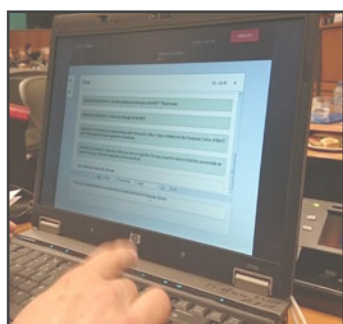




EFHOH PRESIDENT LETTER

See page 2



INSIGN, SUPPORTING COMMUNICA-
TION BETWEEN DEAF AND HARD OF
HEARING AND THEIR EUROPEAN UN-
ION REPRESENTATIVES

Read the story at page 4



EFHOH PRESENTING AT HEAL 2014

Read the news at page 11





EFHOH President letter

Dear EFHOH Friends,

We are pleased to present this Summer EFHOH newsletter and the EFHOH Impact report 2013. The EFHOH Board is proud that we have the opportunity to show the impact of all our work for Hard of Hearing People in Europe. Please share our Impact Report 2013 with all volunteers in your organization and the contacts in your country. Please contact us when you like to have the paper version of the Impact Report.

EFHOH board congratulate Adam Kosa (president of our member organization SINOSZ in Hungary) for his second period as member of the European Parliament. Also our congratulates to Helga Stevens (former director of EUD/Belgium) for her first election as new member of the European Parliament. EFHOH board looks forwards to a warm and successful cooperation in the next five years. EFHOH Board is delighted with appointment of Mr. Guido Gybels as our expert working on the EU Mandate M/473 following principles of "Design for All" see our press release in this EFHOH newsletter. Arnoud van Wijk will also participate for European Disability Forum in this expert workgroup. The Board wish Guido and Arnoud a great success!

Jerusalem/Israel was this year host city to our Annual General Meeting 2014 from 5 to 7 April. Special Thanks to Avi Blau and his great Bekol team for organize this event for EFHOH and IFHOH.

We welcomed our new board member:

- Jaana Linna from Finland

Lidia Best was elected as the new EFHOH vice president for the period 2014-2016. Special Thanks to Knut Magne Ellingsen from Norway for all his work for EFHOH. The most of you will remember him as the wonderful host at the IFHOH World Congress in Bergen/Norway in 2012. It is great that Knut Magne Ellingsen is at this moment also a board member of EDF for the disability council of Norway. One of the keynote speakers at the conference day was Mr Ahiya Kamara the former vice president of IFHOH and current Israeli Commissioner for disabled people. More about this event can you read in the article written by Jaana Linna.

Keep you diaries free for our next EFHOH Annual General Meeting 2015 in the weekend of 10th and 12th April in Essen/Germany.

European Disability Forum Annual General Meeting and European Union Conference in Zagreb/Croatia was the host city of the European Disability Forum (EDF) Annual General Meeting 2015 and the European Conference on "Monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in practice" in the European Union. EFHOH was represented by Sidsel Munkebo Hansen (EFHOH's member of the EDF Youth Committee) and me.



International Conference for Late Deafened People in Egmond aan Zee/the Netherlands, Lidia Best and I had the opportunity to participate in the International Conference for Late Deafened people. In the sunny and lovely place; Egmond aan Zee, Lidia Best gave a presentation "Promoting the Interest of late deafened people at European level". In this EFHOH newsletter you can read a nice article of Trine Lindhardt Gaarsdahl president of the Nordic Council of Late Deafened People. Many thanks to Stichting Plotsdoven in the Netherlands, for the very well organized Congress. It was great to be in Egmond aan Zee and meet you all.

InSign Project, is a new project to make the European Parliament more accessible for deaf and hard of hearing people which started in April at the European Parliament. EFHOH was represented by the president and a volunteer Arnoud van Wijk member of the EDF ICT expert group. Also two representatives of our members organizations in Belgium; Rienhilde van Gool voor Onder Ons and Patrick Hennings for Hörgeschädigte Ostbelgiens VoG. Arnoud van Wijk will inform you about the details of the InSign Project in his article for the EFHOH newsletter.

AEA symposium, I had the great opportunity to give a presentation "How does the customer see Professionals Hearing Care? What are the priorities for the future?" at the meeting of AEA which stand for the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals. In the spring of 2013 EFHOH organized together with AEA and EHIMA the first Hearing Awareness Days in the European Parliament; you can read about it in our Impact Report 2013.

