



# Hard of Hearing Voice in the European Union

**Impact Report 2024**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# FOREWORD

*EFHOH's vision is a Europe where people with hearing loss can live without barriers and have opportunities to participate at all levels in society.*

*We want to see that every hard of hearing person gets opportunities like everyone else and that accessibility such as access to communications is just a matter of fact, part of universal planning and design.*

*EFHOH's overall objective is to protect, promote and raise awareness on the rights of persons with hearing loss in Europe: thus, facilitating legislative and social protection.*

*In this report, with the support of the EFHOH Board and our Secretariat, we provide an accurate and up-to-date account of the activities in 2024. Our member associations are at the heart of our work, and we thank them for assisting and co-operating with us throughout the year.*

*Throughout 2024, we have worked closely with the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European disability umbrella organisation, who have been our great partner for many years.*

*In support of our advocacy work, we have been in contact with several Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other relevant stakeholders.*

*We continue working towards our goal of Europe without barriers for hard of hearing people.*



**Lidia Best,**  
President,  
European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

# INTRODUCTION

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, based in Brussels, Belgium, is a not-for-profit European non-governmental organisation (ENGO) constituted in the Netherlands comprising National Associations.

EFHOH has **29 member organisations** from EU Member States, in addition to Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the UK.

EFHOH aims to establish and maintain European Union level dialogues with its relative institutions and officials, in consultation and co-operation with our members.

EFHOH is a full member of the **European Disability Forum (EDF)** and a Regional Co-operating Member of the **International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH)** to tackle issues of global importance. EFHOH is also a member of the **World Hearing Forum**, the consortium based at the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.

EFHOH collaborates closely with the **International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP)**. EFHOH has established close cooperation with **European Hearing Aids Professionals (AEA)** working towards improved access to quality of hearing care for all Europeans.

Since 2021 EFHOH is a member of the European Disability Platform at the **EU Commission**.

# MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

## General Members

COUNTRY	NAME
AUSTRIA	ÖSTERREICHISCHER SCHWERHÖRIGENBUND
BELGIUM	VERENIGING VOOR HARDHORENDEN “ONDER ONS”
BELGIUM	HÖRGESCHÄDIGTE OSTBELGIENS VOG
CROATIA	HRVATSKI SAVEZ GLUHIH I NAGLUHIH – HSGN
CZECH REPUBLIC	SVAZ NESLYSICICH A NEDOSLYCHAVYCH V CR
CZECH REPUBLIC	CESKOMORAVSKA UNIE NESLYSICICH Z.S.
DENMARK	HØREFORENINGEN
ESTONIA	EESTI VAEGKUULJATE LIIT
FAROE ISLANDS	HOYR
FINLAND	KUULOLIITTO R.Y.
FINLAND	SVENSKA HÖRSELFÖRBUNDET RF.
FRANCE	BUREAU DE COORDINATION DES ASS. DE DEVENUS SOURDS ET MALENTENDANTS – BUCODES
GEORGIA	AURES FOUNDATION
GERMANY	DEUTSCHER SCHWERHÖRIGEN BUND E.V. – DSB
GERMANY	HÖRGESCHÄDIGTE BREMEN UND BREMERHAVEN E.V. – HBB E.V.
GREECE	HELLENIC FEDERATION OF THE DEAF – HFD
HUNGARY	SIKETEK ES NAGYOTHALLOK ORSZAGOS SZÖVETSEGE – SINOSZ
ICELAND	HEYRNARHJÁLP
NETHERLANDS	STICHTING HOORMIJ
NETHERLANDS	STICHTING PLOTSDOVEN
NORWAY	HØRSELHEMMEDES LANDSFORBUND
POLAND	PFOS
POLAND	SUITA
PORTUGAL	OUVIR
SLOVENIA	ZVEZA DRUŠTEV GLUHIH IN NAGLUŠNIH SLOVENIJE
SWEDEN	HÖRSELSKADADES RIKSFÖRBUND – HRF
SWEDEN	UNGA HÖRSELSKADADE
SWITZERLAND	PRO AUDITO SCHWEIZ
UNITED KINGDOM	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEAFENED PEOPLE – NADP

