EFHOH

Published by the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

Edited by Marcel Bobeldijk, president of EFHOH and Niels-Henrik M. Hansen.

Deadline for the next newsletter is February 15.th /2014.

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NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2013

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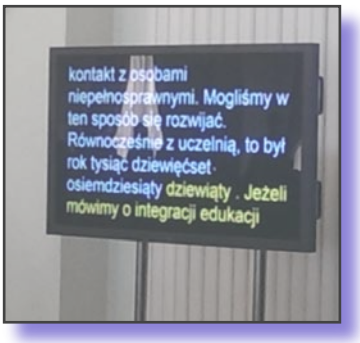

LIVE **SUBTITLES** IN POLAND

Read the news at p. 16

EFHOH

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

EFHOH **President** letter

Dear EFHOH friends,

In this edition we will inform, our members and EFHOH newsletter readers, about the news and what is happening at European level.

Eastbourne
At the beginning of October, Jan Lamby, Lidia Best and I were present at the Third Hearing Loops Conference in Eastbourne United Kingdom. EFHOH board says some words of thanks to the Board and all great volunteers of the host organisation Hearing Link for organizing the interesting conference in 2013. You can find an article about the conference in this issue.

Brussels.
During October our secretary Jan Lamby participated in different UN CRPD related meetings in Brussels. A report is provided in this EFHOH newsletter.

Jan Lamby and I have participated in the fall European Platform meeting. It was a very special platform meeting this time, we welcomed three new organizations to the platform:

- EUDY (European Union of the Deaf Youth)
- EDBU (European Deaf Blind Union)
- IFHOHYP (International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People

As EFHOH board we are very happy that also IFHOHYP secretary Astrid Fejro was able to participate in this platform meeting.

Lidia Best and I attended European Day of People with Disabilities on invitation from European Commission. This year conference theme was Accessible Tourism, Lidia was especially invited to conference as one of the members of EDF Expert Group on Tourism. You can read an article in this EFHOH newsletter.

London.
EFHOH board had at the first weekend in November their fall board meeting at the office of Action of Hearing Loss. Action on Hearing Loss will support EFHOH with an intern traineeship and EFHOH will move in the begin of 2014 their office to the Action on Hearing Loss office in London. We will inform you in the next EFHOH newsletter about the details and will introduce you to our trainee. At the last day of the EFHOH board members we had an interesting meeting with some people from London.

Vilnius
Within the European Disability Forum (EDF), I had my first EDF board meeting in Vilnius. And I am happy to inform you that our board member Lidia Best is elected in the EDF Women Committee and our candidate Sidsel Munkebo Hansen is elected in the EDF Youth Committee.

EFHOH is also present in the EDF expert groups (email based):

- Information &Communication Technologies (included subtitling) - board members Lidia Best and Marcel Bobeldijk and also by volunteer Arnoud van Wijk.
- Building environment - Jan Lamby
- Access to health & health stereotypes - Lidia Best
- Persons with disabilities requiring a high level of support -Lidia Best
- Accessible Tourism – Lidia Best

Late Deafened People.
EFHOH starts in the begin of 2014 with a new EFHOH workgroup for Late Deafened People. In this EFHOH newsletter can you find a call for members of this new EFHOH workgroup we hope that some late deafened people from different European Countries are interested to participate in this group.

IFHOH.
EFHOH board is very happy that IFHOH has signed a new version of the Memorandum of Agreement with the World Federation of the Deaf on October 18 2013. This agreement marks the good cooperation between the two organizations.

AGM 2014.
We hope to meet you in Jerusalem, Israel. At the EFHOH Annual General Meeting 2014, the theme of the conference day is "Overcoming Hearing Barriers".

EP Elections.
EFHOH board hope that you send our Prague Declaration 2013 to your candidates for the European Parliament elections of May 2014. See our website http://www. efhoh.org for more information about the Prague Declaration 2013.