Twitter and Facebook

Do you know that you also can follow EFHOH and also some EFHOH board members, the addresses are:

EFHOH	@efhoh
Marcel Bobeldijk	@marbob32
Lidia Best	@best_lidia

And you can also follow us via our EFHOH facebookpage. On our facebookpage you can find lot of nice photos of our board and events were EFHOH had participated. And you can also find some interesting discussions for example: ALDI-Hearing Aid, Subtitling to rescue, Respeaking OnAir and a report of the rights to political participation for persons with disabilities (Human right indicators) and much more interesting news. Have a look!

Call for the next EFHOH newsletter

It would be fine if you are able to write an article for one of the EFHOH newsletters. We try to make each year 5 EFHOH newsletters for you and all your members. We make the EFHOH newsletter also for the board members and the volunteers in your national and local organisation. You can send your article to our newsletter editor Niels-Hendrik Hansen. His email address is nh@niels-hendrik.dk

Dear EFHOH friends we hope that you will have a great Summertime!

Warm Regards,

Marcel Bobeldijk
EFHOH President

Jerusalem 2014: EFHOH AGM, IFHOH BGM and CONFERENCE

By Jaana Linna

Meeting old friends, making new friends, networking, learning, sharing information, observing meetings, catching a glimpse of the wonderful city of Jerusalem – that was my experience in a nutshell.

What impressed me in the event was the camaraderie and mutual understanding between all these people, with different degrees of hearing loss or no hearing loss at all, between people coming from



different countries and cultures. I am aware this statement has most likely been written in every piece describing every international meeting of hard of hearing and late deafened people, but it bears repeating because I believe it is the glue that keeps EFHOH together and all the member countries cooperating on European level.

I was an observer at the EFHOH and IFHOH meetings. There are some very devoted folks working in both organizations. All the IFHOH board members whose term was up, were re-elected. The outgoing Vice President of EFHOH, Mr. Knut Magne Ellingsen was replaced by Mrs. Lidia Smolarek-Best from The UK. I am excited to be the new Board member of EFHOH, and I look forward to working with all of you to raise awareness about the needs and the human rights of hard of hearing and late deafened people in Europe. Our host organization, BEKO L, had found some very interesting lecturers for the IFHOH Conference "Overcoming Hearing Barriers". Dr.

Nir Fink, head of acoustics section in the public health branch of the medical corps in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces), explained how the IDF is making military service possible for hard of hearing candidates. The candidates can volunteer to serve in suitable positions. This opportunity is very popular with 90 percent of hard of hearing candidates volunteering.

Bekol had arranged a tour of Jerusalem and a dinner after the Conference. The participants of the tour had a choice of listening to audiotapes in the tour bus, downloading the introduction of Jerusalem on their pcs or tablets, or using the good old read-it-on-paper method. The evening was a nice way to end the Conference.

Looking forward for the next two years,





By: Arnoud van Wijk

Insign: Supporting communication between deaf and hard of hearing and their European Union Representatives

On April 9 2014, EFHOH represented by Marcel Bobeldijk and Arnoud van Wijk attended the Insign presentation at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium hosted by the MEPs Ádám Kósa and Werner Kuhn.

Insign is a communication pilot project to enable the communication between deaf and hard of hearing persons with representatives from the European Union, the European Commission and other European Institutions.

How does it work?

When you want to call your MEP, you will for example go to the European Parliament website and look up the MEP you like to contact. Their contact information will include a special "Click to Sign" button. When you click on the button, you will get an overview of the countries and the choice between sign language or text to connect with your MEP per

country. After clicking on the button associated with your preferred communication option and your country, you will then connect automatically with your video (VRS) or text relay of your own country in your web browser. Depending on the communication option, you will see a video screen or text screen of the relay service. The phone number of the MEP is already entered and when the phone is picked up you can ask your MEP directly any question or concern.

The exiting technology that Insign uses is Total Conversation. Total Conversation is a communication concept that enables you to communicate with speech, video (signing) and Real-Time Text.

The EFHOH has been pushing for Real-Time Text and Total Conversation since 2002. So we are actually happy to



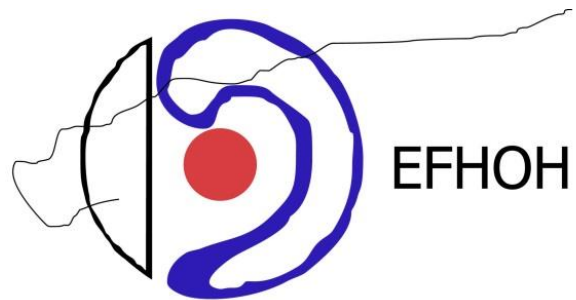
see that the European Parliament adopts Total Conversation.

