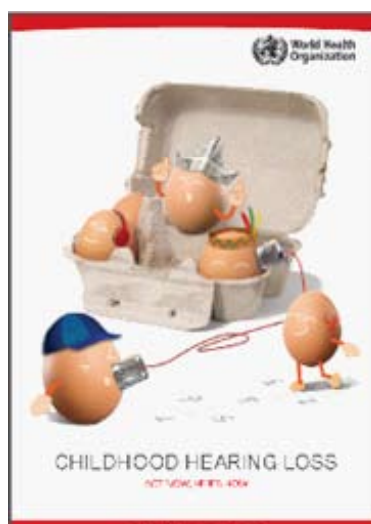
Two days later we were active again, this time in Geneva, during the World Health Organization Seminar, organised on World Hearing Day, on the 3rd March. The theme for this year was

“Childhood deafness, Act now, here is how!” The access to education, technology that is now available, dominated the meeting. Another aspect related to further planning for World Hearing Day and making it even more visible. We were shown two presentations, which related to access to education in Vietnam and Uganda. While we can

say that there are major issues related to basic access to education in developing countries, the educational aspirations for hard of hearing and deaf children also need to be tackled in Europe. We do see in some countries there are far too low expectations, this needs to be tackled together with better access to education.

We have no excuse really, the technology to support our children is available, let's make full use of it!

Lidia Best
EFHOH vice- President



Written by Sophie Kleanthous, EFHOH Policy Officer



CRPD Hearing at the European Parliament

On the 27th of January 2016 I attended my first European parliamentary meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels.

The event was a public hearing on the UNCRPD implementation report by MEP Helga Stevens. Ms Anderson hosted and chaired the debate where specialists and industry professionals from disability organisations discussed the current barriers for all disabled people, from those with mental health disabilities, sensory impairments to physical disabilities. Participants included representatives from 'Inclusion Europe', The EDF and EFHOH amongst many others. Topics discussed included discrimination of the disabled, accessibility, the issue of abuse to disabled children and women and access to employment in relation to vulnerability, stigmatisation and isolation. One of the main topics of the hearing was the recent publication of the first draft of the European Disability Act and whether or not it really allows for inclusion in society and accessibility to all disabled individuals in Europe, and increases the definition and awareness of all disabilities. As representatives of EFHOH, Lidia our Vice President and I wanted to communicate the importance of communication methods for Hard of Hearing People and ensure that the needs of Hard of Hearing people are being met by the EDF and throughout the European Union.

It was truly inspiring being in the presence of so many people who are passionate about what they do, the individuals they represent in their organisations and just generally how rooted to the cause of disabled people everyone was. I have been to Parliamentary events in the United King-

dom and have really enjoyed them but in Brussels it was unlike anything I'd experienced before. The parliamentary conferences I have been too were all very by the book with discussion segments mixed in with several panels discussing issues that they worked for. The Brussels hearing was quite similar with the same format but people were so much more enthusiastic, angry and emotional about the lack of representation and access to services for disabled people. The event was very well organised and the leaders of the hearing were taking note of everything, answering all questions which I had never properly seen in parliamentary events in England, not that they exist but it really stood out to me. Not only were these people powerful decision makers including MEPs but they seemed to really care and want to help, which as an intern going to their first European Union event it made me more motivated to continue working whether voluntary or not for people with hearing loss or those with a disability in general.

A very positive moment right at the beginning of the hearing was that the representatives of Disabled groups that attended the hearing agreed that a yearly hearing on disability was a fundamental thing to improve the lack of understanding that the EU and member states have on disability, and to ensure all disabilities are equally included in these discussions. This is a very positive step for people who are hard of hearing as they being listened to and their rights discussed in an open and frank manner.

Furthermore, it was discussed that wherever possible in debates on disability and the basic human rights of the European population, the UN CRPD should be used as a

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Overall I had a **great** day, met some inspiring and amazing people and got a great insight into how the European Union is run and the intelligent and hardworking people that address these **issues of disability** and giving hard of hearing people **a stronger voice in society**.

”

human rights instrument to illustrate disability in the 21st Century. This is also a key development to ensure that disability is understood and for hard of hearing people that accessibility requirements like hearing loops in public buildings and subtitles are universally used across Europe.

A key discussion point at the beginning of the hearing was the EU petitions service that allows all EU citizens to report formal complaints and write up petitions highlighting violations of their human rights or issues with that country's legal systems. Although the petitions committee noted that most petitions were specifically related to the environment and consumer rights, 10-12% of petitions received were related to disability issues, which is very positive and shows that at least a portion of disabled individuals are aware of this service and how to complain.

Amongst the most common petitions related to disability were the issues of; discrimination particularly in the work place, accessibility to goods and services (which the European Accessibility Act has tried to address) and access to employment. For example, one in six people in the UK, feel like they do not receive adequate support from both their colleagues and managers in the workplace, a statistic which is very worrying.

The issue of more video conferencing and making these petitions more accessible, to include for example Sign Language and subtitles, ensures that these conferences are more inclusive to both Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, which needs to be addressed and reviewed. This ensures all disabled groups are able to take part in important policy updates that affect them, as one individual from the hearing said, “We must not close our hearts to disabled people”. Petitions for disabled people, including hard of hearing people, are incredibly important and give them a direct window to express demands, civil liberties and social employment affairs.