## Associate Members

GERMANY	IVSS-CHURCHEAR
POLAND	KULTURA BEZ BARIER



# BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF



**Lidia Best**  
President  
United Kingdom



**Morten Buan**  
Vice-President  
Norway



**Darja Pajk**  
Treasurer  
Slovenia



**Claire Landesmann**  
General Secretary  
Austria



**Alf Lindberg**  
Board Member  
Sweden

## STAFF MEMBERS



**Derya Fikret**  
Project and  
Administration Officer



**Giorgia Roccia**  
Communications  
Officer



**Lavinia Rotundi**  
Policy Trainee

# COOPERATION



**Marcel Bobeldijk**

EDF Board Member



**Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström**

Co-chair of EDF  
Youth Committee



**Karina Chupina**

EDF Women  
Committee



European Platform of  
Deafness, Hard of Hearing,  
and Deafblindness







April 2024,  
Ljubljana, Slovenia

## Conference

On 19 April 2024, EFHOH hosted Navigating Mental Health and Hearing Loss in Ljubljana, Slovenia, with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clubs Association of Slovenia (ZDGNS). The conference featured EFHOH, IFHOH, the EU Commission, industry leaders, and researchers discussing hearing loss's impact on mental health. Key topics included rehabilitation gaps, hearing health services, and mental health support. With 71 million Europeans affected, the event urged prioritizing hearing loss in the EU Health Strategy 2024–2029. It concluded with Changing Mindsets on Hearing Loss and Mental Health, a call to action signed by EFHOH, IFHOH, and ZDGNS.

## Annual General Meeting

On 20 April 2024, EFHOH held its Annual General Meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, with 30 participants, including observers. Vice-President Morten Buan and Board Member Alf Lindberg were re-elected for a two-year term, and Petra Feinkohl was appointed as EFHOH's external auditor. The AGM featured a presentation on the grant programme and a board-led training on the European Pillar of Social Rights, focusing on national implementation of EU flagship initiatives. The meeting reinforced EFHOH's commitment to advocacy and strengthening support for the hard-of-hearing community.



## BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings provide us with an opportunity to generate new ideas that strengthen the organisation's initiatives and advocacy for the hard of hearing community. These gatherings foster collaboration among members and EU institutions, while also shaping decision-making processes that advance EFHOH's mission.

### In 2024, EFHOH held Board Meetings in:



**Slovenia,**  
April 2024



**Belgium,**  
November 2024



**Online,**  
Monthly meetings

## MEMBERS MEETINGS

EFHOH conducted three planned Members Meetings during CERV 2024:

- 15 March (plans for AGM, EU Flagship initiatives),
- 2 July (Employment Package discussion),
- 4 October (membership mapping discussion)



# EVENTS

In 2024, EFHOH hosted a series of webinars that attracted diverse participants from across Europe and beyond. These webinars provided an opportunity to collect valuable demographic data, highlighting a balanced gender distribution and widespread international engagement, reflecting the global interest in the topics addressed.


## 2024 Events Agenda:


<b>March 5</b>	Lunch Debate: "World Hearing Day 2024 – Changing Mindsets"
<b>March 15</b>	Members Meeting
<b>April 12</b>	Zero Project Webinar
<b>April 20</b>	"Towards Union of Equality" Workshop
<b>July 2</b>	Members Meeting
<b>September 10</b>	Assistive Listening Systems Webinar
<b>September 19</b>	European Accessibility Act – Are We There Yet?
<b>September 25</b>	UNCRPD Training
<b>October 4</b>	Members Meeting
<b>October 30</b>	Hearing Loops or Auracast? Why Not Both?
<b>November 25</b>	Experiences of Women with Hearing Loss: Make Our Issues Visible!

