



ANNUAL REPORT

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Our Vision, Mission and Objectives

The **European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH)** is a European umbrella organisation representing hard of hearing and late-deafened people. Founded and registered in the Netherlands as a European association in 1993, EFHOH's office is currently located in Brussels and works to ensure that the rights and needs of hard of hearing people are recognised and addressed at the European level.

Across Europe, an estimated **59 million people live with hearing loss**. EFHOH currently brings together **30 general members and 2 associate members from 23 countries**, forming a strong network advocating for accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation.

EFHOH represents hard of hearing people in dialogue with the **European Union, Members of the European Parliament, and European institutions**, with the aim of building a Europe where hard of hearing people can live without barriers and participate fully in society. This vision is pursued through policy engagement, research, awareness campaigns, and collaboration with members, partners, and supporters.

At the European and international level, EFHOH engages with institutions and stakeholders to advance accessibility and disability rights by contributing to the implementation of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, alongside key EU accessibility legislation, such as the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the European Accessibility Act. EFHOH is an active participant in the European Commission Disability Platform and engages with the European Parliament, the United Nations, WHO-Europe, the International Telecommunication Union, and other relevant stakeholders.

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.

OUR VISION:

A Europe where people with hearing loss can live without barriers and have opportunities to participate at all levels in society.

OUR MISSION:

EFHOH works to promote awareness, understanding and collaborative practical actions that remove the barriers for hard of hearing people to reach their full potential with access to universal hearing care and rehabilitation, including hearing aids and cochlear implants. This is optimised by an accessible society with public services, hearing loops, subtitling, captioning and assistive devices.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

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. This is realised through practical actions in collaboration with members and other stakeholders.

Summary of the Report

This report provides an overview of EFHOH's main achievements and activities in 2025, as well as key developments shaping our strategic direction for 2026–2030.

2025 marked the consolidation of EFHOH's professional Secretariat in Brussels and the strengthening of our role as a recognised EU-level representative actor.

The report covers:

- **Representation:** Policy engagement at EU and international level, including the Alternative Report to the CRPD Committee, European Accessibility Act implementation, employment accommodation, and hearing access campaigns.
- **Capacity Building:** Trainings, Members Meetings, policy workshops, and internal strategic development.
- **Networking and Partnerships:** Engagement with EU institutions, Disability Platform, World Health Organization, European Disability Forum, International Telecommunication Union Office for Europe, research institutions, and industry stakeholders.
- **Communication, Digital Outreach and Campaigns:** Website relaunch, social media growth, newsletters, and campaign visibility.
- **Events:** High-level policy events at the European Parliament, Webinars.
- **Research and Projects:** EASILY project, and WHO Disability Health Equity Network membership.
- **Governance and Finance:** AGM decisions, elections, strategy adoption (2026–2030), and financial overview.

The report also includes a financial statement, which shows EFHOH's income and expenditure in 2025, as well as the sources of funding and the allocation of resources. We hope that this report will give you a clear and comprehensive picture of what EFHOH has achieved in 2025 and what its plans and ambitions are for the future.

Milestones

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People celebrated significant milestones in 2025. These milestones were only possible thanks to our secretariat and Board members efforts

Major accomplishments included:

- **Approval of the next three-year cycle (2026-2028) of the CERV Operational Grant.** This grant comes from the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Program. We want to thank the European Union for providing the organisation with the funding, which enables EFHOH to work towards organisation capacity building.
- **Launch of EFHOH's new website.**
- **We welcomed 2 new General Members: UNGA (Sweden) and ACAPPS (Catalonia).**
- **Consolidation of the Secretariat in Brussels,** strengthening EFHOH's operational capacity.
- **Submission of the first Alternative Report on Hard of Hearing People in the EU to the UN CRPD Committee.**
- **Adoption of the Tallinn Declaration,** calling for the continued maintenance of Telecoils in hearing instruments while supporting the adoption of Auracast™ through a complementary, dual-technology approach.
- **High-level event at European Parliament "Rights in Focus: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans",** hosted by MEP Katrin Langensiepen.
- **ITU Accessible Europe High-Level conference,** co-organised with the International Telecommunication Union Office for Europe and the European Commission in Brussels. EFHOH was a supporting partner in the event together with Accessible EU.
- **Memorandum of Understanding with the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL),** a five-year framework of cooperation on joint research on accessibility and inclusion and exchange of knowledge, expertise, and best practices.
- **Surveys and publications** on inclusive employment, access to reasonable accommodation, and implementation of the European Accessibility Act, providing valuable data supporting members and policy decision making.

