

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

Headlines in this issue...



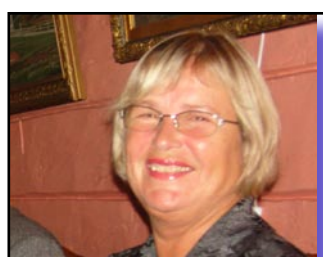
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EFHOH President letter

Dear Friends,

Warm congratulations to two of our members: to HRF with their 90th and to DTL with their 25th birthday. We as EFHOH board wish you both many happy and successful years in all your great work for Hard of Hearing and Tinnitus People in Sweden and in Germany.

I am very happy and proud of our Press Release Audiovisual Media. Our new Subtitling report on the EU member states respect the rights of deaf and hard of hearing people to have full access to media via subtitling by 2020! The report can be seen in English and Spanish version thanks to the support of the European Deaf Blind Organisation (EDBN) at <http://www.efhoh.org/subtitling/>

It is every important that you as our member organisation inform your national broadcasters and the members of your parliament. Please contact us if you have comments or questions by email efhoh@hrf.se

In a few weeks time the period of summer holiday will start for everybody, a nice time of light and a good time to have an evaluation of the 1st part of 2011 and to look forward to our work for the 1st part of 2011.

And of course the Summer Holiday is also the time for new energy and relaxation at home, in the garden, on the beach, in the forest or mountains etc. We know that leisure is important for us as hard of hearing people, because listening, reading speech to text or lipspeakers for the whole day in our daily life takes a lot of energy.

I will have my holiday after the 2nd International Hearing Loops Systems Conference in Washington DC/USA. In June it will be the second time that Hearing Loos Association of America (HLAA), as one of the members of IFHOH & EFHOH, together with the American Academy of Audiology, organises a conference about Hearing Loops Systems. I think that Hearing Loops are one of the most important means of access to information in different situations, on Sunday morning in the church, at work, at meetings, in study at school or at a training course on work, in the theatre/cinema and at many more places. This Hearing Loops Conference is also a good place to learn, to see what the consumer advocacy around the world means and what the status of hearing loop installations is in the different countries. More news about this conference in the next EFHOH Newsletter.



Last weekend of May I was the representative for EFHOH at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) of the European Disability Forum (EDF) in Budapest/Hungary. The main topics of this meeting were:

- Free movement
- European Accessibility Act
- European Mobility Card
- Economic crisis

In this EFHOH Newsletter you can read an article about the EDF AGA 2011 in Budapest.

EFHOH board member Lidia Best (UK) organised the International Summer Holidays for Hard of Hearing People and their families in her home country Poland this summer. This is a very successful event, because with approx. 50 participants it is fully booked. I wish all the participants a very nice and interesting meeting in August, in this beautiful part of Poland.

Poland owns the European Presidency in the 2nd part of 2011. I hope that the Summer Holiday and our participation in some of the EU Presidency meetings in Poland is a stimulant for Hard of Hearing People in Poland to build a network of organisations for Hard of Hearing People.

Our special congratulations to Vera Strnadová because she had the great honour to win the prestigious Olga Havel Award 2011 in the Czech Republic. Vera won this award for her lifelong work and contribution to the welfare of people with hearing impairment. The participants of the last EFHOH Annual General Meeting in Vienna know her from her interesting presentation about subtitling and her actions for more and better subtitling in her country the Czech Republic. Vera I wish you very much success in all your work

for a better life for Hard of Hearing People in your country and in middle Europe!

Some weeks ago also I had the honour to receive a prize together with the title 'Member of Merit' of the NVVS at the Annual General meeting of the NVVS (Dutch Hard of Hearing Organisation). This was given for my lifelong work for Hard of Hearing people in the Netherlands, and especially for the people in the middle group age (25-55 years) and for SOAP!/Subtitling and my European & International work for the NVVS. Receiving this honour was a big and very nice surprise.