Inclusive education was another a topic that was widely debated throughout the hearing. Many organisations argue that Inclusive education for disabled children needs to be improved upon. The European Union of the Deaf noted that the Commission should make it a right for education

establishments and schools to use Sign Language within normal school lessons. This they reported makes children feel more included and their disability accepted ensuring children of all backgrounds are accepted and treated equally, instead of taking them to a ‘special’ or ‘disabled school’. For Hard of hearing children the issue needs to be addressed as well. The inclusion of speech to text reporting within a classroom setting means that new technologies need to establish and ensure inclusive education remains that way in Europe. Creating lip reading classes within the school environment would also be a big step towards improving upon inclusive education for hard of hearing children right up to becoming adults.

Later on in the day Lidia and I met up with Commissioner Marianne Thyssen's policy assistant, Jonathan Stabenow, and discussed with him our concerns regarding the European Accessibility Act. We discussed in depth that the Act needed to be properly legislated and monitored in each country so that Nation States will implement accessibility requirements for hard of hearing people such as ensuring the relevant technology is developed properly and updated regularly, the proper installation of hearing loops and improving subtitles on all audio-visual media. Although I initially had reservations about the impact we could make, Mr Stabenow asked some very insightful questions and promised us that these concerns would be raised and addressed when the Commission starts writing the next draft of the act.

Overall I had a great day, met some inspiring and amazing people and got a great insight into how the European Union is run and the intelligent and hardworking people that address these issues of disability and giving hard of hearing people a stronger voice in society.

By Louise Carroll, IFHOH Board Member-at-large with human rights responsibilities

Workshop participants, from left. Standing: Javkhlan Byambasuren (Mongolia), Neeta Kershary Bhattarai (Nepal), Patrick Gift Egessa (Uganda), Dr Kazuhiko Seya (Japan), Muhammad Akram (Pakistan), Macha Bhai Maharjan (Nepal), Kerriane Robertson (Australia), Royee Rothman (Israel), Ishaque Mia (Bangladesh), Kim Hean Chhim (Cambodia). Sitting: Avi Blau (board member, IFHOH), Ruth Warick (President, IFHOH), Louise Carroll (board member, IFHOH)."



IFHOH is spreading the word on the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD)

In Cambodia, it is common for deaf people to be identified as having a mental disability. In Uganda, many children lack access to basic medical care, let alone hearing aids. And in Pakistan, hearing loss can be particularly challenging in rural areas where there is no written language.

These countries, along with Mongolia, Israel, Japan, Australia and others, recently sent representatives to Auckland, New Zealand, to attend a workshop on the CRPD and how it applies in the hard of hearing sector. All participants were professional or voluntary advocates working with people who are hard of hearing, in their home countries and all had hearing loss.

In my role for IFHOH I facilitated the three-day event in January 2016 and also two previous IFHOH CRPD workshops held in Denmark with people from 15 European countries. Over a 4 month period IFHOH member organisation representatives from 36 countries have learned how to apply the CRPD in support of improving the quality of life for people with hearing loss. Participants gained insight into using this powerful tool to give voice to people facing daily

challenges or injustice because of hearing loss – from getting a basic education, to equal access to hearing aids and other human rights. The lack of captioning, both broadcast and for meetings, or in countries where it is established, the quality of it, has also presented as a global issue as has the provision and cost of hearing aids.

Since the workshop I have been collaborating on follow-up advocacy projects with people from all over the globe who are now using the CRPD to make a world of difference for people with hearing loss.

Special thanks needs to be given to the staff and Board of The National Foundation for the Deaf in New Zealand who supported the Auckland workshop locally, to Marcel Bobeldijk from EFHOH and the staff at the Danish Disability House in Copenhagen who supported the European workshops locally, to Dr. Ruth Warick IFHOH President who has been a stalwart of this project and the Oticon Foundation, Denmark, who granted the funds needed to enable the CRPD to come alive for our sector.

WHO outlines ways to prevent and mitigate childhood hearing loss

Note for the media

1 March 2016

Nearly 32 million children across the world live with disabling hearing loss. A new WHO report, *"Childhood hearing loss: act now, here's how"*, suggests that 60% of this can be prevented. It also highlights that if hearing loss is detected early enough, and if children receive the care they need, they can reach their full potential.

"A child who struggles to hear may also struggle to learn to speak, underachieve at school and end up socially isolated," says Dr Etienne Krug, Director of the WHO Department for Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention. "But this doesn't have to happen. We have a range of tools to help prevent, detect and treat childhood hearing loss."

Most childhood hearing loss can be prevented

There are many causes of childhood hearing loss. It is estimated that 40% is attributable to genetic causes; 31% to infections such as measles, mumps, rubella and meningitis; and 17% to complications at birth, including prematurity, low birth weight and neonatal jaundice. In addition, an estimated 4% results from expectant mothers and new-borns unknowingly using medicines that are harmful to hearing.

To prevent childhood hearing loss, immunizing children against diseases and regulating certain medicines and noise levels are vital.

Mitigating the impact of hearing loss

Early identification of those children with hearing loss helps to trigger the needed interventions, such as the provision of hearing devices and other communication therapies.