The Insign project is led by the European Union for the Deaf (EUD) in collaboration with 5 partners: Designit from Spain to support the EUD in the project management, IVeS from France as the technology provider, SignVideo from the UK as the VRS/VRI provider and for research the Heriot-Watt University from the UK. The European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters from Belgium helps with

making the sign language interpreters available during the pilot.

The project started on December 5th 2013 and ends in December 2014 with the Public launch of the platform. The first demo was on April 9th 2014, the second demo with a more expanded and stable platform will be in September 2014.





European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

PRESS RELEASE

London 21 April 2014:

For many years, EFHOH and other national and international bodies have been calling on governments and the European Union to see to it that much more services and products are more usable and more accessible by a wider audience, including people with hearing loss.

In 2010, the European Commission asked the main European standardisation organisations (the European Committee for Standardization – CEN, the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization – CENELEC and the European Telecommunication Standards Institute – ETSI) to establish processes and guidelines, based on “Design for All” principles, to ensure that accessibility is considered in more depth and from the earliest stages of design and implementation.

With the incidence of hearing loss and other conditions on the rise, not in the least as a result of the ageing population in Europe, the need for more usable and more accessible products is also growing. This need is further exacerbated by the increasingly technological world we live in and which means that access to products and services is essential to full citizenship and participation. In the words of the call text: “Design for All is design for human diversity, social inclusion and equality, enabling all people to have equal opportunity to participate in every aspect of society”.

EFHOH President Marcel Bobeldijk said:

“It is still the case that the needs of people with hearing loss are overlooked when new solutions are created. This latest European initiative could be of great benefit to hard of hearing people as well as European industry as it is well known that products and services which have been designed from the start to be accessible and usable by as many people as possible, work better for all consumers too.”

Work has now begun under an EU Mandate M/473 to address accessibility following a Design for All approach for mainstream products and services. This will include a new standard to further accessibility in the design, development and production of goods and services.

With EU funding, a project has been established and following a call for tender, a range of experts from across Europe has been selected to carry out this work over the next few years.

EFHOH nominated independent expert Guido Gybels FRSA, who for almost ten years, until his departure in 2010, was in charge of the technology directorate at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (since then renamed Action on Hearing Loss) and has also worked on many projects related to accessibility and usability for blind and partially sighted people. Guido Gybels was selected as one of the experts for this project, which is a successful outcome for EFHOH too.

We will keep you informed of the progress of this important work in Europe that is a further contribution to making our society a more level playing field for people with hearing loss.

The EFHOH board congratulates the European Union and the standards bodies involved on undertaking this important task and wishes Mr. Guido Gybels and his colleagues great success!

EFHOH President

Marcel Bobeldijk

GERMANY 2006. POLAND 2011. XXXXXX 2015??

A holiday week with hard of hearing friends from the whole of Europe? Doesn't it sound like a wonderful idea?

YOU can make it come true. If you together with some friends or with your organisation, make it happen.

For many years summer holidays or rallies have been a successful and appreciated way to get new friends and keep old ones going. The young hard of hearing people have an uninterrupted line of summer camps from the late 60's until present days. Perhaps it's interesting to know that all the international organisations for hard of hearing people, IFHOH/EFHOH and IFHOHYP, have their origin in these summer rallies or camps.

The latest holiday for hard of hearing adults was held in Poland in 2011. Close to 50 people from ten countries got together for a wonderful week in August with social activities, excursions and seminars.

But it doesn't happen by pure luck. It involves a certain amount of work, not only practical as dealing with bookings, invitations and information, but also measures to ensure the week will be fully accessible to all participants. This means having speech-to-text support, and loop systems.

If you feel ready to take challenge, please don't hesitate to contact Lidia Best, UK who was responsible for the last week in southern Poland: smolarek-best@hotmail.com. EFHOH cannot give any support financially or practically to the organizers. We offer advertising the event in the Newsletter, at the website and verbal promoting, and of course our moral support.

The board of EFHOH in May 2014.

Support our sponsors! They support us!



The world's leading dedicated hearing aid specialist

With 60 years' experience and more than 5,700 specialist centres in 20 countries, we're the world's leading dedicated hearing aid specialist.