EFHOH Year in Action

In 2025, EFHOH continued to consolidate its role as the European-level voice of hard of hearing people, strengthening its policy engagement, strategic partnerships, and institutional presence. Building on the establishment of the Secretariat in Brussels, EFHOH further enhanced its operational capacity and direct engagement with European institutions, ensuring that hearing accessibility remains firmly embedded within EU disability, health, employment, and digital policy discussions.

Throughout the year, the EFHOH Board and Secretariat actively represented the interests of hard of hearing people in high-level policy spaces. EFHOH participated in the United Nations review of the European Union's implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), marking an important step in positioning hearing loss more visibly within EU disability monitoring processes.

At the European level, EFHOH continued its long-standing tradition of organising World Hearing Day events in cooperation with the European Parliament and other strategic partners, facilitating dialogue between policymakers, industry representatives, and civil society. Later in the year, the high-level event "Rights in Focus" at the European Parliament further advanced discussions on employment inclusion, hearing accessibility, and systemic responsibility for equal participation.

In parallel, EFHOH strengthened its thematic work in the field of assistive listening technologies. The adoption of the Tallinn Declaration during the Annual General Meeting reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to a balanced technological transition that preserves existing hearing loop infrastructure while supporting innovation such as Auracast™. This position reflects EFHOH's broader approach: promoting progress without compromising established accessibility solutions relied upon by millions of users.

Capacity-building remained central to EFHOH's work. Members' meetings, leadership exchanges, and targeted policy trainings enabled stronger coordination across the network and supported national efforts aligned with EU-level developments. Regular Board meetings ensured strategic oversight, while the approval of the 2026–2030 Strategy provided a clear and ambitious roadmap for the coming years.

Throughout 2025, EFHOH also deepened cooperation with the European Disability Forum, the European Commission Disability Platform, WHO networks (World Hearing

Forum; WHO Disability Health Equity Initiative), academic institutions, and professional associations. These partnerships strengthened EFHOH's ability to influence cross-sector discussions on inclusive employment, health equity, digital accessibility, and hearing technology standards.

Overall, 2025 was a year of consolidation, visibility, and strategic positioning. EFHOH reinforced its identity as a policy-driven, member-based European organisation committed to ensuring that hearing access is recognised not as a technical add-on, but as a fundamental condition for equal participation in society.

Policy Impact

In 2025, EFHOH strengthened its role as a European-level policy actor working for the rights of hard of hearing people. Through engagement with European and international institutions, participation in policy consultations via Disability Platform High-Level Stakeholder engagement and the development of evidence-based policy reports, EFHOH contributed to advancing hearing accessibility, employment inclusion, healthcare access, and accessible communication across Europe.

1. Policy Engagement with EU and International Institutions

- **UNCRPD Review of the European Union:**

EFHOH submitted its [Alternative Report](#) ahead of the EU's second review under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), highlighting key gaps affecting hard of hearing people. EFHOH attended the review at the United Nations in Geneva and actively engaged with the CRPD Committee, calling on the EU to take stronger action to ensure accessibility and equal participation. [EFHOH welcomed the Committee's Concluding Observations](#), which explicitly reference hard of hearing persons under Article 29, calling on the EU to ensure accessible voting methods and information for blind, deaf, and hard of hearing persons. The Committee also urged the EU to strengthen accessibility of information, digital services, healthcare communication, and justice systems, reflecting several concerns raised by EFHOH during the review process.

- **Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union:**

In March, [EFHOH President Lidia Best spoke at the conference](#) in Brussels "*Raising Awareness of the Potential of People with Disabilities in Social and Professional Life*", organised under the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and co-hosted by the Polish Government and the European Commission. EFHOH highlighted the

importance of Inclusive employment and the role of assistive technologies and captioning services in enabling the full potential of hard of hearing people in social and professional life.