Twitter.
Do you know that you also can follow EFHOH and also some EFHOH board members, the addresses are:

EFHOH	@efhoh
Marcel Bobeldijk	@marbob32
Lidia Best	@best_lidia

Of course you can also follow everything via our facebook page

Call for the next EFHOH newsletter, If you have an article for one of the five EFHOH newsletters that we will publish in 2014, please send it to us!. We make the EFHOH newsletter also for all the volunteers in your national and local organisation. You can sent your article to our editor Niels-Hendrik and his email address is nh@niels-hendrik.dk

Dear EFHOH friends, on behalf of the EFHOH board, I wish you all, together with your family and friends, a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2014!

See you in Jerusalem

Warm Regards,

Marcel Bobeldijk, President of EFHOH.

EFHOH 2013 Highlights

- NEW EUROPEAN UNION VOLUME LIMITS BUILDING NOISE LIMITATION IN MUSIC PLAYERS AND SOUND EQUIPMENT
- EFHOH BOARD MEETING 1-2 FEDRUARY, STOCKHOLM
- IFHOH BOARD MEETING 1-2 MARCH, HELSINKI
- EFHOH AGM 5-6 APRIL, PRAGUE
- EFHOH DECLARATION OF PRAGUE
- TWO NEW EFHOH MEMBERS
- EFHOH WEBSITE WITH A NEW FACE
- EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HEARING AWARENESS WEEK 8-10 APRIL, BRUSSELS
- EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DISABILITY INTERGROUP ABOUT EUROPEAN STUDY ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING 8 MAY, BRUSSELS
- IFHOHYP AGM 13 APRIL, STOCKHOLM
- EFHOH PRESIDENT ELECTED IN EDF BOARD 26 MAY, ATHENS
- FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF ARAB DEAF PERSONS 6-7 SEPTEMBER, TUNIS
- IFHOH BOARD MEETING 5 OCTOBER, EASTBOURNE UK
- LOOPS CONFERENCE 6-7 OCTOBER, EASTBOURNE UK
- UN CRPD CIVIEL SOCIETY MEETING 14 OCTOBER, BRUSSELS
- WORK FORUM ON THE IMPLEMENTATATION OF THE UN CRPD 24-25 OCTOBER, BRUSSELS
- EFHOH BOARD MEETING 1-2 NOVEMBER, LONDON
- EDF BOARD MEETING 15-16 NOVEMBER, VILNIUS
- EUROPEAN PLATFORM ON DEAFNESS , HARD OF HEARING AND DEAFBLINDNESS MEETINGS, BRUSSELS.
- EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 3-5 DECEMBER, BRUSSELS
- 425 FRIENDS AT FACEBOOK
- PUBLISH DIFFERENT EFHOH NEWSLETTERS

Prague **Declaration**

In April 2013, EFHOH held it's AGM in Prague.

An initiative from our General Member and host SNNCR was presented to all delegates who attended. The initiative was to have a Declaration, similar to Brussels Declaration, making a call to all Member States of European Union to respect and protect the Human Rights of Hard of Hearing and Deafened people. Our Human Rights were clearly stated in Article 9 of UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

What happened next? Has it been forgotten by all? Did it have any impact?

EFHOH has received encouraging news from DSB in Germany; they forwarded Prague Declaration to all Ministers and Parliamentarians.

Second good news came from the UK. Prague Declaration formed part of a report from a social platform lobby of deaf and hard of hearing people, working towards better access for all who need it. http://pardongroup.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/state-of-communication-support-for-deaf-people-in-the-uk-3rd-september.pdf

The Declaration was also mentioned in the UK Parliament, during Parliamentary Questions.

The Minister for Health declared that the new guidance to health professionals on access to communication support will now be issued. This will mean improved access for deafened and hard of hearing people.

So, what is really Prague Declaration and how it can be used?

It is a tool which is available to all hard of hearing and deafened people in Europe. You can use it in the way that works for you and your country. You can use it as part of guidance, response to consultation or by sending it to relevant Ministers and Government Departments.

As you can see, it is most effective use is in lobbying and I encourage you all to use it as an important tool in your arsenal for any points you need to raise with decision makers in your country.