Hearing screening programmes for infants, and pre-school and school-based children, alongside hearing care training for health professionals, can dramatically improve the lives of children. Such programmes ensure that those in need of specialized care receive the interventions they need to be able to communicate, receive education and gain employment later in life.

Raising public awareness about ear and hearing care is another key strategy for reducing hearing loss and associated stigma around the use of hearing devices. Strengthening organizations of people with hearing loss and their families can contribute greatly to this effort.

The WHO report includes case studies from Cambodia, Canada, Thailand, Uganda, United Kingdom, Viet Nam and the United States which showcase the impact that programmes in these and other countries are having on the lives of children across the world. In settings where public health interventions, such as immunization programmes, are functioning optimally, much of childhood hearing loss is avoided. In others, early detection and treatment are key.

WHO collates data and information on hearing loss to demonstrate its prevalence, causes and impact as well as opportunities for prevention and management; assists countries to develop and implement strategies for hearing care that are integrated into the primary health-care system; and provides technical resources and guidance for planning, implementation and human resource development.

Note to editors:

World Hearing Day is an annual advocacy event held on 3 March. It aims to raise awareness and promote ear and hearing care across the world. The theme for World Hearing Day 2016 is Childhood hearing loss; act now, here's how!



Experience – to be disabled for one day

In 2015 we in France celebrated 10 years of the law on equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities.

How should one live and communicate with disabled people? The answer is not so easy, because very often we don't know the best way. Is it important to help a blind woman to cross the road? Should I offer to push a wheelchair when the road slopes? Should I speak louder to an HOH child?

In 2012 Mr Parisot de Bayard, the only disabled prefet (chief of the National Police) in France, had an idea. If you teach youngsters how to treat disabled people, they will know how to live with them in the future. Mr Parisot suffers from muscular dystrophy and is quadriplegic. He's the father of four children.

The first edition of "Différent comme tout le monde" (Everyone is different) was organised in 2014 and was a great success.

Every year several thousand children are able to discover and share the daily life of people with disabilities through role playing workshops and: they learn a great deal. Being in the position of a person with disabilities is pretty unsettling at first, but it is an experience of an intensity and extraordinary richness because it helps them to understand the disability and what difficulty it presents in everyday life.

Such experience is necessary because it can permanently change the way society looks at disability.

The project started in Montpellier (in the South of France) with 3000 pupils from 12 years old. They went by bus from the city of Montpellier and its surroundings to the conference room; 250 pupils at each morning and afternoon session. At the beginning of each session a journalist, without legs and sitting in a wheelchair, welcomes the children and explains the course of this "very special day". A short film explains invisible handicaps like autism.

The pupils participate in three workshops; for example; eating in the dark, playing handball sitting in a wheelchair, painting with the mouth or discovering lip reading. The workshops are run by disability associations.

Our organisation, Surdi 34 offered a lip-reading workshop. One child wore an anti-noise helmet to be like an HOH, and his friend was reading words from a list. The "hearing impaired" had to work out the words read by watching the lips of his friend. After this experience the pupils asked us a lot of questions; they were serious, interested and respectful.

At the end of the day the prefet himself comes to meet the students and discusses their experience with them

Currently many regions are interested in this initiative. In 2016 seven thousand pupils will participate in these courses.

A big round of applause for the organizers. We hope that, in the future, things will change for disabled people.

Aisa Cleyet-Marel, president of Surdi 34 France



Photo of the IFHOH Board with new Member Heikki Niemi, Treasurer

From left to right Marcel Bobeldijk, Louise Carroll, Hanh Duong Phuong, Ruth Warick, Avi Blau and Heikki Niemi

IFHOH Invites you to its World Congress

Every four years IFHOH holds a world congress in co-operation with a host country. For the first time, the Hearing Loss Association of America will be hosts to the World Congress this June, from the 23 to the 26, in Washington D.C.

I invite you to take a look at the information on the website and join your fellow colleagues at what promises to be an amazing event. It will be the largest IFHOH Congress ever, with over 1,500 expected to attend. The website is <http://www.hearingloss.org/content/convention>

Note the deadline to register is May 31st but certainly register sooner. Also plan to attend the IFHOH biennial general meeting on Wednesday, June 22nd from 9 to 4 pm. All events will take place at the Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20009 US. If you have any items for the BGM please ensure that you send as soon as possible to info@ifhoh.org. Also please consider submitting a proposal to host the IFHOH BGM in 2018 or 2020.

With best regards,
Ruth Warick
IFHOH President



Hire an EFHOH speaker!

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

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

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

Please contact us at office@efhoh.org

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AEA_EFHOH_EHIMA – Joined press release – 1rd of March 2016 – Lunch Seminar EU Parliament

40 million Europeans can become healthier and smarter

Professional hearing care can make 40 million Europeans with hearing loss healthier and smarter. At the same time, professional hearing care is cost-efficient. A lunch seminar is being held on March 1 at the European Parliament to present the benefits of professional hearing care.

The health benefits of professional hearing care and the costs of untreated hearing loss will be presented and discussed at a lunch seminar on March 1, at the European Parliament building in Brussels. The title of the seminar is “Hearing awareness. Professional Hearing Care Makes You Smarter and Healthier”. The seminar is being held on the occasion of WHO World Hearing Day, March 3.