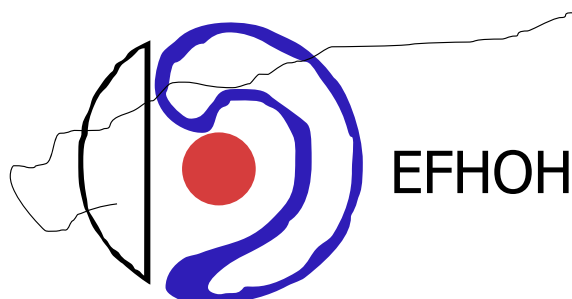
Please don't forget to send your proposal for a presentation for the IFHOH world congress 2012 in Bergen. A completed proposal form and abstract must be submitted electronically to E-mail: ifhoh2012@hlf.no. Deadline: Proposals must be submitted by August 1, 2011. All submissions must be attached as word documents.

Yes it is a very nice idea that we meet each other in the summer of next year in Norway at the world congress. I hope that many of you are able to come and as you know Norway is also a great country for your Summer Holiday in 2012.

Dear EFHOH friends, please put this EFHOH newsletter on the website of your organisation and sent it also to all of your board and other volunteers in your organisation. For more information you can also look at our updated EFHOH Website.

Have a great Summertime!

Marcel Bobeldijk
President of EFHOH



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People



PRESS RELEASE

Audiovisual Media – accessible for all?

A new report called "State of subtitling access in EU 2011" released during European Federation of Hard of Hearing People Annual General Meeting in Vienna on 8th of April 2011 reveals huge inequality for 51 million of deaf and hard of hearing people in EU. The report calls on the EU Member States to respect the rights of deaf and hard of hearing citizens to have full access to media via subtitling by 2020.

Articles 11 and 14 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights confirm access to information and education as basic human rights. The EU has recently adhered to UN Convention on Right of People with Disabilities.

Still over 51 million of deaf or hard of hearing Europeans are deprived of basic human rights simply because they cannot hear programmes broadcasted on TV, they do not understand films in the cinema or plays in the theatre. Subtitles have function not just as the access to information for people who can't hear but also support literacy and learners of other languages.

These reasons have pushed EFHOH to launch a pan European campaign in order to promote subtitling in audiovisual media in all member states as the easiest solution to grant deaf and hard of hearing people full access to information society.

The findings proved that many Members States are ignoring the latest Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/avms/index_en.htm Subtitling is in reality easier done than said and we believe that today, with the European Commission's Com-

munication "EU Disability Strategy" and ratification by the EU of UN Convention on People with Disabilities, the time has come to ensure that European commitment for deaf and hard of hearing people is more than political declaration/empty words.

BM Rudolf Hundstorfer a Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection in Austria was the first European high ranking Minister to receive it.

Thanks to backing of MEP Ms Lidia Geringer de Oedenberg who initiated Written Declaration on the subtitling of all public-service television programmes in the EU in 2007 the document will be distributed to Commissioners and MEP's in European Parliament.

The report can be seen in English and Spanish version thanks to support of European Deaf Blind organisation (EDbN) at <http://www.efhoh.org/subtitling/>

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, EFHOH, with its 26 national organisation members exists to represent 81 million hard of hearing people in Europe in dialogue with the European Union, the Members of the European Parliament, and other European authorities. Contact us at: efhoh@hrf.se

News from the IFHOH President

As we head into the summer months and welcome warm weather, it feels as if many activities are gearing up. Foremost is the pending deadline for submissions for the International Hard of Hearing Congress being held in Bergen, Norway June 25th to 28th of 2012. The closing date for submissions is August first, 2011. Our host organizers, HLF (The Norwegian Association of Hard of Hearing), are working hard to put together an exciting programme, united under the theme of "A better quality of life." Please check the Congress website www.ifhoh.no for more information. Within a few days I will be heading to New York to attend the launch of the World report on disability by the WHO Director-General and the Vice President of the Human Development Network at the World Bank. The official ceremony will be held Thursday 9 June noon at the United Nations Building.