We urge you all to use it during European Elections Campaign in your country, get the hard of hearing and deafened people needs to be more visible and understood.

Please share with us your news, updates and positive influence of Prague Declaration 2013.

The focus of most speakers is still mainly on "how we can arrange more hearing loops?

Accordingly, for best results expensive orthogonal loops are frequently constructed providing optimal speech understanding in all corners of the conference room to suit several hundred of hard of hearing people. This is the case when we all together have a conference as here or we mass ally visit a theater.

These theatres fill a need for several decades with one and the same loop system, how efficient and cost effective!. In each country there are several hundreds or even thousands available, but the frequency of really using the loop system is not known. For realistic estimation about the need of loops, the total number of hearing impaired person in a country gives no reliable estimate, because many hearing impaired persons are aged and these rarely visit a conference room or a theatre.

Visiting a theatre or a conference is no daily practice for us because we usually work hard and at evening we are tired. We urgently need assistive listening at work or other daily activities and for social meetings. Most often you are the only individual who is hard of hearing and you visit is only infrequently. So, all together there is usually only a need

Report
Loops Conference 2013

By Piere Demacker (the Netherlands)

for assistive listening for a few times a months. In that case a small loop covering a part of the floor suffices. This is a classically and cost effective solution and this was the preference for our predecessors before the second world war already. A mobile loop system can also be a solution. In locations where a loop is constructed on the request of an individual, the loops over time often run out of service when the individual moves or develops another activity pattern. This surely calls for more use of mobile loops or for use of loose transmitters/receivers.

In the case of infrequent use, the responsive technician loses the necessary expertise and interest. The loop is still there, but is no longer functional or suboptimal regarding sound. In that case, you better learn to self-control the equipment. Therefore come a little earlier than the agreed time. Alternatively bring a solo set with..

So far I have only talked about loops with a single microphone.

However, in discussions there are often many speakers with only one or two hearing-impaired listeners. Which is the reverse of the situation above? Then you will not get there with a simple loop or a transmitter / receiver solo set. Each speaker is obliged, for optimum signal to noise ratio, to speak into a microphone. It is problematic to reach the single available microphone each time to the next speaker.

In a work situation, you cannot expect this from your colleagues. In that case there is a need for more (wireless) microphones that are in close proximity. Multiple microphones such as in a conference room than are ideal if a small loop is linked to it which you can put around a single chair. (Or a transmitter with receiver).

In short, we have to plead not for more but for more functional loops under the care of interested administrators. If we go for customization, you rapidly get payment of the munipalicity and you keep the administrator interested and cooperative: a win win situation. This of course requires that you self are assertive. Address to the management any absence or defect. Does this preferably prior to the start of the meeting rather than at the end, only then it can be made? This produces positive energy.

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WIDEX®

HIGH DEFINITION HEARING

Call for candidates!

EFHOH LATE DEAFENED PEOPLE **COMMITTEE**

EFHOH recognize that deafened people have specific barriers to overcome and would like to support the efforts of our members in this area.

Therefore the EFHOH Board has made a decision during Board Meeting in London in November 2013 to set up "Late Deafened People Committee". The Committee will start it's work from beginning of February 2014.

Our Board Member, Lidia Best is tasked with setting up the Committee. The aims:

- To advise EFHOH Board in how current policies affect deafened people in Europe.
- What is needed to increase profile of the deafened people?
- Further strategy for strengthening links between deafened organizations / groups in Europe.

We would like to see two contact persons from each organization which will wish to propose candidates.
If you would like to join the Committee, which will be email based please contact Lidia Best via email at smolarek-best@hotmail.co.uk