One in ten has untreated hearing loss

Around 16-17% of all adults have a hearing loss, when measured with a hearing test. Unfortunately, only around one in three Europeans treat their hearing loss with professional hearing care. This means that 10% of all adults Europeans live with an untreated hearing loss.

The benefits of professional hearing care

Several scientific studies in recent years have shown that professional hearing care makes people with hearing loss healthier than if the hearing loss is left untreated. The studies also document that if you do not treat your hearing loss you have an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. The studies furthermore document that you have an increased risk of depression and psychosis and even an earlier death if you leave your hearing loss untreated.

On the positive side, the surveys and studies have found that those who use professional hearing care do not experience the same cognitive decline, live longer and experience an increased quality of life. They are also less depressed, less exhausted and tend to sleep better..

Other studies and surveys in Europe and the US have found that people with hearing loss who are treated through professional hearing care have a higher income and are less likely to be unemployed or opt for early retirement than those who do not treat their hearing loss.





Hosts and speakers

The lunch seminar is hosted by MEP Helga Stevens (Belgium) and MEP Ádam Kósà (Hungary).

The speakers are:

Dr. Shelly Chadha, WHO hearing officer,
Lazlo Gabor Lovász, The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,
Professor Hélène Amieva, Université Victor Segalen Bordeaux 2, France,
Paul Breckell from Action on Hearing Loss (UK),
Sue Archbold, Ear Foundation,
Lidia Smolarek-Best, EFHOH,
Mark Laureyns, AEA.

The lunch seminar is arranged by EFHOH (European Federation of the Hard of Hearing), AEA, (Association of the European Hearing Aid Professionals), hear-it AISBL and EHIMA (European Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association).

Obvious advantages

“Professional hearing care makes good sense both for the individual and for society”, said EFHOH president Marcel Bobeldijk.

“The personal advantages of professional hearing care for the hearing impaired person are so obvious and at the same time professional hearing care is cost-efficient for society. The costs saved for society on other types of health care, less taxes paid, pensions and other social expenditures are enormous compared to the cost of treating more people with professional hearing care,” said AEA president Mark Laureyns.

For further information, press contacts:

AEA (European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals) – Mark Laureyns, president@aea-audio.org

EFHOH (European Federation of the Hard of Hearing) – Marcel Bobeldijk, president@efhoh.org

EHIMA (European Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association) – Soeren Hougaard, sh@ehima.com





AEA – EFHOH – EHIMA – Joined press release – 3rd of March 2016 – WORLD HEARING DAY

Teeth checked! Eyes Checked. What about your hearing?

Professional hearing care makes you both healthier and smarter. Maybe it's time to get your hearing checked. Get a free hearing test on March 3.



On WHO World Hearing Day, March 3, you can in many European countries get a free hearing test by visiting a hearing care professional. Professional hearing care is important and relevant for all those with a hearing loss, from small children to the elderly.

The offer of a free hearing test on WHO World Hearing Day, March 3rd, is provided by AEA, (Association of the European Hearing Aid Professionals).

Around 16-17% of all adults have a hearing loss, when measured with a hearing test. Unfortunately only around one in three (name of inhabitants) treat their hearing loss with professional hearing care. This means that 10% of all (name of inhabitants) do not treat their hearing loss.

Healthier and smarter

Several surveys and scientific studies in recent years have shown that people who treat their hearing loss with professional hearing care can stay or become healthier and smarter than those who do not treat their hearing loss.



The studies and surveys find that if you do not treat your hearing loss you have an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. The studies also document that you have an increased risk of depression and psychosis and even an earlier death if you leave your hearing loss untreated.

On the positive side, the surveys and studies have found that those who use professional hearing care do not experience the same cognitive decline, you live longer and experience an increased quality of life. They are also less depressed, less exhausted and tend to sleep better.

"If you have a hearing loss and want to stay healthy and mentally fit, my best advice is to treat your hearing loss with professional hearing care", said EFHOH president Marcel Bobeldijk.

Increased quality of life

"Far more people can experience better hearing and at the same time become healthier, smarter and experience an increased quality of life, so if you think you have a hearing loss my best advice is for you to get a free hearing test and your hearing checked by a hearing care professional on WHO World Hearing Day, March 3", said AEA president Mark Laureyns.

Other studies and surveys in Europe and the US have found that people with hearing loss who are treated through professional hearing care have a higher income and are less likely to be unemployed or opt for early retirement than those who do not treat their hearing loss.

"The financial benefits of using professional hearing care on top of the health benefits, just makes the decision to treat your hearing loss an even more obvious choice", said EHIMA General Secretary Soeren Hougaard.

The offer of a free hearing test on WHO World Hearing Day is supported by EFHOH (European Federation of the Hard of Hearing), EHIMA (European Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association) and hear-it AISBL.