The full World report on disability, the summary report and other materials will be downloadable from WHO's website from Thursday afternoon (1400 New York time; 2000 European time). The summary report is available in all UN languages, in Braille formatted copy, in accessible PDF and in EasyRead. To download, go to www.who.int/disabilities_worldreport. Ahiya Kamara, Vice-President of IFHOH, and I participated in consultative meetings prior to the

development of the report. I am as excited as you are to see the final document.

Toward the middle of June, I will be joining Marcel Bobeldijk, President of EFHOH, in Washington DC for the Hearing Loop Conference. A tremendous amount of work has gone into this event and our US partners, Hearing Loss Association of America, are to be congratulated for their work. It will be exciting to dialogue and discuss further about hearing loops and their capacity to improve the quality of our lives.

In closing, I wish you all a wonderful summer. Meanwhile, invite you to contact me if you have any IFHOH issues or concerns. I can best be reached by email president@ifhoh.org.

Ruth Warick
IFHOH President

Swedish investigation shows the relationship between stress, hearing impairment and tinnitus

Published by the National office of the Dutch national association for the hard of hearing, May 4, 2011. (translated in English by Hannie Huigsloot)

Extensive research from the University of Stockholm shows that stress has a great influence on building up hearing impairment and tinnitus. People with a lot of stress often have more hearing problems, the Swedish investigators have found.

A large investigation

The Swedes had 9,756 people to experiment with comparing results within the relationship between emotional stress and hearing problems. Competitors had to answer questions about work related stress factors, their health, the quality of their night's rest, the risk for a burn out, long term stress and compulsive ambition.

Furthermore the investigators compared the replies of participants out of 3 groups: one group of people without

stress, a bad health, a bad nights rest, a high risk of a burn out, much long term stress and a high ambition.

The shown combination of these factors, does not imply that the stress factors are as a result directly the cause of the hearing problems. A bad nights sleep might add to symptoms of tinnitus, but could also be caused by these. More information

Do you wish to read the research report? The report: "Stress and prevalence of hearing problems in the Swedish working population, Dan Hasson, Tores Theorell, Martin Benka Wallén, Constanze Leineweber and Barbara Canlon, BMC Public Health 2011 can be found here:

<http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/1471-2458-11-130.pdf>



Interview with Lillian Vicaneck

In this EFHOH newsletter an interview with Lillian Vicaneck one of the former EFHOH secretary and president from Norway. This is also one of the interviews for the EFHOH History book. We will publish this book of the History of EFHOH at the world congress 2012 in Bergen.

In 1997 I was elected vice president of HLF (the Norwegian Association of Hard of Hearing). During my first year EFHOH arranged training courses in international work in Helsinki and Stockholm. Since I was not in an ordinary job, HLF asked me if I was interested in participating in these training courses and take care of HLF's international work.

I informed the board and the secretariat about my participation in these training courses and when I joined the board of EFHOH, I informed the board and regional and locals clubs of my work. I was often invited to annual meetings around the country. I always told something about the international work. I also established contacts that I could send the newsletter to.

HLF asked me in 1998 if I was willing to be proposed as a board member of EFHOH, then with Christina Wahrolin, HRF Sweden, as president. I agreed and in Budapest, spring 1998, I was elected as general secretary for EFHOH. In the beginning it was a difficult job. We had to send everything by post. Contact was not so easy as today. During my first year I got a computer to have contact with European Disability Forum, board members and member organisations.



There is still a lot of work to do before the society is accessible, and the development within medicine and science will also make progress in the future.



The other persons in the board at that time were, president Christina Wahrolin, vice president Werner Butikofer, Switzerland, The treasurer Bas Kooops from Gouda in the Netherlands and a board member, I think from England. I was general secretary for 2 years, and at the end of that time Marcel Bobeldijk joined the board.

In 2001 I was elected as president at the AGM in Budapest, and in 2003 I was an additional board member, paid by HLF to give Marcel support during his first years as president. During these years we struggled to make hard of hearing organisations visible within the European disability network. Together with Christina I visited Brussels a few times.