- **Concluding Statement of the Annual General Meeting 2025, Tallinn Declaration (2025)**

During the EFHOH Annual General Meeting in Estonia in April, the [concluding statement](#) of the proceedings was approved, calling for the continued maintenance of Telecoils in hearing instruments, alongside the introduction of the Auracast™ feature. The statement advocates for a holistic approach from manufacturers and audiology services, ensuring informed choice is provided to hard of hearing citizens.

- **Event at the European Parliament – “Rights in Focus”:**

In October, EFHOH co-organised with AEA (European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals) the event “[Rights in Focus: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans](#)” at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event, hosted by MEP Katrin Langensiepen, brought together policymakers, civil society organisations, and professionals to discuss employment inclusion, accessibility legislation, and equal access to hearing care. The discussions concluded with a call for the need for an EU Hearing Loss Strategy, marking an important milestone in strengthening the recognition of hearing loss within EU disability policy.

- **European Day of Persons with Disabilities:**

On 4–5 December, EFHOH participated in the [European Day of Persons with Disabilities in Brussels](#). The event, organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Disability Forum, brought together policymakers and disability organisations to assess progress under the European Disability Rights Strategy 2021–2030 and discuss remaining challenges. EFHOH President Lidia Best spoke during the panel on inclusive preparedness and crisis management, highlighting the persistent barriers faced by hard of hearing people in accessing 112 services and the need for multiple accessible ways to contact emergency services and receive information.

- **Accessible Europe: ICT4ALL Forum**

On 2-3 December, [EFHOH supported the event 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. 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 European Accessibility Act.

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities:**

Under the theme “Fostering disability-inclusive societies for advancing social progress,” [EFHOH called for stronger implementation of the European Disability Rights Strategy](#), improved quality standards for subtitling under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, accessible 112 emergency communications, and concrete action to address the employment gap affecting hard of hearing people.

- **European Commission High-Level Disability Platform:**

EFHOH participates in the European Commission through active participation in the EU Disability Platform, contributing to meetings in March, June, October and December 2025. During the December meeting, EFHOH highlighted key priorities for hard of hearing people, including access to hearing aids and lifelong rehabilitation, portability of disability recognition across the EU, minimum standards for workplace accommodations, and stronger employment protections, including the role of remote work in improving employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. EFHOH also continues to support the implementation of the European Disability Card and the Disability Employment Package, launched in 2022 as part of the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030 and aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

- **Additional Policy and Institutional Engagement:**

EFHOH actively engaged and communicated with policymakers in Brussels, including **Members of the European Parliament** such as Zala Tomašič and Katrin Langensiepen. EFHOH strengthened dialogue with decision-makers involved in disability rights, employment, and accessibility policy, and disseminated awareness-raising materials on hearing access to support future collaboration and legislative action.

In addition, EFHOH sent an official letter to the European Commission expressing concern over the lack of live subtitling during the President of the European Commission’s State of the Union in September 2025, calling for consistent provision of real-time subtitling in all major EU institutional events.

Throughout the year, EFHOH contributed to several European Commission consultations, ensuring that the perspectives of hard of hearing people are reflected in EU policy development. These included the **Public Consultation on the new 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 and Employment Equality Directives.

The **AccessibleEU Centre** was launched in 2022 and aims to support the implementation of EU accessibility legislation, including the European Accessibility Act (EAA), by facilitating access to relevant knowledge, best practices, and resources. EFHOH continued working closely with the Centre and participates in the events, sharing good practice, ensuring that hard of hearing people are represented in all areas of Centre work.

At global level, EFHOH remained an active partner of the **World Hearing Forum** led by the World Health Organization (WHO), contributing to policy dialogue, awareness campaigns, and initiatives such as **World Hearing Day** and the **Make Listening Safe workstream**, with EFHOH President, Lidia Best serving as a co-Chair and member of Steering Group.

In 2025, EFHOH also joined **WHO Disability Health Equity Network** to further strengthen its engagement in global discussions on equitable healthcare access.

2. Policy Research and Evidence-based Publications

EFHOH strengthened its evidence-based work by conducting key surveys and publishing reports to highlight the challenges faced by the hard of hearing community. These publications served as critical tools in policy design and raising awareness among European decision-makers:

- [EFHOH Alternative Report to the CRPD Committee in the framework of the EU Reporting before the CRPD Committee - 2025](#)
- [Post-Event Report “Rights in Focus”: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans](#)
- [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](#)

These reports strengthened EFHOH’s policy strategy and contributed to ongoing policy discussions in Brussels and across Europe.