For further information, press contacts:

AEA (European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals) – Mark Laureyns, president@aea-audio.org

EFHOH (European Federation of the Hard of Hearing) – Marcel Bobeldijk, president@efhoh.org

EHIMA (European Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association) – Soeren Hougaard, sh@ehima.com



<http://www.aea-audio.org/portal/index.php/world-hearing-day>

VDNR – Seminar at The Danish House of Disabled People's Organisations Blekinge Boulevard 2, 2630 Taastrup, Denmark

Saturday, May 21st, 2016

*The seminar will primarily be hosted in English – some presentations may be held in Danish
– There will be speech-to-text translations to and from English*

- **10:00-11:15**
- Opening: National President, Hard of Hearing Organisation,
Majbritt Garbul Tobberup, Denmark
Chairman of VDNR
Trine L. Gaarsdahl, Denmark
 - o Speech: Psychosocial consequences of hearing loss (social isolation)
- About becoming deaf as an adult – what help is available
/Katharine Cecilia Williams, specialist in clinical work psychology, Norway
- **11:15-11:30** Coffee break
- **11:30-12:30**
 - o Speech: About EFHOH */Aida Regel Poulsen, Denmark*
 - o Speech: Benefits of bilateral CI */Chief Physician Rikke Schnack-Petersen, Denmark*
- **12:30-13:30** Lunch
- **13:30-14:30**
 - o Speech: *Karen Johanne Klint, member of the Danish parliament and Nordic Council*
 - o Debate: About the speeches so far as seen from a political perspective
- **14:30-14:50** Coffee break
- **14:50-15:15**
 - o Speech: What is the Norwegian hard of hearing organisation (HLF) doing for its late deafened members?
/Roar Råken, Chief of the organization, HLF, Norway
- **15:15-15:40**
 - o Speech: What is the Danish Hard of Hearing Organisation doing for its late deafened members?
/Majbritt Garbul Tobberup, National President, Høreforeningen, Denmark
- **15:40-16:00** Break
- **16:00-16:30**
 - o Speech: Preliminary title of this presentation:
"About inclusion into the society in general, at studies, and work life"
- **16:30-17:00**
 - o Debate: How can the organisations become better at attracting, including and helping their members within and outside the organisations.
- **17:15** Guided tour at The Danish House of Disabled People's Organisations (Handicaporganisationernes Hus)
- **19:00** Dinner at Quality Hotel Høje Taastrup

Registration for this event must be performed at the following link:

<http://hoeforeningen.dk/vdnr2016>

Registration deadline: April 3rd

Price for participation:	154 Danish kr.
Price for Dinner after the event:	135 Danish kr. – no beverages included
Accommodation:	700 Danish kr. For a single bedroom incl. breakfast
	810 Danish kr. For a double bedroom incl. breakfast

Can **AC/DC** latest news bring a positive **change**?

Many of us heard the news of AC/DC American Tour being suddenly postponed due to their front man Brian Johnson's hearing problems http://www.acdc.com/news?n_id=274.

The news brought shockwaves across fans, press and surely those who personally understand and have experiences of what a total hearing loss means to an individual. <http://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/mar/08/acdc-singer-brian-johnson-to-stop-touring-to-save-his-hearing>

I believe, this announcement can be a 'game changer' for us all, bringing into perspective last year WHO World Hearing Day theme 'Safe Listening' campaign. It is important that musicians and their fans take the risk seriously and try to minimize the exposure. It is also important to talk about the risk, and this is why we hope the announcement can bring a positive change in the attitudes towards listening at the loud volumes for a long period, something younger people do without much thought for their hearing.

AC/DC is a very influential band that many young people in particular listen to and so EFHOH hopes this announcement can be used as a tool to warn people of the dangers of loud music to their hearing and ear health. There are

only a few famous people with recorded hearing loss, so I hope this high profile story will remind people that they are not invincible and that anyone can be effected by this.

With music concerts, gigs and clubs a large part of a young adult's life, particularly university students, more needs to be done to raise awareness of tinnitus and hearing loss which are often caused by exposure to loud music and loud environments.

I look forward to your comments on this subject.

Lidia Best
EFHOH Vice- President





Family Centred Early Intervention

3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
FAMILY-CENTRED EARLY INTERVENTION FOR
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SAVE THE DATE



HEARING ONLY WITH THE EARS? **(ROMANS 10,17)**

IVSS Churchear Conference 2016 in Denmark
18th–22nd August

International ministry of Hearing impaired persons
Folkekirkens Uddannelses- og Videnscenter (FUV)
(The National Church Centre for Education and Science)
Løgumkloster

It is a pleasure to invite you to our IVSS-Churchear Conference in Denmark 2016! The days will be filled with encounters and an interesting programme at a wonderful place – Løgumkloster Refugium and we welcome you to take part.

Our Conferences are for all who want education and inspiration about the challenge how to include us who are hard of hearing, in our Churches and Congregations. Some of those who come are working professionally with this; others know nothing about these questions, but want to learn. Some are members of IVSS-Churchear, corporate or individual; most are not – of course. You are all welcome to Denmark to our 18th Conference!

Mikael Henning, President



The registration should be sent by **May 1st 2016** to
 Rev. Mona Kjær Nielsen, Munkgaardkvarteret 244, Snejbjerg
 DK-7400 HERNING, DENMARK
 You may also register by email: **mokn@km.dk**
 or at our web site: **www.chuchear.org**

Total cost per person 400,- €, including the conference fee and accommodation in double rooms with toilet and bathroom, meals and sightseeing bus to the Emil Nolde Museum, as well as the Danish evening.
 Bank account number: 18244 at Union-Bank AG, Flensburg
 Bank guide number 21520100
 IBAN: DE66 2152 0100 0000 018244 SWIFT (BIC): UNBNDE21
 The Conference address:
 FUV Kirkeallé 2, DK-6240 LØGUMKLOSTER, Denmark



REGISTRATION

I shall attend the International Conference of IVSS-Churchear at Løgumkloster August 18th–22nd 2016.

