

World Hearing Day 2026

From Communities to Classrooms – and Beyond

On World Hearing Day 2026, under the theme "*From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children*", EFHOH underlines that childhood hearing screening and interventions must be understood as the starting point of a broader inclusion pathway. Equal participation should be ensured not only in childhood, but throughout the transition from education to employment and continue in later years.

Systematic and mandatory hearing screening within school health programmes is a critical first step in addition to newborn screening already in place. Early identification and timely intervention, alongside inclusive learning environments, enable children with hearing loss to develop language, skills and confidence on equal terms.

However, inclusion cannot end in the classroom. Inclusive education must translate into equitable transition to vocational training, higher education and the labour market. Reasonable accommodation must be embedded systematically across recruitment, workplaces, and professional development structures. As working lives extend and hearing loss becomes more prevalent with age, inclusive employment systems are not only a matter of equality but of economic sustainability.

While progress has been achieved under existing EU disability and accessibility frameworks, hearing loss is not yet systematically integrated across health, education, and employment frameworks, creating structural gaps in the life-course pathway.

EFHOH therefore calls for the development of an EU Strategy on Hearing Loss, complementary to the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A dedicated strategy would provide the necessary life-course framework, ensuring alignment between early identification, inclusive education and accessible employment systems within a coherent European approach. Only through such coordinated action hearing accessibility can be embedded structurally, from communities to classrooms, and from classrooms to employment, ensuring equal participation at every stage of life.