EFHOH contributed to consultations for the study *“Guidance to Increase Access to Healthcare for People with Disabilities”*, commissioned by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) and the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE). The study aims to develop guidelines to

overcome barriers in access to healthcare, including medical settings and digital health services.

In addition, EFHOH, in collaboration with the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA) and Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, launched an ongoing multilingual European survey in October 2025 examining the impact of hearing loss and empowerment in the workplace. The survey collects evidence on barriers and solutions for inclusive workplaces and will support future policy recommendations on employment inclusion and reasonable accommodation. Results will be aggregated and published in 2026.

Through these research and policy initiatives, EFHOH continued to strengthen its evidence-based efforts and contribute to policy discussions on accessibility, employment inclusion, healthcare access, and the rights of hard of hearing people across Europe.

3. Engagement with Technology and Industry Stakeholders

In 2025, EFHOH engaged with technology companies and industry stakeholders to promote digital accessibility and ensure that emerging technologies reflect the communication needs of hard of hearing users.

Key engagements included:

- **Dialogue with Apple on hearing health and access innovation (April):** EFHOH held an [online meeting with Apple representatives](#) and EFHOH member organisations to discuss hearing accessibility, safe listening, and inclusive design in digital technologies. The exchange focused on ensuring that technological innovation aligns with the accessibility needs of hard of hearing users and promotes inclusive design in consumer technologies.
- **Exchange with Google on accessibility tools (July):** EFHOH organised a [webinar with Google featuring Christopher Patnoe](#), Head of Accessibility & Disability Innovation. The discussion explored accessibility features embedded in everyday technologies for deaf and hard of hearing users, including tools such as Live Transcribe, Live Caption, and real-time multilingual captions in Google Meet, as well as future developments in AI-supported accessibility and assistive listening technologies.

Members Engagement and Capacity Building

EFHOH members have played an active role in strengthening collective visibility and capacity to ensure active representation of hard of hearing people at the EU level.

EFHOH has active members in the Board, Youth and Women's Committee of the European Disability Forum (EDF), contributing to discussions and ensuring that the interests of hard of hearing individuals are well represented in broader European disability policies.

EFHOH's policy work is strengthened by the active involvement of its member organisations and expert groups. Through consultations, surveys, and thematic exchanges, members contribute national perspectives and expertise that inform EFHOH's policy strategy at the European level.

Key member engagement activities included:

- **Experts Groups:** Following the EFHOH Annual General Meeting, members contributed to expert groups focusing on key priority areas including accessibility, healthcare, and youth engagement. These groups support the development of policy initiatives, guidelines and contribute expertise to EFHOH's policy work.
- **Accessible healthcare guidelines for hard of hearing people:** Experts among members contributed to the development of guidance on accessible healthcare for hard of hearing people, helping identify barriers in healthcare settings and recommending practical solutions to make accessible healthcare services for hard of hearing people.
- **Inclusive employment and reasonable accommodation research:** EFHOH members contributed national perspectives to the publication "[Towards Inclusive Employment: Employment and Reasonable Accommodation for Hard of Hearing People in Europe](#)", sharing information on barriers to employment and access to reasonable accommodation across different countries.
- **European Accessibility Act implementation:** [Members provided input on the implementation of the European Accessibility Act \(EAA\)](#), sharing national developments and challenges to support EFHOH's efforts on accessibility legislation and enforcement.
- **EFHOH-AEA-Thomas More University European employment survey:** Since October, EFHOH, in collaboration with the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA) and Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, has

launched an [ongoing survey in different languages examining the impact of hearing loss and empowerment in the workplace](#).

Through these contributions, EFHOH members play a central role in shaping evidence-based policy recommendations and strengthening the organisation's visibility at European level.

Capacity Building

A crucial part of EFHOH's capacity-building strategy in 2025 was the delivery of targeted trainings, leadership exchanges, expert groups and Members Meetings aimed at strengthening strategic engagement skills, policy understanding, and organisational coordination across the network.

EFHOH held five Members Meetings and Trainings throughout the year, providing updates on policy developments, strategic planning, and opportunities for coordination and peer exchange.

