

EFHOH

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE



Hard of Hearing Voice in the European Union

Impact Report 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People would like to extend its sincere gratitude to the European Union for supporting our work through funding provided under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme. This support makes it possible to carry out our policy and research work, capacity-building activities, and the publication of this Impact Report.

We would also like to thank the EFHOH Board and President for their leadership and guidance throughout the year, as well as our sponsors, partners, and member organisations whose continued collaboration, expertise, and commitment are essential to advancing the rights and inclusion of hard of hearing people across Europe.

EFHOH values the strong cooperation with the European disability movement, particularly the European Disability Forum (EDF), and appreciates the ongoing dialogue with Members of the European Parliament, European Commission representatives, and other EU policymakers working to strengthen accessibility, equality, and inclusion for people with hearing loss.

Views and opinions expressed are those of EFHOH and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission.

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FOREWORD

2025 was a pivotal year for the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People and for advancing the rights of hard of hearing people across Europe. As the European Union continues implementing the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, progress has been made, while significant challenges remain in communication accessibility, hearing care, employment, and emergency services.

Throughout the year, EFHOH significantly expanded its presence and engagement in European and international processes, strengthening its role as a representative voice for hard of hearing people. By engaging with EU institutions, international organisations, and partners, EFHOH contributed to several policy discussions and initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and equal participation.

This Impact Report highlights the progress achieved through EFHOH's work in policy engagement, research, cooperation, and public outreach. These efforts help ensure that the rights of hard of hearing people are increasingly recognised in legislation, public policy, and technological development. Our achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our members, the cooperation of partners and sponsors, and the continued support of the European Union.

Looking ahead, EFHOH remains committed to working with policymakers and stakeholders to ensure that hearing accessibility becomes a policy priority and a shared responsibility across Europe.



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

INTRODUCTION

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People is an umbrella organisation of hard of hearing people across Europe. Founded and registered in the Netherlands as a non-profit organisation in 1993, EFHOH's office is currently located in Brussels and represents an estimated 59 million plus hard of hearing people through its 30 general members and 2 associate members in 23 countries.

EFHOH works to promote awareness, understanding and collaborative practical actions that remove barriers preventing hard of hearing people from reaching their full potential. This includes having access to universal hearing care and rehabilitation, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, and full participation in a society equipped with accessible public services, hearing loops, subtitling, captioning and assistive devices.

For the implementation of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ESRPD) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as the development of research and policy recommendations on equitable healthcare access, EFHOH undertakes a wide range of political and health-related initiatives. These efforts comprise active representation at key international bodies such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and European institutions.

EFHOH is a full member of the European Disability Forum (EDF), a Regional Co-operating Member of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH), and member of the WHO World Hearing Forum and the WHO Disability Health Equity Network. EFHOH collaborates closely with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP) and the European Association of Hearing Aids Professionals (AEA). Since 2021, EFHOH is also a member of the European Disability Platform at the European Commission.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

General Members

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
SPAIN	FEDERACIÓ ACAPPS D'ASSOCIACIONS DE FAMÍLIES I PERSONES SORDES
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



Lidia Best
President
United Kingdom



Morten Buan
Vice-President
Norway



Darja Pajk
Treasurer
Slovenia



Claire Landesmann
General Secretary
Austria



Alf Lindberg
Board Member
Sweden

SECRETARIAT STAFF



Henrique Raskin
Project Manager and
Head of Secretariat



Derya Fikret
Project and
Administration Officer
(left in August 2025)



Lavinia Rotundi
Advocacy Officer

COOPERATION



Marcel Bobeldijk
EDF Board Member



Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström
Co-chair of EDF
Youth Committee



Karina Chupina
EDF Women
Committee



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Advancing hearing access in Europe

10+

High-level events where EFHOH spoke

2

Events held at the European Parliament

7

Policy publications

Strengthening our European community

2

New member organisations

10+

Events, trainings, meetings organised with members

Growing our outreach

140K

Views across EFHOH social media



Conference

On 25 April 2025, EFHOH and Eesti Vaegkuuljate Liit hosted the conference "Achieving Equality for Hard of Hearing People" in Tallinn, Estonia. The conference featured EFHOH, Eesti Vaegkuuljate Liit (EVL), the Supreme Court of Estonia, the Estonian Chamber of People with Disabilities, and the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), among other industry leaders and researchers. Key topics included discrimination and accommodations in the workplace, the European Disability Card, the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Speech Recognition on Television and studies on spacial hearing related to Cochlear Implants.