We also had a board meeting there so that we could meet with the European Disability Forum and their very good lobbyist Sophie Baumont. Over the years this cooperation developed very well, and we managed to make hard of hearing visible and the understanding for the need of speech to text support in addition to induction loops was understood by those who arranged EU and EDF meetings.

When Christina left the EFHOH board she was elected as a member of the executive board of EDF, during these years we joined the accessibility network, first in transport, where I was contact person, and later on about buildings.

The cooperation with the deaf society improved very much when Marcel joined the board. He had easy access to Brussels and the organisation of the deaf. Many European Union directives were improved these years and EFHOH had the possibility to make influence in issues of importance to hard of hearing persons.

Subtitling also became a major issue. Martin Davies from BBC and I were invited to Iceland to talk about subtitling. This meeting gathered deaf persons, hard of hearing persons and persons from other countries living in Iceland. Members of the government and the TV network attended the meeting.

We had a good cooperation with IFHOH and I had good and frequent contact with Marcia Dugan. We had joint board meetings and cooperate about AGM's.

The IFHOH congress and other congresses that set focus on the problems and possibilities will be necessary also in the future. There is still a lot of work to do before the society is accessible, and the development within medicine and science will also make progress in the future.

I have no free time. Since I left the EFHOH board I have been constantly working with accessibility both on local and national level. I also teach universal design for hard of hearing at the technical high school in Gjovik, educating building constructors. They have now invited me to join them in the work of securing the quality of the work with assistive listening devices and acoustics in different kind of rooms, with different kind of building materials. If the project gets funding it will be a guideline to how to build and equip good listening surroundings for hard of hearing.

Regards from Lillian



OLGA HAVEL AWARD 2011

The first granting of this Award was presented by Olga Havlová in 1995, a year before she died. She intended this Award to be for a disabled person who has contributed significantly to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in the Czech Republic. A very important part of Olga Havel Award project is the promotion of civic associations, which provide social services and social health care, the help of human dignity and the use of new forms of social services. That becomes the foundation for social support services which were previously not known, let alone used, and affect the social policy in the Czech Republic.

On 23 May 2011 the Committee of Good Will - Olga Havel Foundation granted this very prestigious award to Vira Strnadová for her lifelong work and contributing to the welfare of people with hearing impairment.

"Olga Havel Award is determined by the personality, which helps to others despite own severe health handicap", says Dr. Milena Ěrná, director of the Committee of Good Will - Olga Havel Foundation.

Vira Strnadová lost her hearing after a severe illness in childhood. She dedicated many years to improving living conditions for people with hearing impairments by removing barriers, especially in the areas of communication, transportation, health and audiovisual media. She continues with these activities despite her serious health problems. Currently, she is the Vice President of the umbrella Association of the organizations of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and their friends in the Czech Republic, where she also leads the Commission for Closed Subtitling and Legislative Committee (all those positions are honorary).

She has a great merit on the enforcement of the content of the law communication systems for deaf and deaf-blind persons where she enforced the enactment of new social

services, simultaneous speech to text, for people who can't hear and use Czech language. Also, she initiated and enforced the obligation to affix Czech subtitles to Czech DVD production. In the circles dealing with hearing impairments, Vira Strnadová is also known as the author of several publications that contribute to increasing public understanding in relation to persons with severe hearing loss.

"The fact that people nominated me and this prize was awarded to me is a sign that people need and appreciate my work. Olga Havel Award is a highly prestigious prize and for me it is also a commitment and motivation to continue to help people", said Vira Strnadová, the winner of this year's prize.

The ceremony took place in beautiful premises of the Czechoslovak Commercial Bank. Olga Havel Award – Olbram Zoubek's bronze statue Encouragement – was presented by the Chairman of the Board of the Foundation Dana Němcová and Bishop Václav Malý, in the presence of the Director of the Committee of Good Will Dr. Milena Ěrná, the CEO of the Czechoslovak Commercial Bank Pavel Kavánek, the Mayor of Prague Dr. Bohuslav Svoboda and other important guests.