Capability Building for Members:

- **Leadership Meeting (January):** A [strategic session with members](#) focused on governance, EU-level policy priorities, and preparation for key institutional milestones, including the CRPD EU review.
- **Innovation in Hearing Health (April):** [EFHOH held a dialogue with Apple representatives](#) and EFHOH member organisations to discuss hearing accessibility, safe listening, and inclusive design in digital technologies.

Trainings on Capacity Building:

- **EU Institutions and Successful Advocacy (October):** A [members-only exchange on practical policy strategies](#), alliance-building, and translating EU policy developments into national impact with the support of the European Disability Forum.
- **ABC to Mastering Health Advocacy (November):** [A focused training with Professor Sara Rubinelli](#), strengthening members' capacity to call for equitable hearing care, accessibility in healthcare systems, and integration of hearing health into broader public health policy.

Expert Groups Meetings:

- **EFHOH Expert Groups Kick-Off Meeting (June):** EFHOH organised the first Expert Groups Kick-Off Meeting, bringing together experts among member organisations to

support EFHOH's evidence-based policy work on accessibility, healthcare, and youth engagement.

Staff training:

- **Policy Training for Board and Staff (May):** An [internal training session](#) enhancing knowledge of EU legislative processes and effective engagement with EU institutions.

In addition, EFHOH conducted study visits to [Malta](#) and [Switzerland](#), facilitating exchanges with national organisations, professionals, and stakeholders working in the field of hearing loss. These visits strengthened cross-border cooperation, supported the sharing of best practices, and reinforced EFHOH's European network.

Networking and Partnerships

EFHOH worked on strategic partnerships and enhanced collaboration with other European NGOs and civil society organisations.

EFHOH co-operates closely with the **International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH)**. The EFHOH president is a permanent member of the IFHOH Board.

EFHOH continues to support Youth by establishing Youth Fund, supporting young people with travel funds and mentoring. The funds are designed to help raise hard of hearing people's voices, by supporting youth advocates' participation at the European Day of Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, EFHOH also keeps close collaboration with the **International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP)**.

In January, EFHOH hosted an [online meeting with the Platform on Deafness, Hard of Hearing and Deafblindness](#), strengthening coordination among European organisations representing persons with hearing and deafblind disabilities. The Platform provides a structured space for joint efforts, policy alignment, and exchange on EU developments, ensuring that communication accessibility and hearing-related priorities are reflected consistently within broader disability rights discussions.

Digital accessibility partnerships were strengthened through collaboration with the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** and the **European Commission** within the "Accessible Europe: ICT4ALL" event conference held on 2-3 December 2025 in Brussels, actively supported by EFHOH, as well as through engagement with the **European Emergency Number Association (EENA)** on accessible emergency communications. These collaborations reinforced EFHOH's efforts for stronger implementation of EU accessibility legislation and reliable access to 112 services.

Cooperation with the **European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA)** remained strong, particularly in advancing quality hearing care standards and employment inclusion. In May 2025, AEA held a Mini Symposium in Valletta, Malta, in collaboration with EFHOH and local associations, focusing on improving hearing care systems, promoting inclusive employment for people with hearing loss, and discussing the future of Telecoil technology during the transition toward Auracast™. Building on this cooperation, EFHOH, together with AEA and Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, conducted a multilingual European survey examining the impact of hearing loss in the workplace.

EFHOH is a partner of **Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ICT)**, working to advance digital accessibility and inclusive technologies for hard of hearing individuals. We are collaborating on Hearing Access and Inclusive Smart Cities.

Lastly, EFHOH is in advisory capacity 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.

Memorandum of Understanding

EFHOH has also signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\) with the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin \(KUL\)](#), which is one of Poland's leading academic institutions that has a strong tradition of research and teaching in accessibility and disability inclusion. 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, and collaboration in applying for external funding.

External Engagement

In 2025, EFHOH continued to strengthen its presence in key European and international forums, representing the perspectives of hard of hearing people in discussions on disability rights, accessibility, and social inclusion. Through participation in conferences, institutional meetings, and stakeholder dialogues, EFHOH contributed to knowledge exchange and policy discussions across multiple sectors.