DEAFNESS...IS A GAME OF **GUESS**

by Hannie

Where are my glasses, I cant hear
My ears are wonderful things, and together
With signs and lipreading we get pretty far
But at other times ..
Perception can be a faded show
And often miraculous though
Eyes are miracles
And our other sense scan perceive
The world around us
Sometimes your neck is out of position
And your eyes tired of looking
My balance
Is a challenge
Sometimes you think you will fall
Though it is merely a mirror that calls one
On the pavement one can slide
And sitting in a train in the station
The other train seems to dance
Language feeding
By lip reading
Guessing, filling in puzzles
In the head,
Miscommunication
Guessing syllables for the nation
Its wonderful
To be taking part of the world
And participating
By sharing, observing,
Mimicry and sign language
It is a challenge
Guessing sense, smell
Witch or bitch,
Love or sandwich
Process of hearing loss
Learning
Accepting
Control
Isolation
Surrounded by the world

Like many people with hearing problems, I frequently experience "ignorance of environment," including in my work place, healthcare community, and sometimes even in my family. I believe the main reason for this behaviour is a lack of education about appropriate communication and understanding the special needs of people with hearing loss.

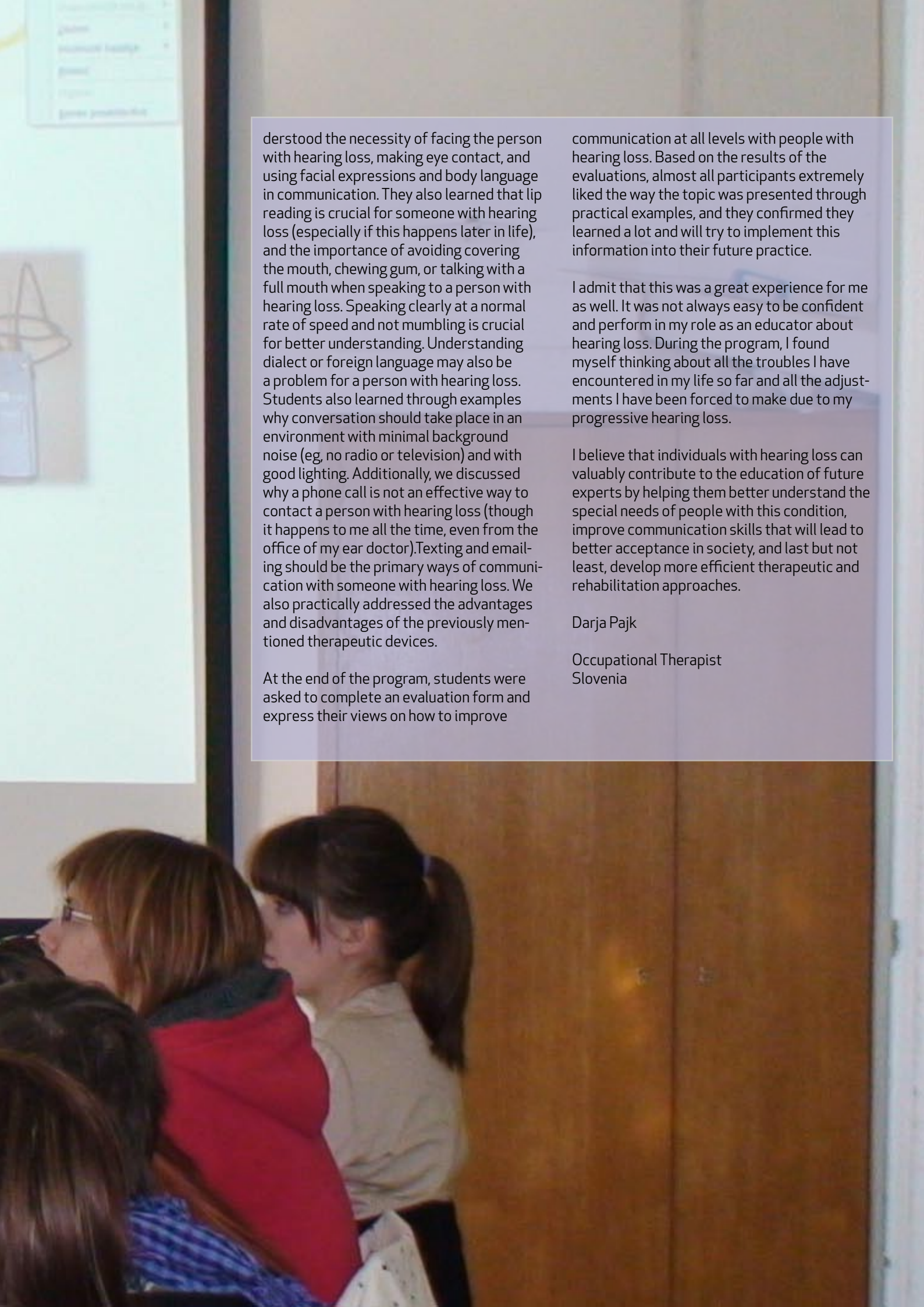
This educational need was recently recognized at the Teaching University in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and in the past year, I had the privilege to be involved in teaching occupational therapy and speech and language therapy students about hearing loss and the importance of proper communication with those who suffer from this condition.

