

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

Prague Declaration

Hearing Loops Conference

Hearing Awareness Days

European Platform



Arab Regional Conference

European Disability Forum

UN CRPD

Screening for hearing loss

Website and social media

IMPACT REPORT



2013

51 millions within the European Union



INTRODUCTION

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.

EFHOH has close connections to the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, IFHOH.

This report give an overview of what we have achieved during 2013. Some examples are very concrete, Others are more in the field of creating awareness and spreading knowledge.

Marcel Bobeldijk , President



Cover page: Some examples of accessibility around the international symbol of accessibility to hard of hearing people (the "ear symbol"), often used in connection with hearing loops.



The PRAGUE DECLARATION

The Prague Declaration was prepared for the Annual General Meeting of EFHOH, held in Prague, Czech Republic, in April. The document forms a statement on the most important demands from the hard of hearing people when implementing the UN Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities, CRPD.

The Declaration was signed by all participating members of EFHOH during the Annual General Meeting. The last one to put his signature on the declaration was MEP Adám Koša, Hungary, and President of the European Parliament Disability Intergroup.

EXCERPT FROM THE PRAGUE DECLARATION

One condition for good quality of life is that all citizens have access to information.
An accessible society for hard of hearing people benefits whole population.

EFHOH emphasizes that a hearing loss itself is no obstacle for full inclusion. In order to secure a good quality of life for all citizens, hard of hearing people should have access to fair working conditions, a good quality health care and meaningful social activities on the same conditions as others.

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), it is obvious that persons with disabilities should have the same living conditions as others. An estimated 15% of the world population has some sort of a hearing loss and the World Health Organisation (WHO) lists hearing loss as one of the most frequent public health problems

Lidia Best, EFHOH board member, at the European Parliament, showing the Prague Declaration with all signatures, to Lidia Geringer de Oedenberg, MEP from Poland. She also signed the declaration herself.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, AGM, IN PRAGUE ON 5TH OF APRIL 2013

This is where EFHOH make all major decisions about their goals and activities; elect the board. Usually the host for the AGM holds a conference on the following day. So did the Czech organisation, the ŠNNCR, Czech Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The conference dealt with subtitling; cochlea implants and different aspects of rehabilitation.



HEARING AWARENESS DAYS , BRUSSELS

In the beginning of April MEP Adám Koša, Hungary, hosted an event in the Parliament building. During two days, EFHOH and EHIMA together with the AEA organised hearing tests. Over 250 staff, MEPs and interpreters working in the EP, tested their hearing ability.

On Wednesday, Adám Koša had invited all to a breakfast meeting, To this meeting came 8 MEPs together with representatives from the host organisations. On the breakfast meeting there were presentations from EFHOH and the European Commission.

At the end of the meeting, Adám Koša signed the Prague Declaration on top of the signatures of the EFHOH members. It is a statement on the most important demands from the hard of hearing organisations when implementing the UN CRPD.

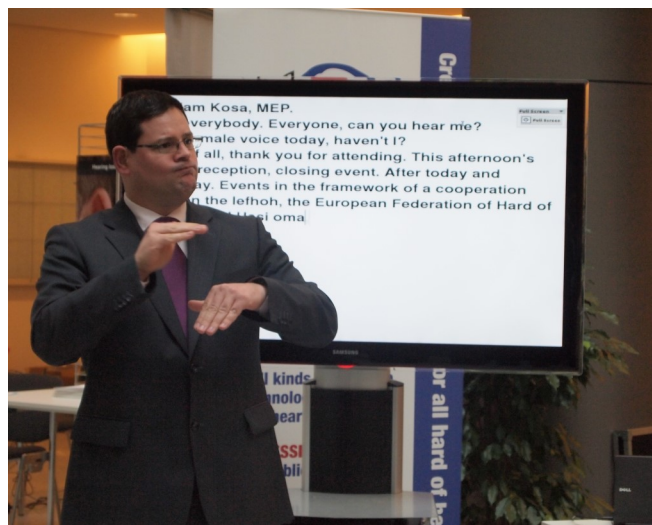


EHIMA = European Hearing Instruments Manufacturer's Association

AEA = European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals; organizes audiologists, and other staff in audiological care.