Key external engagements included:

- **Zero Project Conference (March):** EFHOH representatives, including the President and General Secretary, [participated in the annual Zero Project Conference in Vienna](#). The conference is a global platform promoting innovative solutions for disability inclusion and brings together policymakers, organisations of persons with disabilities, researchers, and experts to exchange good practices and strengthen cooperation.
- **European Commission Disability Platform and Strategic Dialogues:** EFHOH participated in several meetings organised by the European Commission, including the Disability Platform and strategic dialogue discussions related to EU social and employment policies. These exchanges (March, June, October, December) addressed topics such as disability inclusion, employment, social economy initiatives, and the future priorities of EU programmes.
- **European Parliament and stakeholder events:** EFHOH attended several events at the European Parliament and with European stakeholders, including discussions on hearing health, mental health, and accessibility, as well as exchanges with disability organisations and policymakers.
- **Global Disability Summit (April):** EFHOH Treasurer attended the [Global Disability Summit 2025 in Berlin](#), alongside governments, NGOs, and civil society organisations from around the world.
- **European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) – Speech and Multimedia Transmission Quality Conference (May):** EFHOH President participated in the ETSI Speech and Multimedia Transmission Quality Conference: “Communication for All”, contributing to discussions on communication accessibility, audio quality standards, and inclusive digital communication technologies.
- **WHO–ITU Make Listening Safe Initiative (July):** [EFHOH participated in the WHO-ITU Make Listening Safe initiative 10th Anniversary event in Geneva](#). EFHOH President Lidia Best contributes to the initiative’s workstream as Co-Chair and member of the Steering Group, supporting global efforts on safe listening and hearing loss prevention (this participation was not funded by the EU).
- **CIICA Advocacy in Action (October 2025):** EFHOH secretariat and Board participated in the [annual conference organised by the Cochlear Implant International Community of Action \(CIICA\)](#) bringing together experts and

organisations to advance dialogue on hearing health, cochlear implant access, and inclusion of people with hearing loss.

- **EENA 112 Conference (December):** EFHOH has strengthened collaboration with the European Emergency Number Association 112. In December, EFHOH President participated in a [panel organised by EENA 112 in Brussels](#) during a multistakeholder event, ensuring hard of hearing people are part of planning for accessible 112.
- **AccessibleEU:** EFHOH also participated in several AccessibleEU events in Brussels dedicated to the implementation of the European Accessibility Act.

Communication

In 2025, EFHOH continued to strengthen its digital communication strategy, using social media and online platforms to collaborate for stronger legislation, promote hearing accessibility, and increase visibility of hard of hearing people's rights across Europe. Digital communication remains a key tool for campaign dissemination, public awareness, and engagement with policymakers and stakeholders.

A major milestone in 2025 was the launch of EFHOH's new website. The redesigned platform enhances accessibility, visual clarity, and user experience, providing a central hub for policy updates, official statements, research publications, campaign materials, and event information. The new website strengthens EFHOH's institutional visibility and supports transparent communication with members, partners, and EU stakeholders. We thank Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström and Kave Noori for their engagement in delivery of the website.

EFHOH continued active engagement across social media platforms with diverse audiences, including EU policymakers, professionals, members, youth, and grassroots advocates, which resulted in increased, strong visibility on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and X. In 2025, our social media outreach significantly increased across the platforms.

- Facebook: +94K Audience
- LinkedIn: +24K views Audience
- Instagram: +19K views Audience
- X (formerly Twitter): 9.4K Audience

EFHOH uses these platforms to share updates on activities, policy developments, campaigns, and organisational news:

- Facebook: Using EFHOH's [Facebook Page](#) to post updates and communications for members' information.
- X (formerly Twitter): Updating external audience on our [X account](#), @EFHOH.
- LinkedIn: Expanding our presence on the [LinkedIn page](#) to engage with members, EU policymakers, and professionals, sharing policy updates, events, and project developments.
- Instagram: Reaching younger audiences on our [Instagram page](#).

The EFHOH website serves as a key resource for policy updates, calls to action, and research publications. It provides access to official statements, reports, and event information, ensuring members and stakeholders stay informed.

In 2025, our website outreach shown significant increase:

- +24K page views
- +56K visitors
- 37 articles published

The monthly newsletter remained an important communication channel, delivering regular updates on policy developments, events, and strategic initiatives. Throughout 2025, ten editions were distributed to members and external stakeholders, further consolidating EFHOH's outreach and engagement at the European and international level.