During the gala evening guests could enjoy the performance of Kokeš Jazz Trio and choir Bambini di Praga. The event was hosted by actress Bára Štěpánová. The ceremony and the performance were interpreted into the Czech sign language by Marie Horáková and transcribed to speech to text by Simona Sedmihorská. In this occasion, the Olga Havel Foundation also expressed thanks to the major sponsors and partners and commended the outstanding projects.

Photo: Jaroslav Winter
Text: Martin Novak

New Secretary of EURO-CIU



Sari Hirvonen-Skarbö of Finland was elected as the new Secretary of EURO-CIU.

Sari said:

"I am grateful that you have elected me secretary and thank you for welcoming me to EURO-CIU Board. I see this as a challenging but very interesting position of trust and I want to do my best.

"I got my CI seven years ago. I'm member of CITO board in Finland, which plans and organizes seminars and week-ends for CI adult users and for those who are considering having a CI operation. An important part of CITO work is to provide opportunities for peer support. It also promotes advocacy for getting a better resources for rehabilitation in Finland. CITO is part of Kuuloliitto, the Finnish Federation of Hard of Hearing (FFHOH).

Dr Ruud van Hardeveld steps down from the Board of EURO-CIU

After many years as General Secretary, Ruud decided to step down from the Board of EURO-CIU. Before the end of the meeting he was thanked for all the work he had done and presented with gifts which came with best wishes on his retirement. Members were delighted that Ruud has agreed to continue with his annual survey of CIs in member countries.

"I graduated from Helsinki University, major in Art History (MA). I am married and have three sons. The oldest one is hard of hearing and wears BAHÁ hearing aid but he is in mainstream education. We live in Espoo City, which is near the capital of Finland, Helsinki."



Text and pictures are taken from the EURO-CIU newsletter.

Call for participants for the Enter! Youth Meeting

We are pleased to inform you that we are launching a call for participants for the Enter! Youth Meeting which will take place at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg from 14-18 September 2011 (arrival and departure dates). Please forward this call to the youth members within your network. Please note however:

This call is open to applicants from the following countries only: Andorra, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine

All interested applicants should apply on-line, completing the application form through this link: <http://youthapplications.coe.int/>.

The deadline for receipt of applications is the 4th July 2011. In order to participate in the Meeting you need to apply as an organisation. You should provide the details of a youth worker (who will assist and accompany young people) in Section 1 of this application, the details of the organisation in Section 2, and the details of 2 young people from your organisation in Section 3. Section 4 requires you to answer a few questions regarding your experience and motivation to participate in the Meeting.

Most of the young participants should have the following profile:

- be preferably aged 16 to 20
- have been a participant, volunteer or peer educator/leader in a youth project addressing the issues of violence, exclusion and/or discrimination in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- are directly concerned by the issues of violence, exclusion or discrimination in their neighbourhood
- preferably speak some English or French (this is not a must, however a youth worker should be able to easily communicate in either of these languages).

You may also think about proposing 1 person in the reserve list in case some of the participants you propose drop out for different reasons. There is a place in the application to provide the details of a person to be put on reserve list. Your application will be evaluated by the Council of Europe Secretariat and you will be informed if you have been selected or not shortly after the deadline for applications. For any questions regarding the applications or problems in accessing the platform, please contact Jackie Lubelli at jackie.lubelli@coe.int

IFHOHYP Secretary, Carlos Muncharaz
Website: www.ifhohyp.org

International Research Symposium

"Equitable Health Services for People with Disabilities with a Focus on Low and Middle Income Countries"

Co-organised by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)

8 November 2011

Free symposium hosted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

The forthcoming World Report on Disability highlights gaps in knowledge and stresses the need for further research and changes towards disability inclusive policy and prac-

tice. This one day international symposium seeks to bring together researchers, policy makers, disability advocates, NGOs and health and rehabilitation professionals to share current research on equity in health care for people with disabilities and promote interdisciplinary action in policy relevant research.

CALL FOR PAPERS AND REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Please see the attached call for papers. For further details and to register please visit www.equityhealthdisability.com/

Please circulate this through your networks to others who would be interested



Press Release

11 May 2011

Contact person at ANEC: Chiara Giovannini

Tel: +32(0)2 743 24 70

Can consumers trust website accessibility declarations?