Name
 Organisation/Country
 Address
 Telephone
 Mobile Email
 Workshop Friday Saturday (write number)
 Food: Normal Vegetarian
 Special requests (allergies etc.)
 I want a single room, paying therefore an extra € 50 (Yes/No)
 I want to share double room with
 I want all the lectures on a CD in English and German for € 1 (Yes/No)
 I have transferred € 150,- to the account of IVSS-Churchear in Flensburg (It is of course possible to transfer the whole fee as well) (Amount)
 Date Signature.....

Programme:

Thursday **18.08** Arrival

18:00 Dinner and opening

Friday 19.08

08:15–09:00 Breakfast

09:00 Morning Prayer in the Chapter Hall

09:30–12:00 Lecture by Søren Skov Johansen:
“Is there a relation between hearing loss and
reduced memory span?”

12:00 Lunch

14.30 Coffee / tea

15:00 Workshop

1. Mette Gautier, sign interpreter: “See a
hymn” is a “hymnological workshop” for
working with signs and gestures, holding the
hymns in our hands. Adding linguistic move-
ments to a text brings a deeper under-
standing of what the hymn is about – we may
frequently sing the same hymns several times
without quit registering what they are about,
and what they want to tell us.

2. Søren Skov Johansen: “What we do in
Denmark”

3. Dorothee Holzapfel: “Meditation in the
prayer of the heart”

4. The Refugium: “Music and song?”

18.00 Dinner

20:00 Evening programme: Pantomime thea-
tre from Odense: “The walk to Emmaus”

Saturday 20.08

08:15–09:00 Breakfast

09:00 Morning Prayer in the Chapter Hall

09:30-12:00 Lecture by Lisbeth Smedgaard Andersen,

**Hearing Consideration at the
IVSS-Churcheare conference**

All speakers will use microphones
(in the conference hall and all
other sites)

In the conference hall: Induction
loop, loudspeakers and
captioning in English and
German.

Outside the conference hall: All
conference attendants are
offered to borrow an FM
receiver, enabling you every-
where to receive the sound from
the microphones through telecoil
og head phones. There will even
be mobile captioning in English
(See picture further down).
Group conversation: Smaller
groups may borrow a micro-
phone transmitting the spoken
sound to FM receivers mentioned
above. This may be combined
with induction loops as well as
head phones, and on some
occations there may be English
captioning as well (e.g. at dinner
and workshops)



“So faith comes from hearing – St. Paul says, as has largely been the case within the Protestant Church. There are, however, painters and sculptors having thought differently. Among them is Rembrandt, who in the 17th century Calvinist Holland painted with a distinct preaching content, time and time again working on themes where faith comes from seeing.”

12:00 Lunch

13:00 Workshop (See Friday)

14:30 Coffee / tea

15:30 General Assembly

18:00 Dinner

20:00 General Assembly

Sunday 21.08

08:15–09:00: Breakfast

10:00 A worship for all senses

12:00 Lunch

13:00–17:00 Excursion: A Nolde Safari, bringing us close to the Danish-German artist Emil Nolde and his powerful struggle against drainage and cultivation of the marshland at the beginning of last century (Remember to bring your passport!).

18:00 Dinner

20:00 A Danish evening

Monday 22.08

08:15–09:00: Breakfast

09:00 Morning Prayer in the Chapter Hall

09:15 News from Danish providers: Induction loops and visual aids - a way into the future?

10:00 Coffee / tea

10:30 Group picture and evaluation

12:00 Lunch

Departure



The picture above: A small group being shown around. The guide has a microphone transmitting the spoken sound to the borrowed FM receivers. Some have a carried induction loop (sound through the induction coil), while others use head phones (loudspeaker sound). In the front you see Ginny listening to the guide through head phones, captioning what he tells, on her computer which transmits the text to mobile screens available for borrowing (iPad). Thus you may even read what is said, when we are outside the conference hall as well. The text may also be received on your smartphone.

REMINDER: SEND US YOUR PICTURES ON TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY!

To illustrate EDF's work on transport accessibility we need your pictures to show real-life situations. After all, a picture says more than a thousand words!

We are especially looking for pictures that illustrate both the positive and the negative aspects of transport accessibility: your broken wheelchair after the airline dropped it, your difficulty boarding a bus with a broken ramp, the lack of accessible time table information, unclear signage, broken lifts – but also positive things that have occurred for example when you received competent and friendly assistance at the airport.

By sending us your pictures we assume that you agree that we can use your photos for EDF's internal and external communication, for example in position papers, presentations, exhibitions or on facebook, and twitter. We will of course give you the credits so please include your full name and if possible the date and place where the photo was taken. You can also add additional explanation for the context if you like.

Contact: marie.denninghaus@edf-feph.org

HOW CAN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IMPLEMENT THE UN'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EU?

Today EDF participated in the meeting of the European Parliament's Employment Committee focusing on the implementation of the UN's recommendations to the EU for the promotion of the rights of 80 million people with disabilities and the role of the European Parliament in this context.