Annual General Meeting

On 26 April 2025, EFHOH held its Annual General Meeting in Tallinn, Estonia, with 41 participants, including observers. President Lidia Best, Treasurer Darja Pajk and General Secretary Claire Landesmann 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 establishment of EFHOH's secretariat in Brussels and the approval of the strategy for 2026-2030. Also, the Tallinn Declaration (2025) was adopted, calling for the maintenance of Telecoils in hearing instruments for at least the next 10-15 years.

BOARD MEETINGS



Board meetings provide an opportunity to generate new ideas, strengthen EFHOH's policy priorities. These gatherings foster collaboration among members and EU institutions, while also shaping decision-making processes that advance EFHOH's mission.

In 2025, EFHOH held Board Meetings in:



Belgium,
January, 2025



Estonia,
April, 2025



Belgium,
December, 2025



Online,
Bimonthly

CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2025, EFHOH strengthened members' capacity, building leadership skills and improving understanding of EU institutions and policy processes.

Leadership Meeting (January)

**Innovation in Hearing Health
- Dialogue with Apple (April)**



TRAININGS & WEBINARS



Exploring Google Accessibility Tools (July)

EU Institutions and Successful Advocacy (October)

ABC to Mastering Health Advocacy (November)

EXPERTS GROUPS KICK OFF

In June 2025, EFHOH launched Experts Groups following the Annual General Meeting to strengthen collaboration with members and support work on key priorities such as accessibility, healthcare and youth engagement.



STUDY VISITS

Study visits to Malta and Switzerland connected EFHOH members with national organisations and professionals, promoting the exchange of good practices and strengthening European cooperation.



PUBLICATIONS

Reports

In 2025, EFHOH published four impactful reports addressing key issues for the Hard of Hearing community. These publications provide evidence and recommendations that support discussions with policymakers and stakeholders:

- Alternative Report to the CRPD Committee in the framework of the EU Reporting before the CRPD Committee
- Rights in Focus: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans (Post-Event Report)
- Towards Inclusive Employment: Employment and Reasonable Accommodation for Hard of Hearing People in Europe
- European Accessibility Act: from consultation to implementation, a Hard of Hearing perspective



EFHOH publications contribute to European strategic dialogues by providing evidence-based analysis and concrete calls to action from the perspective of hard of hearing people.

All our reports are accessible on the EFHOH website for further reading.

SCAN HERE



PUBLICATIONS

Alternative Report to the CRPD Committee in the framework of the EU Reporting before the CRPD Committee (2025)

In 2025, EFHOH played an active role in the second review of the European Union under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by submitting its Alternative Report, bringing the experiences of hard of hearing people directly into the international human rights review process.

During the review in Geneva, EFHOH engaged directly with members of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, raising concerns about the limited recognition of hard of hearing people within EU policies and institutions. EFHOH emphasised critical issues such as disparities in access to hearing care and rehabilitation, communication barriers in healthcare and emergency services, insufficient workplace accommodations, and gaps in disability data collection.

Through this contribution, EFHOH called on the European Union to strengthen its implementation of the Convention and ensure that policies and legislation fully reflect the rights and needs of people with hearing loss.

The costs of participation at the UN CRPD were not funded by the European Union.



President Lidia Best and Advocacy Officer Lavinia Rotundi at the United Nations' EU Review of the CRPD, Geneva (2025)

CHECK THE REPORT!



POLICY STATEMENTS

Opinion on the CRPD Committee's Concluding Observations on the EU

EFHOH welcomed the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities following the second review of the EU under the Convention. The recommendations reflect several concerns raised by EFHOH and explicitly recognised hard of hearing people under Article 29 on political participation.



CHECK IT ON OUR WEBSITE!

Tallinn Declaration

Following our 2025 AGM, EFHOH published the Tallinn Declaration, calling for the continued availability of Telecoils in hearing instruments such as hearing aids and cochlear implant processors. With the emergence of Auracast™, EFHOH called for the need of a balanced approach where Telecoils and Auracast™ co-exist, ensuring continued access to assistive listening systems for the next 10–15 years.



International Day of Persons with Disabilities

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, EFHOH called for stronger implementation of the European Disability Rights Strategy, improved subtitling standards under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, accessible 112 emergency communications, and concrete action to address the employment gap affecting hard of hearing people.



EVENTS

In 2025, EFHOH hosted a series of webinars, trainings, meetings and on-site events that attracted diverse participants from across Europe and beyond. These events 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.