Campaigns

Hearing Access Week

The [Hearing Access Week](#) is an annual initiative held during the second week of March. This campaign raises awareness about hearing accessibility and promotes inclusive spaces that enable hard of hearing and deafened individuals to fully participate in society. Building on the momentum of WHO's World Hearing Day (March 3), it strengthens EFHOH's collaboration efforts across Europe, engaging policymakers, organisations, and the public in discussions on accessibility and inclusion. EFHOH members have actively participated and followed by instituting their own national campaigns.

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.

The campaign "[Hands Off Our Telecoil](#)" was launched to speak up: Auracast™ is not ready yet, and Telecoils are still essential. For such, EFHOH urges manufacturers, policymakers, and professionals to adopt a balanced approach that ensures both telecoils and Auracast™ co-exist for the next 10-15 years.

Events

In 2025, EFHOH hosted and supported a series of 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.

- **[Virtual Lunch Debate \(March\)](#)**: EFHOH, in partnership with AEA and European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA), continued its tradition of hosting a Parliamentary Lunch Debate under the theme “Changing Mindsets”. Hosted by MEP Zala Tomašič, the virtual event brought together policymakers, industry representatives, and disability advocates to address the intersection between hearing loss, employment, and inclusive policy implementation.
- **[Rights in Focus: Addressing Inclusion of Hard of Hearing Europeans \(October\)](#)**: Hosted by MEP Katrin Langensiepen and co-organised with the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), the event was held at the European Parliament in Brussels bringing together policymakers, civil society organisations, professionals, and experts to discuss the inclusion of hard of hearing people through European-level policy action. Contributions from representatives of the European Commission, the European Disability Forum, academia, hearing health professionals, and EFHOH highlighted the need to strengthen employment inclusion, enforce disability rights legislation, and develop an EU Hearing Loss Strategy.

- **Accessible Europe: ICT4ALL (December):** EFHOH, together with Fundación Once, supported the Accessible Europe event in Brussels, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Office in Europe in cooperation with the European Commission. EFHOH President Lidia Best contributed to the panel on digital accessibility in Europe, highlighting the need for stronger national enforcement and practical implementation of accessibility standards.

Financial Report

This report gives an overview of the financial situation of the year 2025. In 2025, EFHOH reported a negative financial result. This outcome is because only 70% (€ 107.905,58) of the total EU Grant (€ 154.150,83) amount is pre-financed before the execution of the annual project. The remaining foreseen budget will only be received after the finishing of the reporting in 2026.

The first CERV Grant received by EFHOH in December 2024 should formally have been reported in 2025, but it was recognized as income in 2024. Conversely, the pre-financed CERV Grant received in December 2025 (€ 264.042,64) is intended for activities in 2026 and is therefore recorded as deferred income (amounts received in advance) rather than as income for 2025.

The balances of our accounts in ABN AMRO Bank in Netherlands and cash account were:

Current account:

40.21.25.576 € 269.542,64

Savings account:

40.21.30.642 € 21.539,23

Assets in the year 2025 € 291.081,87

EU Grant 2025 € 154.150,83

Pre-financed amount in 2025: € 107.905,58

EFHOH Treasurer, Darja Pajk provides support and financial advice to the board. Darja also works closely with President Lidia Best and accountant Koen Swaans.

INCOME 2025	
EU Commission Operating Grant 2025	EUR 107.905,58
Donors 2025	EUR 9.000,00
Membership Fees 2025	EUR 6.956,00
Other	EUR 3.100,00
Total	EUR 126.961,58

EXPENDITURE 2025	
EU Commission Operating Grant	EUR 178.703,24
- Personnel Costs	EUR 117.535,60
- Travel, accommodation, subsistence	EUR 21.268,09
- Other goods, works and services	EUR 39.899,55
Other projects and activities	EUR 4.272,26
Total with deductions	EUR 182.367,18

We deeply appreciate all contributions received. We rely on grants, donations (from individuals and corporations), as well as membership fees to fulfil our mission effectively.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the financial support provided by the European Commission and the donors Amplifon, Cochlear and MED-EL.

Please see detailed information in the Financial Report document for more information.

EFHOH Annual General Meeting (AGM)

On 26 April 2025, EFHOH held its [Annual General Meeting in Tallinn, Estonia](#), with 41 participants, including observers, in partnership with our member organisation Eesti Vaegkuuljate Liit.

