



Hear the Future:

Breaking Barriers for an EU Strategy on Hearing Loss

Hosted by MEP Katrin Langensiepen

With the co-organisation of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People and the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals.

Date: 04 March 2026

Time: 14:00 – 17:00

Format: On site

Location: European Parliament, Brussels

Rooms:

Audiometry Tests (14:00-15:00): Altiero Spinelli 08E168

Event (15:00-17:00): Altiero Spinelli 5E1

Accessibility: Real-Time Human Captioning; Audio Induction Loop.

Live captions: <https://tinyurl.com/4k6ksnsw>

Background

Hearing loss can affect individuals at any stage of life, from early childhood and adolescence to working age and older adulthood. The challenges faced by people with hearing loss differ across the lifespan, and policies and accommodations must reflect these age-specific needs, addressing the diverse conditions, barriers, and goals experienced by hard of hearing individuals.

Following the commemoration of the World Hearing Day, the event “**Hear the Future: Breaking Barriers for an EU Strategy on Hearing Loss**” brings together lived experience, professional expertise, and policy perspectives to emphasize the urgent need for a coordinated EU Strategy on Hearing Loss, one that fosters early detection, accessibility, inclusion and equal opportunities for persons with hearing loss at every stage of life.



Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are those of EFHOH and/or AEA and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Agenda

14:00 – 15:00	Audiometry Tests Room: Altiero Spinelli 08E168
	Hear the Future: Breaking Barriers for an EU Strategy on Hearing Loss Room: Altiero Spinelli 5E1
15:00 – 15:10	Opening remarks MEP Katrin Langensiepen
15:10 – 15:20	My personal story: from school to employment Nicole Sophie Marinos, Disability Advocate, AHEAD
15:20 – 15:30	Hard of hearing role models and career development among young adults Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström, General Secretary, Unga Hörselskadade
15:30 – 15:40	Breaking barriers: hearing loss, hearing care and empowerment to be successful at work Mark Laureyns, President, AEA
15:40 – 15:50	Managing Hearing Aids and Cochlear Implants in the workplace Jiska Peeters, Staff Member, Communications and Marketing Department, Thomas More University
15:50 – 16:00	Lessons from a global action for hearing loss: the strategy of the WHO Shelly Chadha, Team Lead of Hearing Health, World Health Organization
16:00 – 16:10	Why an EU Strategy on Hearing Loss is urgent Lidia Best, President, EFHOH
16:10 – 16:30	Questions & Answers Moderation: Henrique Raskin, Head of Secretariat, EFHOH
16:30 – 16:40	Conclusion

Speakers

Katrin Langensiepen is a Member of the European Parliament since 2019. As the first woman with a visible disability in the Parliament and vice-chair of the *Committee on Employment and Social Affairs* and the *Disability Intergroup*, she fights for a social and inclusive Europe. Her special focus lies on inclusion in employment and, together with different NGOs, she worked on the report on equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UNCRPD, that demands better inclusion of persons with disabilities in the first labour market and an end to exclusionary practices.

Nicole Sophie Marinos is a strong advocate for people with disabilities, actively working to challenge perceived limitations and promoting inclusion within both educational and professional settings. Through student organisations and volunteering, Nicole Marinos has been involved in initiatives that promote equal opportunities, accessible education, and inclusive environments for all students. She is particularly interested in exploring how policy, education, and technology can be leveraged to support individuals with disabilities and create more inclusive spaces.

Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström is a lawyer who currently works as Secretary General for the Swedish organisation of young hard of hearing people. He is EFHOH's Representative and Co-Chair in the European Disability Forum Youth Committee, Board Member of the Swedish National Council of Youth Organisations and has a wide interest in human rights and democracy, as well as in accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Mark Laureyns is an audiologist and speech pathologist, president of the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), and director of the Amplifon Centre for Research and Studies in Milan. He lectures on hearing aid fitting at Thomas More University in Antwerp and co-chaired the WHO's "Make Listening Safe" workgroup until 2023. His research focuses on safe listening, hearing and cognition, and professional hearing care.

Jiska Peeters is staff member, in the Communications and Marketing Department at Thomas More University of Applied Sciences in Belgium. Born with significant hearing loss, Jiska Peeters shares her experiences at the University in Belgium, where she talks about her personal story and frequently connects it to the impact of technological innovation in hearing rehabilitation.

Shelly Chadha is the technical lead for the World Health Organization's work in the field of ear and hearing care, being responsible for prevention of deafness and hearing loss, advocacy for prioritisation of hearing care and technical support to countries for development of hearing care strategies. The major initiatives she leads include the Make Listening Safe initiative, the World Hearing Day, the World Report on Hearing and the World Hearing Forum.

Lidia Best is president at the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) and chair of JCA-AHF (Joint Coordination Activities on Accessibility and Human Factors) at the International Telecommunication Union. As an advocate with lived experience, she focuses on accessibility, research, policy, and empowering deafened and hard of hearing advocates. Lidia Best actively works on raising awareness and changing societal and systemic attitudes towards people with hearing loss.