2025 Events Agenda:

Date	Event Title
08 January	Platform on Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness
17 January	Leadership Meeting (Members only)
04 March	Virtual Lunch Debate (European Parliament): World Hearing Day 2025 - Changing Mindsets
09 April	Apple Meeting (Members only)
25-26 April	EFHOH Conference and AGM (Tallinn, Estonia)
09 May	Policy Training (Board and Staff)
05 June	Expert Groups Kick-off (Members only)
16 July	Exploring Google Accessibility Tools (Webinar)
02 October	Rights in Focus (Event at the European Parliament)
21 October	EU Institutions and Successful Advocacy (Members only)
05 November	ABC to Mastering Health Advocacy (Members only)

EVENTS AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

VIRTUAL LUNCH DEBATE - WORLD HEARING DAY (MARCH 2025)

The WHO World Hearing Day is an annual commemoration date held on 3 March each year to raise awareness on how to prevent hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world.

Since 2013, EFHOH, in co-operation with EHIMA and AEA has annually organised a Lunch Debate in the European Parliament especially aimed to engage and collaborate with representatives and policymakers in Europe.

In 2025, World Hearing Day had the theme of "Changing Mindsets", and counted with the participation of MEP Zala Tomasic, Shelly Chadha (WHO), Monika Chaba (European Commission, DG EMPL), Lidia Best (EFHOH), Ariane Laplante-Lévesque (WHO Europe), Mark Laureyns (AEA) and Stefan Zimmer (EHIMA).

AEA **EFHOH** **EHIMA** **European Union** **epp**

- Welcome – MEP Zala Tomasic
- WHO World Hearing Day 2025 theme - Shelly Chadha – WHO
- The EU Disability Employment Package - Monika Chaba – European Commission
- Hard of Hearing people in employment - implementing inclusive approach – Lidia Best – EFHOH
- Advocacy / multi-sectoral action for change - Ariane Laplante-Lévesque - WHO Europe
- The consequences of hearing loss on employment – Mark Laureyns – AEA
- The role of hearing health in employment and job retention – Stefan Zimmer - EHIMA
- Debate - All
- Conclusion – MEP Zala Tomasic

Virtual Lunch Debate – European Parliament
"World Hearing Day 2025 – Changing Mindsets"
Host: MEP Zala Tomasic (Slovenia, EPP)
Tuesday the 4th of March 2025 12:30-14:30h CET
All presentations are supported with Speech to Text in: English, Dutch, French, German, Slovenian and Spanish

Scan me!

WORLD HEARING DAY
3 MARCH 2025
CHANGING MINDSETS. EMPOWER YOURSELF.

EVENTS AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

RIGHTS IN FOCUS (OCTOBER 2025)

On 2 October 2025, EFHOH, in collaboration with the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA) and hosted by MEP Katrin Langensiepen, organised the event “Rights in Focus: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans” at the European Parliament in Brussels.

The event brought together policymakers, professionals, and experts to explore the barriers faced by hard of hearing people in Europe. Bringing this discussion directly to the European Parliament marked an important milestone in strengthening the recognition of hearing loss within EU disability policy.

Speakers from the European Commission, the European Disability Forum, academia, and hearing health professionals highlighted the need for stronger enforcement of accessibility legislation, improved recognition of hearing loss within disability policies, and affordable access to hearing care and assistive technologies.

The discussions concluded with a clear call for the development of an EU Hearing Loss Strategy, better implementation of accessibility laws, and policies that ensure equal participation for hard of hearing people across Europe.



CHECK THE POST-EVENT REPORT!



EVENT AT THE UNITED NATIONS

ACCESSIBLE EUROPE: ICT4ALL FORUM (DECEMBER 2025)

On 2-3 December 2025, EFHOH supported the Accessible Europe: ICT4ALL Forum, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Commission in Brussels in connection with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.



The Forum brought together policymakers, civil society and technology companies to discuss the future of digital accessibility in Europe, particularly in light of the entry into force of the European Accessibility Act (EAA) in June 2025.

EFHOH contributed to the event as a key European stakeholder representing hard of hearing people. President Lidia Best spoke on the digital accessibility panel, highlighting the need for effective implementation of EU accessibility laws.



EFHOH Board and Staff with the Head of the Office for Europe at the ITU (2025)

EFHOH's involvement marked an important milestone in strengthening the visibility of hearing accessibility within European digital policy discussions and reinforced the role of organisations of persons with disabilities in shaping the implementation of the EAA.