Adám Koša, in the center of the photo, with representatives from organisations responsible for the hearing tests: Far left Søren Hougaard, General Secretary, EHIMA; and to the far right Marcel Bobeldijk, President, EFHOH.

One of the over 250 persons who underwent a hearing test with a portable audiometer. The majority of the test persons showed no measurable hearing loss, but appr. 10 % were advised to seek professional care. The figure is in line with statistics from WHO, and clearly shows the importance of an increased awareness and knowledge.



Adám Koša at the reception that closed the Hearing Awareness Days. He uses sign language, fully accessible to all through interpreters and speech-to-text service.



EDF European Disability Forum



The European Disability Forum is a strong and increasingly influential part in the European Union network. At the Annual General Assembly in May, a new board was elected. There are now three members from the deaf and hard of hearing movement in the board, all of them from organisations belonging to the Platform. They are seen in the back row: Ricardo Lopez, European Deafblind Network, EDbN; Yannis Yallourus, European Union of Deaf, EUD; Marcel Bobeldijk, EFHOH and finally Knut Magne Ellingsen from the Norwegian Disability Council, also Vice-President of EFHOH. The outcome of the election means we have a better possibility to influence EDF policy work; in addition we have representatives in the EDF committees and expert groups, see below.

EDF also has some e-mail expert groups, meaning all work is done through e-mail conversation. EFHOH is represented in the expert groups for Built environment and ICT, Information and Communication Technologies.

A third part of EDF is the working Committees. EFHOH is represented in the Womens Committee and the Youth Committee.



European Day of People with Disabilities



Commissioner Viviane Reding, Head of DG Justice, speaking at the conference.

Every year in December the European Commission hosts a conference together with EDF, covering some important aspect of conditions for people with disabilities. In 2013 the theme was Accessible Tourism in Europe. Marcel Bobeldijk and Lidia Best represented EFHOH at this conference. Accessibility when travelling and at hotels are fields where we need accessible information, emergency alerts through accessible ways.



EUROPEAN PLATFORM OF DEAFNESS, HARD OF HEARING, AND DEAFBLINDNESS

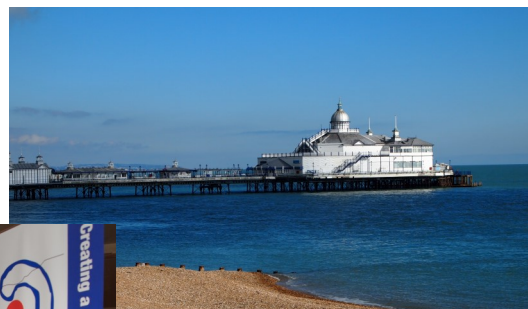
In May 2012 a number of deaf and hard of hearing organisations founded the **European Platform of Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness**. The organisations were: European Union of Deaf, EUD; European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, EFHOH; European Cochlea Implant Users, Euro-CIU; European Deafblind Network, EDbN.

In November 2013 the Platform was extended when the European Deaf Young People, EUDY; European Deafblind Union, EDBU, and International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People, IFHOHYP; all joined the Platform.

The Platform aims to unite the forces of the deaf and hard of hearing movement, and creating better influence to the decision makers within the EU bodies. An important part in the EU network is the European Disability Forum, EDF, where EFHOH, as the major part of the Platform organisations, is a full member.



3rd INTERNATIONAL HEARING LOOPS CONFERENCE EASTBOURNE, UK



Hosted by the EFHOH member Hearing Link, UK, the 3rd International Hearing Loops Conference was held in Eastbourne, UK, in October. Over 200 participants worldwide came together in this excellent organised event. Here information was exchanged how to spread the awareness and knowledge of hearing loops. Representatives from different stakeholders, met professional installers who showed the latest development of loop technology. In the left picture, you see as the third from left British MP Stephen Lloyd, a hard of hearing himself; flanked by members of the EFHOH board.