Elections:

- Lidia Best (United Kingdom) was re-elected as President for a two-year term.
- Claire Landesmann (Austria) was re-elected as General Secretary for a two-year term.
- Darja Pajk (Slovenia) was re-elected as Treasurer for a two-year term.
- Petra Feinkohl was appointed as EFHOH's external institutional auditor.

Other key decisions:

- Introduction and approval of the Strategy 2026–2030, setting ambitious objectives for the next five years.

- Launch of EFHOH's new website.
- Adoption of the Tallinn Declaration (2025).
- Welcome of two new member organisations: Unga Hörselskadade (Sweden) and Associació Catalana per a la Promoció de les Persones Sordes (ACAPPS, Catalonia, Spain).
- Brussels, Belgium, was approved as the host city for AGM 2026.

Please see detailed information in the AGM Minutes document.

The AGM followed the conference “Achieving Equality for Hard of Hearing People” held on 25 April 2025 in Tallinn, Estonia, which gathered more than 100 participants. 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 People with Disabilities, Speech Recognition on Television and studies on spacial hearing related to Cochlear Implants.

Members, EFHOH Board, and Organisational Structure

EFHOH Organisational Structure



In 2024, EFHOH started transition from a volunteer-run structure to a professionally supported Secretariat, thanks to the EU Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme

funding. As the result, EFHOH Organisational Structure has changed with establishment of the Secretariat in Brussels with initial two staff member providing administration and communication support. We have also welcomed a Policy Intern.

The Board Members have been directly involved in the organisational change, working extra time to support secretariat and to oversee all transition changes.

Monthly management meetings have regularly taken place with diligent follow up of the operational grant implementation.

EFHOH appointed Local Knowledge in Brussels as the professional agent, supporting board in HR matters and business management.

In addition, EFHOH appointed an accountant Mr Koen Swaans to support organisation accounting procedures.

EFHOH Board

The following persons were members of the Board in the year 2025:

Role	Name	Country	Duration
President	Lidia Best	United Kingdom	2025-2027
Vice President	Morten Buan	Norway	2024-2026
General Secretary	Claire Landesmann	Austria	2025-2027
Treasurer	Darja Pajk	Slovenia	2025-2027
Board Member	Alf Lindeberg	Sweden	2024- 2026

Board Meetings

In 2025, the board of EFHOH held nine meetings, two of them in-person, and seven online.

Date	Location
16 January	Brussels, Belgium
27 February	Online
March	Online
24 April	Tallinn, Estonia
4 June	Online
6 July	Online
6 December	Brussels, Belgium

Secretariat Staff

In 2025, EFHOH's work was supported by a professional Secretariat based in Brussels, which played a key role in coordinating the organisation's advocacy, policy work, communications, and project implementation.

The Secretariat team included:

- Henrique Raskin, Project Manager and Head of Secretariat
- Lavinia Rotundi, stepping up from Policy Trainee to Advocacy Officer
- Derya Fikret, Project and Administration Officer (until August 2025)
- Giorgia Roccia, Communications Officer (until February 2025)

The Board would like to thank the Secretariat for their dedication and daily work supporting EFHOH's activities, coordinating with members, partners, and institutions, and contributing to the organisation's growing presence and impact at the European level.

Members

In 2025, EFHOH recorded 30 General Members, 2 Associate Members, and 4 individual members. EFHOH also has contact persons in countries where we do not have members yet.

Last words

Finally, Board Members wish to thank the European Union, donors (Amplifon, Cochlear, MED-EL), partners and close collaborators, individual persons, members, cooperating organisations and, finally, the sponsors who, in lots of different ways, have given support to EFHOH in the work to create a barrier-free Europe for all hard of hearing citizens.

United in Hearing Access for hard of hearing people in Europe

March 2026

EFHOH Board

Lidia Best, President

Morten Buan, Vice President

Darja Pajk, Treasurer

Claire Landesmann, General Secretary

Alf Lindberg, Board Member

ANNEX I

Member Organisations

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
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

COUNTRY	NAME
GERMANY	IVSS-CHURCHEAR
POLAND	KULTURA BEZ BARIER

ANNEX II

2025 Events Agenda

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
09 May	Policy Training (Board and Staff)
05 June	EFHOH Expert Groups Kick-Off Meeting
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)