OUR PRESENCE



United Nations' EU Review of the CRPD, Geneva **(Not EU funded)**



Zero Project Conference, Vienna



European Commission and Office of the Polish Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled Persons, Brussels



Global Disability Summit, Berlin



Mini Symposium of the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals, Valletta



European Disability Forum's Annual General Assembly, Vilnius



Make Listening Safe, WHO, Geneva **(Not EU funded)**



Rights in Focus: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans, Brussels



CIICA Conference, Brussels



Accessible Europe: ICT4ALL (ITU) Brussels



EENA: Future EU Legislation on Emergency Communication, Brussels



European Day of Persons with Disabilities, Brussels

EU DISABILITY RIGHTS STRATEGY 2021 – 2030: FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

In 2025, EFHOH contributed to the implementation of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030, ensuring that the perspectives of hard of hearing people are reflected in EU policies and initiatives.

EFHOH participated in meetings of the **European Commission Disability Platform** in March, June, October and December 2025, engaging with EU institutions, Member States, and disability organisations on accessibility, employment, and inclusive services. Discussions included key EU initiatives such as **AccessibleEU** and the **Disability Employment Package**, which aim to strengthen accessibility and improve labour market participation for persons with disabilities.



EFHOH also contributed to several European Commission consultations, providing input on the **Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights**, the **EU Anti-Poverty Strategy**, the **EU Civil Society Strategy**, the **Digital Networks Act**, and the evaluation of the **Racial Equality Directive** and **Employment Equality Directive**. EFHOH highlighted barriers affecting hard of hearing people and pushed for stronger accessibility, equal participation, and inclusive policies.





On 4–5 December 2025, EFHOH participated in the **European Day of Persons with Disabilities** in Brussels, organised by the European Commission and the European Disability Forum. EFHOH President Lidia Best spoke during the panel on inclusive preparedness and crisis management, calling for accessible 112 emergency services.


DIGITAL OUTREACH


Social Media Growth

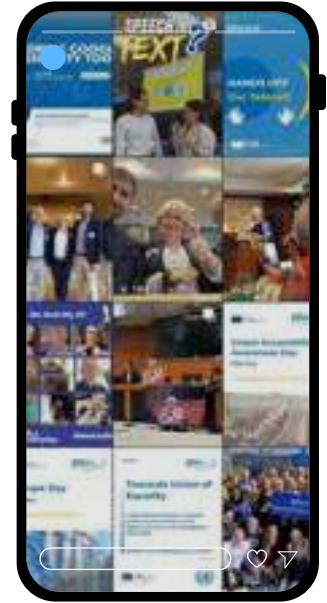
EFHOH uses social media to amplify the voices of hard of hearing people. In 2025, our digital presence increased significantly, expanding our reach across all platforms.

 **Facebook:** +94K Audience

 **LinkedIn:** +24K Audience

 **Instagram:** +19K Audience

 **X:** +9.4K Audience



Website

The launch of EFHOH's new website was a key milestone in 2025. With improved design, features, and content, the platform was strengthened as a central hub for EFHOH's work, publishing statements, reports, and updates on events and activities.



[#] +24K page views

[#] +56K visitors

[#] 37 articles published

Newsletter

In 2025, this direct and engaging communication channel has expanded EFHOH's reach and strengthened connections with its audience.

10 newsletters published

[#] +6.8K recipients reached



Sign Up

CAMPAIGNS

Hearing Access Week 2025

Hearing Access Week is EFHOH's already traditional initiative that takes place annually in March.

Its purpose 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.



Hands Off Our Telecoil!

At the 2025 Annual General Meeting, EFHOH approved the Tallinn Declaration, which warns against the premature removal of Telecoils from hearing instruments such as hearing aids and cochlear implant processors. With the emergence of Auracast™, hearing device manufacturers have begun phasing out Telecoils, threatening continued access to assistive listening systems such as hearing loops.

Building on strong engagement from member organisations across Europe, EFHOH launched the campaign "Hands Off Our Telecoil!", mobilising the community to highlight that Auracast™ is not yet a complete replacement and that Telecoils remain essential for accessible communication.



PARTNERSHIPS

WHO Disability Health Equity Network

In 2025, EFHOH has become a member of the WHO Disability Health Equity Network, a global platform launched to advance health equity for persons with disabilities worldwide. The Network provides a strong framework for joint action by supporting countries and stakeholders to share knowledge, shape inclusive policies, and promote equal access to healthcare.



Research Partnership with Catholic University Lublin



EFHOH has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), which has a strong tradition of research and teaching in accessibility in Poland.

The agreement formalises long-standing cooperation and establishes a structured framework for joint research initiatives, exchange of expertise and best practices, development of participatory projects involving young people and adults with hearing loss.

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.



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