A new study for ANEC by the University of Middlesex (United Kingdom), reveals that consumers and public authorities should doubt claims about the accessibility of websites to people with disabilities. The study also points to a very low level of accessible websites in Europe. "Only 3 websites out of 76 government and public body websites certified by a third-party were accessible, while none of the commercial websites out of 24 that had self-declared could be considered accessible", noted ANEC Secretary-General, Stephen Russell.

Released at a public event, hosted by the European Standards Organisations¹ on European Accessibility Requirements for public procurement of ICT products and services, the study investigated the use of declarations of accessibility and the differences between third-party certification by an independent body and self-declaration by the website owner. The study looked at 100 websites of public and private organisations across five European countries.

"Many services are being offered to consumers through the internet, sometimes exclusively or on preferential terms. Hence it is essential, particularly in the case of public services, that websites are accessible to all consumers. Sadly, that is far from the case today. Where websites provide a declaration of accessibility, those claims must be reliable for consumers and be measureable against authoritative standards", added Mr Russell.

The study proposes how the present low level of web accessibility could be improved and makes recommendations to web-designers, website owners and certifiers on increasing accessibility. ANEC will use the results of the study to contribute to current work on the standardisation of web accessibility in order to achieve benefits for all consumers².

The results of the ANEC study can be found at <http://www.anec.eu/attachments/ANEC-R&T-2011-ICT-002finalrev.pdf>

ENDS

¹ CEN (www.cen.eu), CENELEC (www.cenelec.eu), ETSI (www.etsi.org)

² Mandate M/376 – Standardisation Mandate to CEN, CENELEC & ETSI in support of European Accessibility Requirements for Public Procurement of Products and Services in the ICT domain.



EDF NEWS

European Disability Forum Annual General Assembly:

29 May 2011 was the weekend of the 15th Annual General Assembly of the European Disability Forum gathered the whole disability movement in Budapest. Among all the important topics, the 200 participants focused on how to make sure the European Union will guarantee freedom of movement for all persons with disabilities.

"Collaboration, consultation and involvement- the fundamentals of a democratic society, the fundamentals of Europe! In this trying time, governments need to remember that they have to include us in all the decisions about us: Nothing about us without us." Reminded Yannis Vardakastanis, EDF President. This, he said is one of the strong messages we should carry out from this annual assembly.

Free movement:

Free movement of persons with disabilities was the second important discussion point. The European Union says it guarantees freedom of movement for all of its citizens. But persons with disabilities still face major difficulties when travelling or going to study, work and live in another European country. The disability movement discussed and proposed the necessary measures to make sure the EU will improve the lives of people with disabilities. The important issue of accessibility to all has been raised from a human rights perspective: Rodolfo Cattani, EDF Executive Member stressed "There are diverse needs for persons with disabilities, in relation to the diverse aspect of accessibility. Needs are not universal. But rights are universal. And nobody can enjoy human rights, to which they do not have access."

The European Accessibility Act:

Total accessibility implies a binding European Accessibility Act. Overall, the issue of accessibility is vital as it is essential for participation in society. For this reason, a seminar on accessibility and the present legislation in the EU was held with the support of the Hungarian Public Foundation for the Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities. On this issue, the European Commission will present in 2012 a European Accessibility Act setting out a general framework for accessibility in relation to goods and services. The only acceptable way is to include and listen to the disability movement when preparing this Act. The disability movement wants the European Accessibility Act to take the form of a Directive. This would clearly establish the requirement of accessibility on the relevant

sectors, but leave Member States sufficient freedom to take into account their national characteristics.

European Mobility card:

A further tool to really improve free movement would be the European mobility card. This would ease travelling between Member States as the holder of this card would be granted the same status and benefits anywhere in Europe. In this sense, the European Accessibility Act will become the instrument and the mobility card a tool for granting free movement to persons with disabilities.