# DIGITAL PRESENCE

## Social Media Growth

EFHOH leverages social media to advocate for stronger legislation, promote assistive technologies, and educate a wider audience on supporting the hard-of-hearing community. By the end of 2024, our reach grew across platforms:

 **Facebook:** 23.4K+ followers

 **LinkedIn:** 18K+ followers

 **Instagram:** 1,237 audience


 **X:** 9.4k audience

## Website

The EFHOH website is a key resource for policy, advocacy, and research, offering official statements, reports, and event updates. Visitors can access in-depth insights and stay informed about EFHOH's initiatives. In 2024, the website saw:

 **559K** page views

 **68K** visitors

 **24** articles published



## Newsletter

In May 2024, EFHOH launched its revamped monthly newsletter, providing key updates, member highlights, and upcoming events. This direct and engaging communication channel has expanded EFHOH's reach and strengthened connections with its audience.

 **6** newsletters published

 **34K** total reached



# CAMPAIGNS

## European Hearing Access Week

Hearing Access Week is a new EFHOH initiative that takes place annually during the second week of March. Its goal is to raise awareness about the accessibility needs of hard of hearing people and to promote accessible spaces that enable hard of hearing and deafened individuals to fully participate in society. Hearing Access Week builds on the advocacy campaign surrounding WHO's World Hearing Day, which is held every year on 3rd March.



## World Hearing Day 2024 – EU Parliament Lunch Debate

In March, EFHOH, alongside AEA (European Hearing Care Professionals) and EHIMA (European Hearing Instruments Manufacturers Association), organised the Lunch Debate “Changing Mindsets” on the occasion of the World Hearing Day.

Hosted by MEP Jaroslaw Duda (Poland), the event’s tradition of engaging policymakers focused on the theme, with emphasis on the drive towards greater acceptance of hearing loss and better inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans.





# PUBLICATIONS

## Research reports

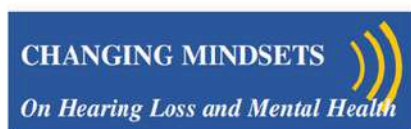
In 2024, EFHOH published four impactful reports addressing key issues for the Hard of Hearing community. These reports, funded by the EU, focus on critical topics: access to healthcare, hearing aids reimbursement, the experiences of Hard of Hearing women in Europe, and the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). Each report highlights EFHOH's commitment to advancing the rights and wellbeing of the HoH community across Europe.

These reports are accessible on our website for further reading.



## Position Statements

During 2024, EFHOH published four official position statements to call for action on different topics addressing hard of hearing people's needs, among which mental health, quality for hearing care, the EU Disability Card Directive and Auracast and Telecoils.



A Step Forward for Disability Rights:  
The EU Disability Card Directive Approved



Position Statement on Auracast and Telecoils  
Call for balanced approach

# PROJECTS

## International Summer School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth Workers

EFHOH is one of partners of this ERASMUS Plus Project which is coordinated by our member SUITA (Poland). Lidia Best and Claire Landesmann took part in the project facilitation trainings in English Language in International advocacy and Teaching assertiveness for hard of hearing people.



## EASILY Project



EFHOH is a partner in the EASILY project, a groundbreaking study exploring the benefits and challenges of listening efforts in the workplace. With input from four universities, top hearing companies, and six doctoral researchers, EASILY aims to assess interventions that support better listening environments.

EFHOH board members Claire Landesmann and Alf Lindberg represent EFHOH in the project, sharing insights on our work and on creating more inclusive workplaces.

# EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

EFHOH actively engaged with the EU Parliament and EU Commission and communicated with policymakers in Brussels, such as European Parliament President Roberta Metsola and MEPs. EFHOH reached out to MEPs involved in disability rights for future collaborations and disseminated raising-awareness materials on hearing access.

## European Days of Persons with Disabilities 2024

On 28-29th November 2024, EFHOH participated in the European Days of Persons with Disabilities 2024 in Brussels. The event, organized by the European Commission and the European Disability Forum, focused on the progress of the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021–2030, marking the midpoint of its implementation.