EFHOH, who originally came up with the idea to hold this kind of conferences, was represented by some members of the board. Together with IFHOH, we had a table in the exhibition area, on which our information material was displayed.



FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF ARAB DEAF and HARD OF HEARING PERSONS IN TUNIS



Left photo: Marcel Bobeldijk, President of EFHOH, together with some delegates;



Right photo: workshop participants

In September the first ever Regional Conference of Arab Deaf Persons took place in Tunis. The theme of the conference was "To promote Human Rights for Deaf Persons in the Arab World". Arranged by the Arab Organisation of Persons with Disabilities, AOPD, and EDF, European Disability Forum. IFHOH, the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, was also invited, and were represented by Marcel Bobeldijk, President of EFHOH.

The participants were roughly 1/3 deaf persons; 1/3 hard of hearing and 1/3 hearing. A large part of the discussions dealt with subjects related to the UN CRPD. Also the conference was a great opportunity for all participants to meet and hopefully build some bridges between deaf and hard of hearing people in different continents.

Marcel Bobeldijk gave a short presentation, on the situation for hard of hearing people in Europe and the world.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS



The UN CRPD

The European Union EU has ratified the convention and during the autumn 2013, they started to write their first report to the UN Committee. The preparation was discussed at a meeting held in October. At the same time the EDF is preparing their shadow report on the implementation, and also held a meeting to discuss the content of their report. EFHOH was represented at these meetings, report is found in the Newsletter December issue.



The Greens / European Free Alliance

The group of Green parties in the European Parliament held several meetings/conferences that were accessible to hard of hearing people by speech-to-text service. In this project EFHOH helped the Greens to find speech-to-text reporters. The goal for the Greens is to make all their meetings accessible this way. A good initiative that we hope will spread to other parties in the European Parliament.



Screening for hearing loss

The Member of Parliament Stephen Lloyd, UK launched a campaign for a nationwide screening on hearing loss with support from EFHOH. The aim is to perform regular screening of all persons above the age of 55 years. Similar goals are now a part of the advocacy work of hard of hearing associations in other countries.



Sound volume limitations in music players

As a result of the work of the European standardization body CENELEC, a final document was issued in 2013. It set up requirements for limitations of the sound volume in MP3-players and other music players. An important step in preventing hearing loss in the younger generations. Many of them use these devices in such a way they are exposed for the sound 8 hours or more per day.

EFHOH contributed to this work through the EDF expert group for Information and Communication Technologies. ICT.



WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

EFHOH has a website with modern design. Board member Lidia Best has been responsible for the site. Plans to have a volunteer webmaster from 2014.

We are present in social media, we have an EFHOH Facebook group and on Twitter.

The EFHOH Facebook group gets a steadily increasing attention, attracting some 500 members.

You can also follow us on Twitter, **@efhoh**



NEWSLETTER

Our Newsletter remains the best way to communicate all the work we do; to report from different events and advertise coming meetings and conferences.

The Newsletter is usually published in five issues a year. The Editor works as a volunteer like the board of EFHOH. During 2013 the Editor has been Niels-Henrk M. Hansen.



OFFICE and CONTACT



The board at work, all meetings are accessible through loop systems and speech-to-text support.



EFHOH is a European federation, and it's board of five people work solely on a voluntary basis.

During 2014 we will get a support from the UK organisation Action on Hearing Loss through an internship.

By the end of 2013 EFHOH had **28 General members, 3 Associate members and 8 Sponsor members.**

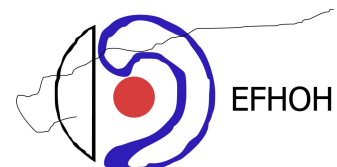
The General members are all national federations/association for hard of hearing people.

The Board of EFHOH

President Marcel Bobeldijk, NL Personal: marbob32@hotmail.com
Vice President Knut Magne Ellingsen, Norway
Treasurer Ritva-Liisa Schaeding, Germany
General Secretary Jan Lamby, Sweden
Board member Lidia Best, UK

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