All our hearing care is tailored to each person's hearing and lifestyle needs and is delivered by professionally qualified hearing aid audiologists.

From our comprehensive hearing assessment to your programme of Free Lifetime Aftercare, we are committed to help you get the very best from your hearing.

Hire a 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



EFHOH presenting at HEAL 2014

I had the pleasure to attend HEAL, Hearing Across the Lifespan Conference as the speaker and delegate for EFHOH in Cernobbio (Lake Como) Italy. <http://www.heal2014.org/>

It was an amazing opportunity to promote EFHOH and network with delegates representing public health, researchers, educators, doctors and audiologists and it was also a great place to learn and share new ideas related to hearing loss and its management. My attendance at the HEAL would not be possible without generous support from Amplifon.

I have decided to talk about the impact hearing loss brings on someone's life. Thanks to our member Bucodes Surdi France, I was able to provide a short overview of their study into the impact of hearing loss, which concluded that experiencing hearing loss either gradually or suddenly is a major trauma and people need support to be able to make the best of the situation they find themselves in. The presentation was well received and I sincerely hope that I have managed to provoke some thoughts for the delegates during and after the presentation.

Our Impact Report was also presented and delegates have taken their own copies home.

A few major themes emerged at the conference ; improving quality of life , research on connecting issues between hearing loss and dementia, early intervention in both

cochlear implants and hearing aids uptake, and lastly new technology.

The future of wireless Bluetooth connection was presented by ReSound and a new symbol was unveiled for places fitted with new system.

It is still a work in progress but it is promising to revolutionize the way we access communication aside of FM systems or hearing loops. The way new cochlear implant processors and hearing aids are developed is to add additional benefit of wireless feature for wireless communication. To access it, all we will need is a QR code.

A lot of presenters looked at dementia, late uptake of hearing aids etc. This is a big concern even in cochlear implantation as many people could have better outcomes if they decided to have implants earlier instead of waiting too long.

The impact of good quality care was also raised in many presentations including our own where we encouraged professionals to take a more person centred approach as each of us is unique with our own hearing loss.

Overall, EFHOH was more than happy to attend this great conference and to give hard of hearing people a direct voice. We cannot wait until the next conference in 2016!

Congress for the late and sudden deafened 2014 in The Netherlands.

The organisation committee of Stichting Plotsdoven arranged the international congress in Egmond aan Zee in The Netherlands 27th, 28th and 29th of March 2014.

VDNR (vuksendövas nordiska råd) asked me, if I would present them for. I said yes.

I landed with SAS at the airport in Amsterdam. I was standing by "Meeting Point", and one of the Students sign-interpreter picked me and two Danish sign-interpreters, who were also with SAS.

Afterwards the Students sign-interpreter drove with us to Hotel Zuiderduin in Egmond aan Zee.

We were registered in and got warm welcome of Gerard, Robert, Georgia and the other. We were 150 people in total in the Congress and consisted of Englishmen, Finns, Americans, Dutch and Danes. Late one of them, Lauren from Ccac captioning, came to greet me.

The program of these three days was very well as a map with all the locations and rooms, where presentations and workshops were held. I heard the lectures of Mrs. Caroline DeGraw-van Dijk, Antonia Lindsey, Dr. I. King Jordan, Mrs. Liisa Sammalpenger, Mr. Robert ten Bloemendal, Mrs. Theo van der Wilt and Mrs. Eline Slik and finally Lidia Smolarek-Best, new vice chairman of EFHOH.

Liisa Sammalpenger from Finland had a presentation. She had a slide on Nordic summer weeks and another on VDNR. I got up at participants of my workshop could get more information.

Liisa asked me to stand up, so people knew the person to get more information.

Liisa mentioned some visual methods to support lipreading, and asked me to show how MHS works.

At breakfast I got good talk with Lidia Smolarek-Best and Marcel Bobeldijk on European deafened committee and laws. Liisa asked me to introduce myself to Lidia who was leading the new Deafened Team of EFHOH. Kalle had earlier suggested to Lidia that also chairperson of VDNR could join the team. Kalle and Liisa were suggested to the Team by Kuuloliitto, Finnish Federation of the Hard of Hearing.

A few days after returning Lidia wrote to me and asked me for my address, then she added me to the European deafened committee.

I met Bert van Vaneveld during eating and talked to him about Congress. I asked him if Congress also could be in circulation every two years. But he would find out together with the committee of Stichting Plotsdoven.