EFHOH President Lidia Best underlined the need for effective communication for people with hearing loss, stating: "If we don't have effective communication, we feel left out". She stressed the need for hearing loops and speech-to-text in public spaces to ensure full participation in public spaces.

# EU DISABILITY RIGHTS STRATEGY 2021 – 2030: FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

## EU Disability Platform

EFHOH strengthened its collaboration with the European Commission through the **Disability Platform**, engaging policymakers and advocating for the rights of hard of hearing people. Through strategic dialogue and advocacy events, EFHOH contributed to accessibility policies and the implementation of the ESRPD.

## AccessibleEU Centre

**AccessibleEU Centre** was launched in 2022 and aims to support the implementation of EU accessibility legislation by facilitating access to relevant knowledge, best practices, and resources. EFHOH works closely with the Centre and participates in the events, sharing good practice, that hard of hearing people inclusion is ensured in all areas of Centre work.

## Disability Employment Package

In 2022, the EU Commission launched its **Disability Employment Package** to support Member States in ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy social inclusion and economic autonomy through employment. The Package is part of the ESRPD and is in line with the UN CRPD. EFHOH supports the package and informs the EU Commission on how well the right to work and employment is realised in the EU for hard of hearing persons as well as which barriers remain.

## European Disability Card

EFHOH welcomed the EU Council's approval of the **Disability Card and Parking Card Directive**, a key step in the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030.

EFHOH President, Lidia Best stated: *"We are pleased with achieving this important milestone; however, gaps remain. We call on the European Commission to address the existing matter of recognition of the disability status for people who are in transition between two countries."*

EFHOH will continue working closely with the European Disability Platform to ensure citizens with disabilities, including hard of hearing people, can fully benefit from the rights established under this new framework.



# INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

## Apple Health Summit

Our President Lidia Best attended Apple Health Summit that took place at Apple HQ, Cupertino, USA. Presentations related to role of technology and innovation in Safe Listening, hearing access, heart conditions, mental health were part of the Health Summit.

EFHOH has interest in the safe listening and hearing health initiatives at Apple as well as continuous additions of accessibility features in their products.



## Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict)

EFHOH collaborates with Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict) and its division; the International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP). Together we are working to advance digital accessibility and inclusive technologies for hard of hearing individuals.

## International Telecommunications Union

EFHOH continues collaborating on standards and advocacy with Accessible Europe departments to ensure hard of hearing perspectives are part of the standards and developments.

## World Hearing Forum

EFHOH is an active partner of the World Hearing Forum, a global network led by the World Health Organization to promote ear and hearing care worldwide. EFHOH contributes to policy discussions, awareness campaigns, and initiatives that support hearing accessibility and inclusion, such as the World Hearing Day and the Make Listening Safe Workstream.



## Zero Project 2024

The annual Zero Project Conference has become a unique global meeting place to innovate for disability inclusion. EFHOH Team, President, General Secretary and Youth representative participated in Zero Project Conference “Inclusive Education and ICTs”. EFHOH President moderated one of the panels on deaf education and our Youth representative, Paulina Lewandowska participated in a panel gathering Youth representation



## Person Centred Care Partnership



In June, European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) and European Hearing Care Professionals (AEA) joined forces by issuing a **position statement**, advocating for access to quality of hearing care for all.

The organisations caution that tender process applied towards hearing care services can lead to abandoning Person Centred Care.

## Cochlear Implant International Community of Action (CIICA)

Working with CIICA, we were active in providing feedback to "Living guidelines CI". The project aims to create living practice guidelines that can be adapted and adopted in the country, to optimise the care for adults eligible for cochlear implant. The work was organised online through a platform. More information: <https://adultheating.com/living-guidelines/>.

In May EFHOH representatives actively participated in the first CIICA Conference in Brussels.

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[www.efhoh.org](http://www.efhoh.org)

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