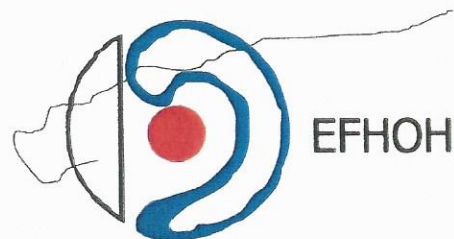


Essen Declaration 2015



European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

“Access to hearing aids is access to opportunity”

All persons have a right to equal opportunity in the world. For 51 million hard of hearing people in the European Union this right can be best fulfilled through state-funded provision of hearing aids and the proliferation of assistive listening devices (ALD). For these many millions of people, including children and youth access to hearing aids is access to opportunity.

On behalf of the 51 million Europeans with hearing loss¹, the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) Annual General Meeting in Essen, Germany is calling for all Member States to guarantee access to affordable, good quality, professionally approved hearing aids, ALD and the training and support standards to use them successfully. No one should be priced out of equal opportunity.

Access to Education and Employment: Hearing aids together with compatible assistive listening devices (ALD) provide cost effective access to education and further education, and as such to improved employment prospects. This is crucial to lowering unemployment levels among hard of hearing people.

Access to Rehabilitation: The use of hearing aids is also the most effective means of support provision for the majority of people who experience hearing loss. This is, however, reliant on certain standards being met. In its EU Standard (EN 15927) entitled ‘Services Offered by Hearing Aid Professionals’², the European standardization authority ANEC recognises that the process of providing a hearing aid must include rehabilitation. If this standard is not met then the hearing aid will not be effective, and the state and healthcare providers will incur further costs.

Access to an Independent Life: All governments have an obligation under **Article 5** of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities³ (UNCRPD) to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to lead full and independent lives. Hearing aids improve quality of life in all areas: communication, socialisation, education, employment, leisure, and ultimately inclusion in society. This combination of factors has proven implications for the positive wellbeing of those who experience a hearing loss.

Rationale: Approximately 10% of the population of the European Union has some sort of hearing loss. Research suggests that those with hearing difficulties are at much greater risk of exclusion from the labour market. This has a negative effect on individual lives, but also on national economies. For example, underemployment in those with hearing loss cost the UK economy an estimated £25bn (approx. €33.5bn) in 2013⁴. This vastly outweighs the cost of state-funded hearing aid provision.

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People, EFHOH

Marcel Bobeldijk
President

International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, IFHOH

Dr. Ruth Warick
President

International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People

Sidsel Munkebo Hansen
President

Kaj Birk Lang

AUSTRIA
Österreichischer
Schwerhörigenbund
ÖSB

BELGIUM
"Onder Ons"
Vereniging van en voor
volwassen
slechthorenden en
doofgewordenen

W. G. ...

BELGIUM
Hörgeschädigte
Östbelgiens VoG

Stamip

CZECH REPUBLIC
Svaz neslycicich a
Nedoslychavych v PR

...

CZECH REPUBLIC
Ceska Unie Neslycicich

...

DENMARK
Høreforeningen

Hilda Røge ...

Jani ...

FINLAND
Kuuloliitto r.y.

FINLAND
Svenska
hörselförbundet rf.

...

FRANCE
Bureau de Coordination
des Ass. de Devenus
Sourds et Malentendants
BUCODES

DARZERA

GERMANY
Deutscher
Schwerhörigen Bund
e.V.

Med ...

GERMANY
Deutsche Tinnitus-Liga
e.V.

Volker Albrecht

GERMANY
Internationaler Verband
für Schwerhörigen-
Seelsorge e.V.

...

HUNGARY
Siketek es Nagyothallok
Országos Szövetsége -
SINOSZ

...

IRELAND
Hearing Loss Ireland

Carol Robinson

NETHERLANDS
NVVS

...

SLOVENIA
Zveza Drustev Gluhih
in Naglusnih Slovenije

...

...

SWITZERLAND
Pro audito schweiz

UNITED KINGDOM
National Association of
Deafened People

UNITED KINGDOM
Action on Hearing Loss

SWEDEN
Hörselskadades
Riksförbund

...