The economic crisis: feeling the brunt:

The crisis is hitting us hard in Europe. Austerity measures are now causing alarming situations for persons with disabilities. Yannis Vardakastanis vigorously claimed "We are not responsible for this crisis and the disability movement will fight to ensure that 80 million persons with disabilities are not the first to pay!"

WOMEN MORE PRONE TO DISABILITY THAN MEN, AND PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

USAID have compiled a collection of statistics on the gender dimension of disability. The numbers of disabled women are higher than those of disabled men; they make up as many as 3/4 of disabled persons in low and middle income countries. According to the ILO, this is due to neglect in health care, poor workforce conditions, and/or gender-based violence. More information and statistics

DISABILITY CONVENTION: 100th RATIFICATION

Colombia has just become the 100th nation to ratify the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. European Disability Forum welcomes this ratification of the treaty and wants the EU to work on the next steps. We are still waiting for 10 of the EU's 27 Members to ratify the Convention. When it comes to the implementation of the UN Convention the EU Institutions must ensure that the disability movement is included, particularly in all relevant decision-making processes. It is in fact, an obligation to actively involve the representative organisations of persons with disabilities. This must be taken especially seriously when establishing structures for implementation and monitoring of the Convention.

UNITED NATIONS ENABLE ON FACEBOOK

A new Facebook page, United Nations Enable was launched to inform users of this social network to find out more about the work of the United Nations for persons with disabilities, as well as upcoming events. More information

EDF MEETS BARROSO: DISABILITY RISES HIGH ON THE EUROPEAN AGENDA

Brussels, 1st June 2011 /// A delegation of the European Disability Forum led by its President, Yannis Vardakastanis, met with President of the European Commission Barroso in Brussels yesterday. This was the opportunity to discuss the next steps for disability in the EU.

The outcomes were successful: Mr. Barroso endorses the State of the Union on Disability, and committed to ensuring the right enforcement of the UN Convention throughout the European Commission. Finally, the President promised to put pressure on national authorities to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities during times of crisis. Mr Jose Manuel Barroso recognised that the European Disability Forum is the primary representative to the European Institutions. A part from the President, the disability movement was represented by its Vice President, Erzsebet Földesi, its Secretary Rodolfo Cattani, and Director, Javier Güemes. They successfully brought 3 important issues to the table:

1. the State of the Union on Disabilities

Barroso agreed to endorse 'The State of the Union on Disability'; an important instrument for improving the lives of persons with disabilities, envisaged by the disability movement. Presidents of both the European Council and the European Parliament Van Rompuy and Buzek had already granted their support. The State of the Union on Disability will gather the presidents of the three institutions and EDF to discuss policy developments and disability issues across the EU. The State of the Union will be a biennial meeting to start before the end of 2011.

2. UN Convention: from words to deeds

The next topic on the agenda dealt with the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities. The conclusion of the Convention by the EU, which took place late last year, was a landmark achievement for the disability movement. During the discussion Barroso committed to ensuring the appropriate follow up of the Convention within the European Commission. Explicitly, this will be brought to the College of Commissioners and the plenary of the Directorate Generals.