At Friday night dinner Liisa and I sat together with three Americans from ALDA, The USA based Association of Late-Deafened Adults. Rex Waggoner and Antonia Lindsey held workshops. The 3rd one was one of the team who arranged ALDAcon some years ago, Gerard attended it and maybe got idea for this 25th anniversary congress from there.

Lauren from Ccac Captioning came and asked me, if I would be member of ALDA. I said yes.

Thursday evening there was the 25th anniversary reception of the association.



Friday early evening we got a very nice dinner, afterwards Gerard de Vijlder got a big surprise, [because he](#) was given a medal of merit by the Mayor for his 25 years of hard work with late- and sudden deafened. He was knighted in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau

Saturday after lunch we were on a surprise trip to Zaanse Schans windmills. Zaanse Schans is one of the highlights of the Netherlands. Packed with windmills, traditional crafts and museums. Just outside Amsterdam. The project "Zaanse Schans" was made possible by the European Regional Development Fund.

Finally some of American, Finns and we were picked up by Robert ten Bloemendal to the airport.

A very good service the organisation committee has arranged at professional level.

I got a good view of organisations around and something good home.

Herning, d. 08.04.2014

Trine L. Gaarsdahl
VDNR (Vuksendövas Nordiska Råd)
Ordførende

Winter has gone, spring is almost here and summer is coming!

Ory feels stressed.

The weather is nice, a lot of sun and no wind. So ? What is the reason for his stress?

Summer means summer-shopping! To go to the shopping-center, looking for new shoes, a new bathing outfit,

perhaps a new parasol, to buy clothes for the children. Ory hates shopping: too many people, too many cars in the car park, too much noise.

But his family wants him to come with them. Ory is thinking about what to say.

-You don't need me!

-I'm tired, I don't need anything.

-Go without me please.

-You are more expert in shopping.

Stop that noise !

9 th. episode :

Ory and His **New** Hearing **Machine**



His son understands his father's unhappiness. "Hey, dad, come on, you can switch on the STOP THE NOISE button on your new hearing machines!"

So, off they go.

First a traffic jam, then waiting for a place in the car park, people are hooting. The children are excited in the back of the car, so happy to spend an afternoon in the shopping centre.

Ory doesn't say anything, he is following the red car before him, but inside he's boiling. After a long while, they find a place and go into the shopping center. Everywhere are big coloured posters and tv- screens, lights and a lot of music.

The cheeks of the children are red of excitement.

"Oh, dad, look at that bath out-fit, so nice and very cheap!"
"And those shoes, at half price, I saw them on Internet, I want to try them."

Ory follows his children, he tries to keep calm and alert, but he's got a terrible headache. He switches off his hearing machines, but he doesn't feel better. He feels uneasy, he can't hear the children anymore.

The shopkeeper asks Ory if he needs help. Ory says : "Excuse me it is so noisy, I can't hear you."

With a big smile the shopkeeper repeats: "DO YOU NEED HELP?"

Ory feels better. Ory looks at his watch: only two hours more to spend in this area, he can make an effort. In the next shop, a nice song welcomes them, Ory has already heard it on the radio. His daughter asks him; "Do you prefer this pink top or that black t-shirt?" Ory doesn't mind; pink or black, it's all the same, but with a little smile, he says : "And you?"

It is very noisy in the shop, but Ory tries to stay concentrated.

The last shop is the supermarket. Ory feels like a sailor lost on an ocean of noise! His son touches his arm : "Don't forget dad, switch on your STOP THE NOISE button!" The difference is outstanding; he's hearing better, the noise becomes sound. Ory is breathing slowly and deeply. At the same time, he sees inside his head another button "Stop the noise". He's talking to himself : this is not noise, this is sound. Ory feels victorious, he's able to control his feelings about noise. He's able to transform noise into sound. Finally, exhausted, but self satisfied, Ory will finishes the shopping afternoon with his children in a good mood.

Aisa Cleyet-Marel
April 2014.



My first audiologist could not believe**Wendelina Timmerman**
Coach and trainer on hearing loss

When I got hearing tests for hearing aids
my first audiologist invited me
for a talk about my hearing loss.

He could not believe that I attended
regular high school.
He was convinced this was impossible
with my hearing loss.

He was so curious how I managed this, and I
was surprised that he was so interested.

I told him how I became a star in lip-reading.
How I learned to understand all nonverbal languages
and what I learned from my mother.