The European Ombudsman and the European Agency of Fundamental Rights (FRA) -as members of the EU Monitoring Framework together with EDF and the European Parliament- took active part in the meeting as speakers, as well as Diane Kingston, member of the UN CRPD Committee and Jan Jarab, Regional Representative for Europe of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The European Parliament is drafting a report on the UN's recommendations, under the leadership of MEP Helga Stevens. During the meeting, MEPs could listen and exchange with key EU bodies and the European disability movement. How well the EU will address the UN's recommendations and implement the UN CRPD, will set a standard for the respect of human rights.

Emily O'Reilly, European Ombudsman:



"As a supervisory body, the Ombudsman is particularly sensitive to the need for us to listen to what the UN CRPD Committee has said about the EU's compliance, or lack of compliance, with the Convention. We need to focus on concrete actions, so that the Convention does not remain a wish-list but has a genuine impact on the daily lives of persons with disabilities."

For the first time in history, last year the EU was reviewed by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the work it does to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). The EU received specific recommendations, the so called 'Concluding Observations', by the UN Committee on how to improve their work in this field in the coming years.

The European Parliament is drafting a report on the implementation of the UN CRPD and especially the follow up to the UN's Concluding Observations. MEP Helga Stevens (ECR, BE) is the rapporteur and more than 30 MEPs from several European Parliament Committees are contributing to the report creating a comprehensive overview of the European Parliaments approach to implementation of the UN CRPD. The rapporteur and other MEPs plan several moments of consultation with stakeholders including a close consultation with the disability movement. MEPs Helga Stevens and Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL, UK) hosted this public hearing as an opportunity for MEPs and representatives of the disability movement to have an open dialogue on how the European Parliament can contribute to and promote the successful implementation of the UN's Concluding Observations.

At the opening of the hearing, EDF Vice-President, Gunta Anca, stated that the UN Committee's Concluding Observations give the EU a powerful mandate to make the rights

of persons with disabilities a top priority. She highlighted the UN Committee's requests for the EU to review the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and connect it with the UN CRPD, to adopt a strong, wide-ranging and UN CRPD-compliant European Accessibility Act, as well as the EU directive on the accessibility of public websites, the equal treatment directive, among others. She recalled that the Concluding Observations include a detailed list of actions and measures which the EU has to take, across all policy areas: freedom of movement, non-discrimination, independent living, education, access to goods and services, employment, humanitarian aid and international cooperation, legal capacity, access to justice, health, participation in elections etc. That is why it is important that MEPs from so many different committees are involved in the European Parliament's report and its follow-up.

Gunta Anca also underlined the importance of the active involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities in all EU policy and decision making processes: "The UN has asked the EU to set up a structured dialogue with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. This means that organisations of persons with disabilities should be meaningfully and closely involved and consulted by all European institutions".

EDF members and other civil society organisations and foundations were present in strong numbers at the hearing. They used the opportunity to explain important gaps in the EU's implementation of the UN CRPD and gave concrete recommendations to MEPs on critical UN CRPD articles in relation to freedom of movement, legal capacity, political participation, refugees with disabilities, equal access to justice, inclusive education, equal access to cross border health care and deinstitutionalisation.

EDF is an umbrella organisation including over 130 organisations of persons with disabilities, and together with its members looks forward to work very closely with the European Parliament in the implementation of the UN's Concluding Observations.

Contact: Lila Sylviti | EDF Communication officer | lila.sylviti@edf-feeph.org

EQUAL ACCESS TO WEB

Open letter from 20 civil society networks, representing consumers, older people and people from a range of representative organisations of persons with disabilities strongly oppose Council's proposals to water down the Web Accessibility Directive.

Web accessibility means that everyone – including people with disabilities – can use the internet independently to browse, navigate and interact. In 2012, the European Commission released a proposal for a Web Directive on the accessibility of the public sector bodies' websites. The

proposal has been discussed at the European Parliament and at the EU Council.

The Council, which is composed of representatives of all EU member states, has proposed to significantly reduce the scope of the Web Directive, excluding websites of public broadcasters, schools, kindergartens, universities, nurseries or NGOs. The Council also proposed to exclude some web content such as the live audiovisual, as well as intranets and extranets. Excluding intranets and extranets will prevent persons with disabilities from being able to work in organisations that rely on the use of these types of "private websites" in their everyday work.

These exemptions will mean limited access and unfair treatment for many people- including older people and people with disabilities. Because of this situation, EDF has worked together with a range of partners and members to advocate for the EU to adopt a meaningful Web Directive.

Our open letter, launched today and signed by 20 civil society networks, representing consumers, older people and people from a range of representative organisations of persons with disabilities, expresses our strong opposition to the far-reaching exemptions proposed by the Member States. These exemptions will prevent millions of citizens from accessing digital information and online services which are nowadays taken for granted. The websites of private entities used to deliver a public service such as postal services or transportation, should also be covered by the Directive. These online public services, such as paying taxes, accessing academic materials or buying a train ticket, are increasingly accessed through mobile devices and applications, therefore to the Directive must ensure accessibility of both mobile web and mobile applications.