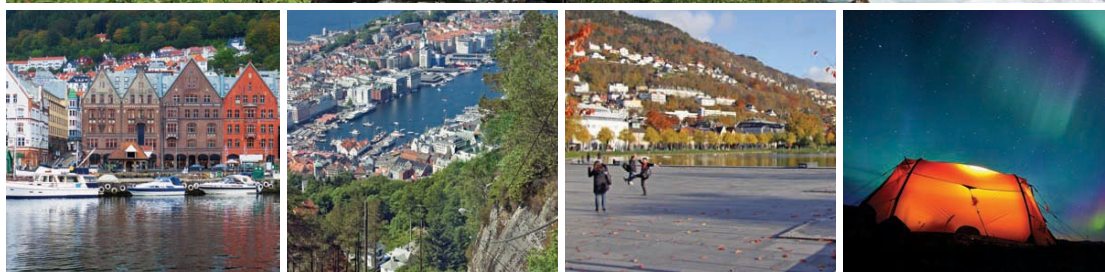
3. the crisis: emergency exit

A further, disquieting issue that EDF addressed were the very serious consequences of the austerity measures for persons with disabilities. On this, Barroso promised to safeguard their rights using the relevant tools: Europe 2020, the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs and the European Platform Against Poverty, and the Disability Strategy 2010 - 2020. Cuts in social expenditure are taking place across the EU, yet the Commission has vowed to remind Member States of their obligations towards the most vulnerable groups of society. He stressed the need to combat the negative portrayal of disabled people that occurs in dire situations. EDF wants to make sure 80 million persons with disabilities are not the first to pay for the crisis.

Yannis Vardakastanis, EDF President stresses: "the European Disability Forum is satisfied with this new impetus: Bridging the gap between words and deeds is crucial. To this end, we welcome these strong political commitments, but the importance lies in delivering on them. This meeting has opened up new opportunities for cooperation between the European Commission and the European disability movement."

EFHOH MEETINGS 2011 & 2012

2011	2011	2011	2011
13 January	Brussels / Belgium	EP Disability intergroup	Lidia
9 February	London / UK	Workshop Subtitling making Opera accessible	Lidia
4 March	Stockholm / Sweden	IFHOH board meeting	Marcel
4 March	London/UK	DTG (Digital TV Group) Summit 2011	Lidia
23 March	Brussels / Belgium	Meeting with EUD, FEPEDA, EURO-CIU and MEP Adam Kosa and we have also a meeting with MEP Lidia Gerdinger de Oedenberg and MEP Richard Howitt	Lidia and Marcel
29 March	Brussels / Belgium	EP Disability intergroup meeting And Adam Kosa's consultation of NGO's	Lidia
8-10 April	Vienna / Austria	EFHOH AGM	All EFHOH board members
27 April	Brussels	Meeting with the director of EUD and a Meeting with the director of EDF	Lidia and Marcel
30 April	Belgrade / Serbia	IFHOHYP AGM	Knut
11 May	London / UK	Reduction levels in Subtitling	Lidia
28 + 29 May	Budapest / Hungary	EDF AGA 2011	Marcel
9 and 10 June	Nottingham / UK	Deaf education changed by CI	Lidia
18 June – 20 June	Washington DC / USA	2e International Hearing Loops Systems Conference	Marcel and Knut
28 June	Brussels / Belgium	EP Disability Intergroup meeting	Lidia
28 Juni-1 July	London / UK	4e International Media for All Conference	Lidia and Jan
7 July	Brussels / Belgium	European Council Deaf and HOH People meeting	Lidia and Marcel
6-13 August	Szczyrk / Poland	International Summer Holiday	Lidia
14-14 October	Krakow / Poland	Audiovisual Conference	Lidia
29 October	Hamburg / Germany	EFHOH board meeting	All board members
2 – 4 November	Bangkok / Thailand	1e IFHOH Asia meeting and Board meeting	Marcel
08 November	London / UK	International Symposium Equitable Health Service for People with disabilities	Lidia
2012	2012	2012	2012
13-14 April	Tallinn / Estonia	Euro-Ciu AGM	One of the board members
26 – 27 May	Copenhagen	EDF AGA	Marcel
25-28 June	Bergen / Norway	IFHOH World Congress	All the board members



You cannot miss the IFHOH World Congress 2012 in Norway, the Land of the Midnight Sun!

The last World Congress was in Vancouver, Canada in 2008.

The next one will be in Bergen, Norway, June 25 to 28, 2012!

The theme for the World Congress in 2012 is "A Better Quality of Life!"

À ne pas manquer, le Congrès mondial IFHOH 2012 en Norvège, le pays du soleil de minuit !

Le Congrès mondial précédent a eu lieu à Vancouver, Canada en 2008.

Le prochain sera à Bergen, en Norvège, les 25 au 28 juin 2012 !

Le thème du Congrès mondial 2012 est « Une meilleure qualité de vie ! »

WWW.IFHOH2012.NO

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.