



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

EFHOH NEWSLETTER

2021 No. 2

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Dear members and readers,

It is a pleasure to address you as the new President of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People and I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for the mandate you have given for the new board. Your trust in us must be earned, so with this in mind we are getting to work on your behalf.

Now, let me congratulate the Swedish Association of Hard of Hearing (HRF) who are celebrating a major milestone, 100 years anniversary and a first digital congress, well done on your achievements! Congratulations to all newly elected members of the board at HRF. We have been fortunate to have strong leader from HRF in past, Christina Wahrolin who served as a President from 1997-2001 and Jan Lamby as the General Secretary from 2005- 2015 . Monica Steorn served in 2003-2005 period as the General Secretary. Currently, we have Alf Lindberg as our board member.

I have personal connections with HRF. In 1990, I was part of a small group of hard of hearing young people from Polish Association of the Deaf (PZG), visiting Sweden on the invitation from HRF. In 2010 the second visit to HRF who hosted EFHOH AGM resulted with my election as a board member. So, once again, warm congratulations on 100 years anniversary!

Away from nostalgia, as the pandemic and the restrictions are still ongoing in many countries, the digital revolution moved at much faster pace and at the hearing loss advocacy has accelerated as the result. Suddenly many people with hearing loss found themselves in the situation where they needed to advocate for themselves more than previously , increasing awareness of our specific communication needs.

But there are also positive trends triggered by the need for social distancing, such as rapid development of accessible online platforms with captioning allowing for new ways of engaging within our community. Our ability to reach out to hard of hearing people as well as external engagement has increased and we should embrace the



new trends in a way that benefits our community.

We now look to you all to support EFHOH vision, helping us to be the powerful voice of hard of hearing and deafened people, and making the difference to everyone's quality of life and access to opportunities, no matter where they live in Europe.

“ Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much” – Helen Keller

Lidia Best , EFHOH President



Dear Friends,

I was pleased to attend the EFHOH on-line annual meeting held May 19th and to present a report about

IFHOH's work which can be found under the tag of IFHOH/Ruth AGM presentation at <https://www.efhoh.org/efhoh-agm-2021-2/>. Congratulations to elected officers for the EFHOH board: Lidia Best, President; Jennie Westh, General Secretary, and Darja Pajk, Treasurer who join Morten Buan, vice-president, and Alf Lindberg, member at large. I look forward to working together in our common cause for promoting our human rights and hearing access.

And, a huge thanks to retiring board members Aída Regel Poulsen and Marcel Bobeldijk for their many years of hard work. Not only is Marcel retiring from EFHOH but, at the same time, he leaves the IFHOH board, on which he has served since becoming EFHOH President in 2003. He will be sorely missed. It was nice to see the outpouring of appreciation for Marcel and Aída on social meeting channels and during the annual meeting.

Congratulations are also in order to the Swedish Association of Hearing Impaired Persons (HRF) on its 100th anniversary being observed this year. Their continuing service has improved the lives of countless persons with hearing loss.



In IFHOH news, please note two important events. First is the IFHOH Congress, being organized by our Hungarian partners, SINOSZ, from the 10th to the 12th of March 2022 in Budapest. As you are aware, the event was postponed from last year due to the pandemic.

Also please hold the date of June 22nd, 2021 for a webinar by the International Hearing Access Committee on The Future of Hearing Loops and New Technology. More information in on our website in the latest IFHOH Journal.

Also check out our website for two papers that are being revised: our policy paper on cochlear implants and a position paper on Hearing Accessibility Guidelines. Both are available at www.ifhoh.org/position-papers. We would appreciate your thoughts on them.

Finally, please sign up for the following pledge, to emphasize support for hearing health care as expressed in the WHO first-ever World Report on Hearing. Please sign the following pledge with the hashtag of **#Hearingcare**. It is also on the IFHOH Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/IFHOH/.

With warmest regards,
 Ruth Warick
 IFHOH President
president@ifhoh.org



Farewell Interview – Marcel & Aïda

You can watch farewell interview with Marcel & Aida on our web site:

<https://efhoh.org/farewell-interview-marcel-aida/>

HRF Talks

The Swedish hard of hearing people, HRF, has made a number of HRF Talks, where experts talk about a different subject such as tinnitus, cognition, and sustainable working life.

To find the English subtitles you click on the gear symbol and choose between English or Swedish subtitles. The videos are made available through cooperation between HRF and EFHOH.