We call on the governments of all EU member states to ensure that the 80 million persons with disabilities and the 150 million older people who live in Europe, have access to the online public services that are provided to other citizens in the EU, and that public money never funds inaccessible content. Equal access to information and communication technologies is a human right enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

It is not acceptable to adopt legislation that would potentially deny millions of citizens access to the digital world we live in today.

It is not acceptable to legalise digital barriers to the right to work because of inaccessible employment web editors, intranets, extranets, etc.

It is not acceptable to exclude millions of people from fully participating in society.

As society, the economy and public services become more and more digitalised, it is critical that no one is left behind.

Governments have an obligation to create a level playing field, with equal access for all.

We call on the EU member states to not miss this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and older people and to adopt a meaningful Web Directive.

EUROPEAN ACCESSIBILITY ACT: WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL TO BRING A POSITIVE CHANGE?

EDF presents an initial response to the Act

For over three years, EDF and its members have strongly campaigned for the publication of a legislative proposal on the accessibility of products and services in the EU. On 2 December, the European Commission finally published its proposal of this long awaited piece of legislation which was welcomed by EDF. The proposal is innovative as it aims to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities from an EU internal market perspective. It also followed the UN Committee's recommendations to the EU to promptly adopt the European Accessibility Act. After a broad consultation with its members from all over Europe, EDF now presents its initial response to the Act.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Until now, EU member states had certain accessibility laws and rules, but there was no harmonised EU-wide legislation on the accessibility of products and services in the internal market. The European Accessibility Act will harmonize these accessibility laws and rules so that products and services can circulate on the EU internal market without problems, and be accessible for persons with disabilities and other people with functional limitations. At the same time, the Act will improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the EU, by allowing them equal access to mainstream products and services, at a more competitive price.

Through its Freedom of Movement campaign, EDF has advocated for a European law on accessibility, as people with disabilities still face barriers to access products and services on equal basis with others.

- Using an ATM might be difficult or impossible for blind people if there is no voice output or for wheelchair users if they cannot reach it.
- Buying online is an activity increasingly used by consumers, but people with disabilities still face many difficulties in accessing and using websites with e-commerce systems successfully.

- Persons with disabilities can buy accessible products, like a smartphone or a TV set, but they are often more expensive than other products and there is less choice.

An ambitious and strong European law on accessibility, such as the European Accessibility Act, could change this. EDF and its members all around Europe examined the European Commission's proposal for the European Accessibility Act and we are now presenting our initial response, highlighting areas where the text should be improved.

WIDENING THE SCOPE OF THE ACT

The Act should include more areas, as there are many products and services that could be included but have been left out. The proposed text covers areas such as computer hardware and operating systems, ATMs, ticketing machines, check-in machines, phones and smartphones, tablets, TVs, online shopping, banking services, e-books and websites of transport companies. However, it is not enough to make the ATM, for instance, accessible if it continues being in a building that people with disabilities cannot access. Thus, the building of the bank, where the ATM is, should also be accessible. The same is true for a coach or bus terminal, where the ticketing machine might be accessible but not the building in which the machine is situated.

EXCEPTIONS

The European Commission's proposal foresees exceptions if a company argues that it is too complicated or too expensive for them to make their product or service accessible. Companies may use this to avoid making their products or services accessible. We call for the EU to have clarity on the rules and conditions under which such exceptions can be made and to not allow exceptions if there are no very serious reasons for that.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After the publication of the proposal of the Act, there was a consultation period in which EDF and its members submitted their responses. As a next step, the proposal will be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council.

EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis, stated: "We welcome the initiative of Commissioner Thyssen to establish legislation in this field. We have seen from experience in the US that legislation which includes a robust enforcement and surveillance mechanism is an extremely effective means of ensuring that products and services become accessible for persons with disabilities. We now call on the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament to strengthen the European Accessibility Act by revising the text and including in it stronger and more compulsory provisions in order to address accessibility in a holistic way and to make it an agent of change in the internal market".

EFHOH MEETINGS 2016 & 2017:

2016	2016	2016	2016
1-3 April	Paris / France	EFHOH AGM	All EFHOH board members
20 April	Brussels	Platform meeting	Marcel and Lidia
21 May	Copenhagen	VDNR meeting	Aida
21 and 22 May	Dublin/Ireland	EDF Assembly	Marcel
29 May	Brussels	AEA Seminar	Lidia
30 May	Brussels	EFHOH workshop for EDF staff	Lidia and Marcel
2-4 June	Como/Italy	HEAL	Lidia
9 June	Brussels	EDF-ENGO's meeting	Marcel
22 June	Washington DC/USA	IFHOH BGM	Marcel and Aida
23-26 June	Washington DC /USA	IFHOH World Congress	Marcel and Aida
26-28 August	Berlin	ECOS 2016	Marcel
22 September	Brussels	EDF-ENGO's meeting	
14-15 October	Dublin	EFHOH board meeting	EFHOH board
25 October	Copenhagen	Hear It AGM 2016	Aida
12-13 November	Bratislava	EDF Board meeting and Conference	Marcel
December	Brussels	European Day of Disabled People	
2017	2017	2017	2017
20-22 April	Finland	EURO-CIU AGM	
5-6 May	Dublin / Ireland	EFHOH AGM	All board members

Version: 6-3-2016

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.