My mother -living with hearing loss- initiated me
when I was very young:

"you should always look at the faces"
"Try to focus on the mouth and read the lips"
"Find a change to sit near the speaker"
"Remember that light should shine on faces"

Those basic and very helpful rules help me
and they still do.

For **teamwork** we need to organize more:



Last week a client invited me to find new ways
to communicate with her team.
She was already using the basic rules.
Now it was time to work on hearing and understanding
and **working together** with her colleagues.

Options:

With her team we worked together on the best conditions to communicate during a meeting with a group of ten.

We experimented which room was best.

One wanted a small room.

One a room full with light.

One the room which could be reach with the elevator.

Everyone voted for the room with a lot of **soft materials**.

Visuals:

Inspiration gave the wall where we could draw and write all the **key words** on.

Red wire:

The hearing colleagues encouraged their colleague with hearing loss to be open about all of her needs. They asked her to end with some conclusions to see what helps her the most.

Colleagues gave feedback on this method below;

'It helps me a lot'

'I also cannot always follow meetings'

'your needs are also my needs in a meeting'

Writing interpreter:

We exercised with a writing interpreter.

All colleagues were enthusiastic

and happy that they could read the text

and wanted to read some of it afterwards.

Buddy:

My client told her team she was looking for a buddy someone who she could share gossip news and new developments on a weekly basis with.

Extra tips we organized with the team:

- + If you are about to speak, raise your hand.
- + Keep the agenda clear.
- + Do some relaxation exercises in between.
- + Be the chairman if you have a hearing loss.

What **creative tips** do you use within your team?

Looking forward hearing from you!

Wendelina Timmerman

info@ hooridee.nl

FUTURE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION, WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR 80 MILLION EUROPEANS WITH DISABILITIES?

EDF asks leading EU candidates for commitments

EDF has addressed the leading candidates nominated by the European political parties as candidates for the presidency of the European Commission – Jean Claude Juncker (EPP), Martin Schulz (Socialist), Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE), Ska Keller/José Bové (Greens) and Alexis Tsipras (European Left).

In a joint action with some of its national members, EDF has sent them 5 key questions based on EDF manifesto, asking them to outline their vision and their plans for persons with disabilities in Europe, but also to make commitments for action in five areas:

1. The protection of persons with disabilities from the crisis
2. The implementation of the UN CRPD
3. The removal of discriminations concerning the right to vote and to be elected
4. Making the EU single market accessible to persons with disabilities
5. Ensuring the involvement of persons with disabilities in decisions that concern them

EDF will disseminate widely these questions and the answers of the candidates in the EU media, as well as through its membership, providing accessible formats of the candidates' answers for persons with disabilities.

OUR CAMPAIGN

In Europe, there are 80 million citizens with disabilities representing 16% of the overall EU population. The European elections campaign is a unique opportunity for candidates to make strong commitments to concrete changes aiming to ensure that European citizens with disabilities fully enjoy their civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

EU PUBLISHED ITS FIRST REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION

On 5 June 2014, the European Union published its first report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). The EU ratified the Convention in 2010 making it the first international human rights treaty ever ratified by a regional organisation like the European Union. The EU has the obligation to prepare and submit a report on the actions it took to give effect to the Convention. Considering this as a historic moment for the rights of persons with disabilities, EDF



welcomes the publication of the EU report as an evolving and dynamic process to which it would like to contribute by sharing the clear and structured view of 80 million persons with disabilities.

The EU report offers a complete description and information on the actions taken by the European Commission. However, it misses the opportunity to involve the Council and the European Parliament, as well as the Commission at its highest political levels. The report also fails to include civil society, first and foremost organisations of persons with disabilities, as well as to trigger a substantial debate on the role of the EU in implementing the rights of persons with disabilities.

Among others:

- The report outlines adopted measures, but does not include an assessment of their actual implementation and of the budget available to do so. In this sense, it also lacks self-criticism;
- The report presents a too strict view of the competences of the EU and of the actions in which the EU as a whole or the European Commission have been involved and have had impact on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- The report does not address the diversity of persons with disabilities.

EDF regrets the limited visibility of the report; it is as a missed opportunity by the EU to raise awareness on the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as to hold a public debate with the involvement of the Council and the Parliament.

EDF PREPARES ITS ALTERNATIVE REPORT

In order to cover the gaps of the EU report and present the real situation for 80 million Europeans with disabilities, EDF is in the process of preparing its alternative report with the involvement of other civil society organisations. EDF alternative report is due to be published at the end of the year.