The teaching program included theoretical and practical components. During the theoretical portion, students became familiar with the role of the auditory channel, transmission of sound, main causes of hearing loss, and the impact that hearing loss can have on daily life. I explained and demonstrated devices available to improve the lives of people with hearing loss, including alerting devices, induction loops, and different types of hearing aids. The role of novel treatment strategies, such as cochlear implants, was also discussed. I also explained, based on my own experience, how technical devices sometimes do not work as advertised, and even more importantly, how our society is often not aware of devices that may be helpful for normal functioning of people with hearing loss in the community (eg, induction loops at work or public places).

During the practical portion, we put theory into practice and engaged in different situations that people with hearing loss face daily in "the world of normal hearing people". Students played roles of different experts and tried to communicate with me, a person with severe hearing loss, in various situations. Through this exercise, students un-

Education of Students about Hearing Loss:

Communication is a **Key**



derstood the necessity of facing the person with hearing loss, making eye contact, and using facial expressions and body language in communication. They also learned that lip reading is crucial for someone with hearing loss (especially if this happens later in life), and the importance of avoiding covering the mouth, chewing gum, or talking with a full mouth when speaking to a person with hearing loss. Speaking clearly at a normal rate of speed and not mumbling is crucial for better understanding. Understanding dialect or foreign language may also be a problem for a person with hearing loss. Students also learned through examples why conversation should take place in an environment with minimal background noise (eg, no radio or television) and with good lighting. Additionally, we discussed why a phone call is not an effective way to contact a person with hearing loss (though it happens to me all the time, even from the office of my ear doctor).Texting and emailing should be the primary ways of communication with someone with hearing loss. We also practically addressed the advantages and disadvantages of the previously mentioned therapeutic devices.

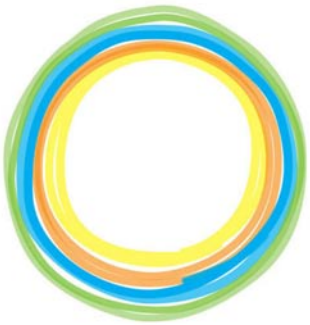
At the end of the program, students were asked to complete an evaluation form and express their views on how to improve communication at all levels with people with hearing loss. Based on the results of the evaluations, almost all participants extremely liked the way the topic was presented through practical examples, and they confirmed they learned a lot and will try to implement this information into their future practice.

I admit that this was a great experience for me as well. It was not always easy to be confident and perform in my role as an educator about hearing loss. During the program, I found myself thinking about all the troubles I have encountered in my life so far and all the adjustments I have been forced to make due to my progressive hearing loss.

I believe that individuals with hearing loss can valuably contribute to the education of future experts by helping them better understand the special needs of people with this condition, improve communication skills that will lead to better acceptance in society, and last but not least, develop more efficient therapeutic and rehabilitation approaches.

Darja Pajk

Occupational Therapist
Slovenia



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Telephone gives **freedom**

Blog: Wendelina Timmerman info@hooridee.nl
Translation: Hannie Huigsloot

I love to make direct phone calls
In the past I hired a telecommunications service for making phone calls.

It did not really work out that way. In this service Anita would reply the phone calls by using my company name.