<https://efhoh.org/hrf-talks/>

Adults with hearing loss in the UK: Self-help during the pandemic

The National Association of Deafened People (NADP) and our activities at this time

Last year our lives changed suddenly and hugely: we had to deal with the fear of the pandemic, isolation, social distancing, and the rapid growth in online meetings. Like in many countries, in the UK cochlear implant surgeries scheduled CI fitting appointments were stopped in response. Some deaf people, about to have an implant and who were looking forward to starting their CI journeys, were left without any means of amplification.

Traditional ways of adapting to the environment ceased. The increased use of face masks took away our traditional way of communication face to face – speech reading, and face masks and screens reduced the audibility of speech making it even more difficult to hear.

NADP is a user and volunteers led charity, and our workload increased as we were trying to find ways to support our members struggling with managing remote work, meetings, and

socialising with these challenges. The face-to-face meetings and conferences which enable knowledge sharing and collaboration have gone, and digital transformation has made a fast forward jump.

NADP's immediate focus was to support people with hearing loss who had to go to hospital and faced communication barriers due to face masks and lack of deaf awareness among hospital staff. Thanks to Euro CIU posting their examples of hospital information cards for CI users, we have produced a similar one, based on the UK situation. Our US colleagues had similar ideas plus having an overnight bag ready, should the worst happen, to ensure we have our gadgets fully charged, disposable batteries stocked, and we have notepad and pen ready. A bit like having a maternity bag ready when it is time to go to hospital to have a baby, just little bit different circumstances! It is so important to have all your communication tools ready in case they are needed!



We also produced [resources](#) shared via social media and on our website to support people new to online meetings, communicated tips for organisers of online events and organised online workshop. All those were efforts to get people with hearing loss to feel confident using ICT, online conferencing tools and give them the tools they needed to self-advocate for themselves when access to live captioning is denied.

Many organisations from different countries have started to share resources, knowledge, and the collaboration flourished. The world has truly become smaller thanks to the internet and virtual meetings; many who could never travel to conferences can now participate on line, and the tools to communicate have become so much more accessible than they were before.

Families struggled to stay in touch with their relatives and while some people found virtual meetings liberating as they could lipread, others found lipreading via video not quite the same as in real life. Once again, we came forward with comparison table and best virtual platform for meeting with relatives. We found Google Meet and live captioning is excellent and is relatively easy to activate, it is simply there for anyone who needs it. Our members could not praise it enough, it helped them out of isolation, and they gained confidence to use

technology like never before. This strange time has enabled many, with our support, to become independent and confident in the use of the developing technology, which has changed and become so much more accessible over the past year.

Self help is no longer confined to face to face meetings. Most counselling sessions, group meetings and support work are now online and thanks to live captioning making them more accessible, more people can reach the help they need.

The European Disability Card and the Disability Rights Strategy - What's next?

The EU Disability Card, a blue card with the picture of the owner and name and name of the owner. On the card the name of the card is written in Braille.

The new Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030 was published by the European Commission in March 2021, after several years of intense advocacy by us and our members.

One of the key items that we wanted to see included was the European Disability Card – and we succeeded! The Card will be one of the “Flagship Initiatives”, that means it is one of the most important and visible action, of the new Disability Rights Strategy. And more: the Commission promises to deliver the Card by the end of 2023.

Read [the article on the European Disability Card](#)

European Emergency Number Association interviews EDF accessibility officer Mher Hakobyan

The interview was published today to mark Global Accessibility Awareness Day. In it Mher talks about access to emergency services, accessibility in general and the impact of COVID-19 in persons with disabilities?

Read [the interview EENA meets Mher Hakobyan from EDF](#)

EFHOH at the next MEETINGS in 2021 & 2022

***Related COVID-19 are most of the meetings online.
Updated on May 2021.***

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9 July	Online	LTA project meeting	Aïda and Marcel
9 August	Online	IFHOH board meeting	EFHOH president
15-17 September	Hannover Germany	EUHA congress and expo	One of the board
4 October	Online	IFHOH board meeting	EFHOH president
7 October	Online	EDF ENGO meeting	Darja
6 December	Online	IFHOH board meeting	EFHOH president
2022	2022	2022	2022
Spring	Budapest	EFHOH board meeting	EFHOH board
Spring	Budapest	EFHOH AGM	All board members
Spring	Budapest	IFHOH world congress 2022	All board members