EDF also calls on the Parliament and the Council to engage in the examination process of the EU report by the UN CRPD Committee to address these concerns.

MILLIONS OF EUROPEANS WITH DISABILITIES EXCLUDED FROM THEIR RIGHT TO VOTE

Today, on the day of Europe, less than two weeks before the European elections, EDF deplores that millions of persons with disabilities are being excluded from their right to vote.

For the first time in the EU history, the outcome of the elections will directly determine who becomes president of the European Commission, with top candidates from the different political forces running paneuropean campaigns.

In this crucial time of crisis in Europe, every vote counts and every voice should be heard!

EDF calls on the EU and the Members States to remove restrictions preventing citizens with disabilities from enjoying the rights to vote and to stand as candidate, guaranteed by EU Treaties, the EU Charter and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). We also call on the European Commission to take measures to ensure that the right to vote in European elections enshrined in the Treaties is enforced for all citizens.

NOT ACCESSIBLE MORE THAN HALF OF THE POLLING STATIONS IN EUROPE

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has unveiled the main findings of its EU-wide survey on the right to political participation of persons with disabilities in the EU. The survey, for which FRA cooperated with EDF, confirms that persons with disabilities face major barriers preventing them from enjoying the fundamental right to vote and to stand as candidate:

- Only 12 EU Member States out of 28 have accessibility standard for all polling stations. Moreover, most of standards focus only on persons with physical impairments, so they still exclude other persons with disabilities.
- In most Member States, the official websites providing instructions for voting and information on candidates do

not meet the internationally recognised standards for internet accessibility.

ACCESSIBILITY OF TV DEBATES

The top candidates participate in a series of historic TV debates. But without sign language interpretation, nor subtitling, the first two debates broadcasted on France24 on 9 April and on Euronews on 28 April failed to reach all Europeans and excluded millions of persons with disabilities.

It is crucial that the upcoming TV debates between the top candidates, which contribute to provide information to voters across Europe in a moment that is particularly critical for Europe and its citizens, are accessible to citizens with disabilities.

In view of today's TV debate, EDF contacted the organisers to receive their commitment that the debate foresees sign language interpretation and that the venue is accessible for persons with disabilities. EDF also calls on all broadcasters and organisers to follow that example.

THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT CALLS FOR THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN CONVENTION

This Friday 6 of June the Transport, Telecommunication and Energy Council will meet and discuss the state of play of the Web Directive. Unfortunately, during the last two presidencies of the EU, there has been no further progress on the Proposal for a Directive on the Accessibility of Public Sector Bodies' Websites in Council. EDF wants to see the forthcoming Telecommunications Council conclusions include a clear political commitment to ensure rapid progress on this Directive during the forthcoming Italian Presidency. This would make a real difference to 80 million Europeans with disabilities.

The Parliament's report on the proposal for a Directive on the Accessibility of Public Sector Bodies' Websites introduced extremely valuable changes to the Commission's proposal. These changes would benefit the majority of citizens across the EU and would boost the web-developing European marketplace, giving a perfect example of how a piece of legislation can contribute to inclusive growth in the digital field.

EDF regrets that the Greek Presidency failed to take this very important legislation further, and hopes that the forthcoming Italian presidency will treat the web directive as a priority.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

Non-binding political initiatives failed to make the web accessible for persons with disabilities. That is why this directive must cover all public websites as well as public services provided online, regardless of who owns the website, either it is a public or private entity. It must include effective and strong enforcement measures, as well as a monitoring and reporting mechanism that involves persons with disabilities and their representative organisations. Last but not least, it must take into account the new ways and platforms for surfing the web and deliver public services, such as apps or websites designed for smartphones and tablets.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

80 million Europeans with disabilities, 150 million aged over 50, and many citizens without proficient ICT skills would benefit from this legislation. Furthermore, the market of web-developers, which employs more than 1 million people, would be able to work across the EU, and governments will save money as there would be a reduced need to establish costly alternative means to provide information or services because of the inaccessibility of their websites.

In February the first European Standard on accessibility for ICT products and services was adopted. It includes a dedicated chapter with the accessibility guidelines that a website must follow to be accessible: the worldwide recognized WCAG level AA. It's time to put this in practice!

Remember the joint statement of EDF, AGE Platform Europe and ANEC!