She then sent the received information to me by email.
Then I knew who had phoned me, and about which subject.
When this was achieved, I dared to call them back, if I really had to.

It remained a gamble to know if the voice on the other end of the line would be audible and understandable, and if it was a real goal for me.

More than most it was a matter of bluff on the way and hard work to trace the red line of the conversation.

At the moment I can make my own telephone calls again myself

Now this is freedom.
This is independence.
It gives me pure power

Additional new techniques
My smartphone now is linked to Compilot by way of Blue Tooth.

The Compilot has been linked to my two hearing aids by the audicien.
If I phone you now, I can hear your voice inside the two hearing aids.

Two ears are capable of hearing more information than just the one.

I am still every day very much impressed and inspired by awe that this has become possible.

The quality of sound is unique
People always ask me how is it possible that I can make phone calls with my hearing loss. I explain how it is operated and how it results. This renders fascinating feedback. Sometimes the other person on the line says: " I hear an echo on the phone' and then I turn the volume down a bit.

Making phone calls is like dancing on the thin line
The communication is most efficient if I pick up the name of the caller and the subject very quickly.

It is important I check if I heard all well.

I am very happy now because this new technique works wonders.

Direct and quick
I have my own business, so it is important for me to be able to discuss matters with the business partners directly.
I can be very efficient then.

Ergonomic changes to work place.
These additional solutions are called accessories.
You find them in all sorts and sizes.

Check for example at http://www.comfortaudio.com/

If you wish, I can think along with you to try and find fitting alternatives.

In Holland very clear rules exist before the purchase of a technical resource.

Which alternatives do you know? Which do you apply?

I **believe** in kindness and evolving

By Duong Phuong Hanh, Director of Center for Research and Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CED), General Secretary of International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH), President of Asia Pacific Federation of the Hard of Hearing and Deafened (APFHD)

I could not believe it when I received 600 used hearing aids, most of which were from EFHOH Board and few from Deaf Rave of England. IFHOH Board kindly contributed to shipping costs. This kind support means the poor Vietnamese children with hearing loss will now be able to improve their hearing. Particularly appreciated the patience of the EFHOH Board and, especially Ms. Lidia Smolarek Best.
It wasn't easy getting these hearing aids into Vietnam. When I attended the recent IFHOH Board meeting in UK, I visited the Embassy of Vietnam in the UK and asked if they could help me. The Embassy was very friendly and came up with a solution. With their advice, I carried the parcel back Vietnam as hand luggage. On behalf of the poor children with hearing loss and their families, I greatly appreciated EFHOH Board, IFHOH Board and friends from Deaf Rave who carried the parcel to the Embassy and London Gatwick airport.

After calling applicants for the 600 used hearing aids on CED's website and facebook, CED received 554 applications with 53 from HCMC, 317 from the School for Children with Disabilities in BenTre City and 187 from the School for the Deaf in Vung Tau City. These hearing aids are being put to good use and with help some poor Vietnamese children to hear better and integrate with their community. I believe in evolving.
But the demand
is higher than the supply, CED needs to source more used hearing aids to meet demand. However a big problem for CED is we don't have an audiometer so we depend on a commercial company to testing and fixing used hearing aids. As their priority is not testing and fixing used hearing aids for the poor, one month has elapsed but testing is not been finished. Children and their families desperately want these hearing aids as it would make a big difference to the quality of their lives.

What CED needs desperately to have its own audiometer so we can quickly turn around used hearing aids. The cost of setting up audiometer testing is a lot of money for CED and beyond our resource but I strongly believe in CED's mission which is *"Everything is possible."*

7 th. episode :

Ory and His **New** Hearing **Machine**

The red cell phone

Ory has cought a cold. He's got a terrible headache with a high fever and he needs to see a doctor. He's all alone, because his family have gone away for a few days. Sitting in front of his laptop, he's looking for the doctor's phone number. But what can he do with that number? He's deaf; he can't phone. He hasn't used the phone for years. He even can't remember how easy it was in the past.
Of course, he knows that some of his friends do phone with their hearing machine, it seems possible.
"But not for me, I'm too sick, too angry, too worried, too … everything", said Ory to himself.

