



Manifesto on Hearing Loss and Disability

In Europe, 10% of the total population (52 million people) self-report to experience hearing loss, 73% consult a medical professional, but only 50% are referred to hearing care professionals. Hearing loss is a huge problem for the health of Europe's citizens, threatening to put huge pressure on Europe's health and social care systems if left untreated. Innovative medical technology, such as hearing aids and hearing implants, can alleviate the burden. Action from European policy-makers is called to help raise awareness of this condition, look at effective ways of prevention, facilitate access to these technologies where appropriate, improve care and share best practices amongst Member States.



Call upon:

The Member States:

1. To share best practice on hearing care, including preventative measures and early screening programmes to identify and diagnose hearing loss;
2. To integrate strategies for hearing care into primary health care systems which effectively address prevention and early identification;
3. To promote access to hearing devices which include cochlear implants, hearing aids and other assistive devices;
4. To remove age limits in disability support measures that prevent older persons with disabilities, such as hearing impairment from enjoying their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
5. To promote effective initiatives to improve access to information for persons with disabilities with respect to public facilities, public buildings and audio-visual media services;
6. To ensure education and recognition for hearing care professionals in their country.

The European Commission and the Council:

1. To take the lead in ensuring that access to professional hearing care is a right, including diagnosis, rehabilitation, service and maintenance;
2. To support Member States to coordinate health policies and promote healthy ageing;
3. To develop a European strategy on hearing loss focusing on equality, prevention and rehabilitation to make everyday life easier for hard of hearing people and ensure that this strategy is led by the experts working in the field;
4. To launch programmes to increase awareness of hearing loss as a cause of social isolation, depression and deteriorating of both mental and physical health for older people and, therefore, of the importance of hearing loss geriatric care;
5. To invest in research on hearing loss, its prevention, rehabilitation and to share relevant studies and statistics.