CAMPAIGN WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Greek Presidency: @gr2014eu

Italian Presidency: @IT2014EU

Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the @EU_Commission: @NeelieKroesEU

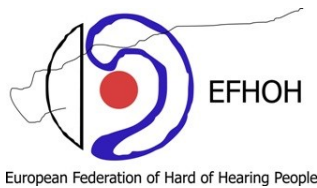
Digital Agenda for Europe: @DigitalAgendaEU (action 64 refers to Web Accessibility)

Press department of the Council: @EUCouncilPress

European Council: @EUCouncil

The EFHOH board and the editor of the newsletter wish all a great summer!

Remember the deadline for next newsletter is 15th September!



Welcome to the Centre of the Ruhrgebiet

EFHOH Conference & AGM in Essen (Germany), 10th – 12th April 2015

Deutscher Schwerhörigenbund e.V. (DSB), the association for hard of hearing people in Germany, invites all EFHOH members and interested hard of hearing people from all over Europe to Essen, the Centre of the Ruhr gebiet. (region)

The area of approximately 4.500 square kilometres with a population of more than 5 Million people in western Germany is called the Ruhr gebiet. It is an agglomeration of several cities which grew together in the last centuries when the Ruhrgebiet was an important industrial location in Europe. In the south of the region the river Ruhr flows from east to west. Today the boundaries of the Ruhr are a popular holiday destination. In the last few years the Ruhr gebiet more and more transformed itself from industry to a service location.

Essen is very special, difficult to describe in only a few words. Essen is a typical city of the Ruhr region, the biggest city of all with a population of more than half a Mio people, a shopping destination, business location and university town, urban on the one hand, rural on the other. Here you can find one of the best opera houses in Germany, the Folkwang University of the Arts known for its outstanding artistic standard and a world-class art collection in a museum. Specifically the Ruhr gebiet is known for its industrial heritage. The closed coal mine 'Zeche Zollverein' was appointed to UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001.

The motto of the conference from 10th to 12th April 2015 will be **"CRPD and inclusion – Exchange of experience with the implementation in the several European self-help associations"**. The Mayor of the City of Essen will welcome the participants and open the Annual General Meeting. The conference day is under the patronage of the Commissioner for disabled people of the German Government. Some Members of the European Parliament announced their attendance.

The presentations of the conference will start with a Keynote to CRPD, followed by the themes Health Care, Accessibility, Assistance and Job Market. In the afternoon the key themes will be continued in workshops with participation of Members of the European Parliament. EFHOH members will be able to present their experience with the implementation of CRPD in their country. The goal is to work out a declaration and hand over to the politicians.

On Sunday morning a guided tour to the highlights of Essen with a visit to Zeche Zollverein will be provided. After lunch the hotel offers a bus transfer to Düsseldorf airport.

Looking forward to welcome you in Essen
yours

Renate Welter
Vice President of DSB

Please note:

Bus transfer free of charge

April 9th 18:00: Düsseldorf airport – Hotel franz

April 10th 11:00: Düsseldorf airport – Hotel franz

April 12th 14:30, Hotel franz – Düsseldorf airport



By Sidsel Munkebo Hansen (EFHOH-representative in EDF Youth Committee)

EDF Annual General Assembly

– from a **youth perspective**

The 16th-18th of May 2014 Marcel Bobeldijk, president of EFHOH, and I went to Zagreb. We went there to represent EFHOH at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) of European Disability Forum (EDF).

It was some very exciting days, which gave me an insight into the structures of and the politics, dealt with in a big European organization like EDF. Besides being a part of the democratic process of the organization, our Croatian hosts had also planned an exciting and educational conference dealing with topics as Equinet, which is the European Network of equality bodies, who are working with "reasonable accommodation" and good practices in this respect. Other topics of the conference were tokenism, user-involvement and co-creation in policymaking including good practices, when involving children in decision-making.

Finally there was a presentation of the CRPD-report made by the CRPD-committee on the implementation of the

CRPD in both the member states and internal in the body of EU.

My participation in Zagreb was also a chance to meet and talk to different representatives and people from all over Europe. Among others I talked to the new elected board member of EDF, Christina Wurzinger from Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation (ÖAR). She is one of the youngest elected board members in EDF and was very interested in further collaboration. My main topic of interest and suggestions in all the informal meetings I had through the AGA, was the establishment of an organized network for young disabled people across Europe. It is my hope that we in the future will see a united movement of and for the disabled youth in Europe. What do you think – do we need a stronger voice of the disabled youth?

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.