Ory tries to sleep a little, but his headache is really awful. He takes his new red cell phone with an apple and he dials the doctor's number.
A voice says: "Maria Boro, can I help you ?"
Ory is so surprised to hear the voice that he cut off the connection. He dials the number again. The same voice : "Maria Boro, can I help you ?" Ory is paralysed, he only says : " I'm deaf. I can't hear you. I want to see the doctor. I'm ill." But immediately afterwards, he disconnects.

Ory feels bad, ashamed.
His red cell phone rings, a SMS from his son. HEY DAD ARE YOU ILL? DOCTOR PHONED US. YOU CAN GO AT 3 O CLOCK BYE DAD
Ory answers : HEADACHE OK THANKS
Ory makes a new resolution; he will learn to call his children to communicate again.

A week later in EFHOH news, Ory reads an article about the HeEro project (Harmonised eCall European Pilot), a EU-wide eCall, based on the common European emergency number 112.

That's a good idea, he will explain to all his friends that a mobile phone is not only used to call but they also can send SMS to 112 emergency.

On the screen of his red mobile phone Ory sees a big smile. It is his smile that is reflected in the mirror of the screen.

Aisa Cleyet-Marel (France)

Accessible tourism in the heart of this year's **European Day** of People with Disabilities

Tourism is an important source of growth for the economy in Europe, representing today 1.8 million businesses and approximately 9.7 million jobs. However, travelling can still be a real challenge for some people as finding the information on services, checking luggage on a plane, booking an accessible room often prove to be difficult, costly and time consuming.

In the frame of the European Day of People with Disabilities, the European Commission in close cooperation with the European Disability Forum (EDF), organised a conference on "Accessible Tourism in Europe" on 3-4 December 2013. The conference welcomed around 500 participants with the aim to raise awareness on the right of everybody to have equal access to tourism services and destinations and to present some success stories and best practices in the field.

The conference was part of the EU's wider efforts to promote the mainstreaming of disability issues in line with the EU Disability Strategy 2010-2020 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).

The first day of the conference focused on the accessibility for tourists and residents from the users' perspective showing examples of good practices of Tourism for All, and possible solutions for the obstacles most frequently encountered.
The second day of the conference covered the practical, political and economic aspects of these issues, focusing on how to overcome barriers that are limiting the potential of a more open Europe to international tourism and benefit from the tourism industry.

As in the previous years, the winning city of the Access City Award for 2014 was announced at a special ceremony at the end of the first day of the conference and it was Gothenburg (Sweden). The second prize of the Access City Award went to Grenoble (France) and the third to Poznan (Poland) .

More information is available on the European Commission's website

Marcia Dugan **Memorial Grant** - IFHOH Biennial Conference 2014

The Board of IFHOH is accepting applications for a Marcia Dugan Fund Fellowship for one hard of hearing person to attend 2014 IFHOH Biennial Conference in Jersusalem, Israel April 5-7, 2014. The Fellowship will be up to a maximum of 1,500 Euros. Expenses in exceeding this amount will be the responsibility of the individual.

Who is eligible as a candidate?
Any hard of hearing person, regardless of age from a developing country who demonstrates an interest in working with hard of hearing people and who are currently involved with hearing loss issues and provides proof of eligibility to obtain a VISA for travel. Preference will be given to individuals from IFHOH member countries.

The applicant must have demonstrated an interest in remaining actively involved with hearing loss issues and must have indicated that a grant would enable his/her attendance at the IFHOH Biennial Conference. An article from the candidate is expected following the Conference. Willingness to have his or her name publicized in receiving the award will be a condition.

Submission date:
Nominations may be emailed to general.secretary@ifhoh.org by January 5, 2014.

Grant announcement:
The selection of the fellowship recipient will be announced by mid-February, 2014.

Grant awardees will be formally introduced during the Congress. IFHOH reserves the right to freely publish the name and photograph of grant winners.

For more information, contact by email general.secretary@ifhoh.org.

Live **Subtitles** in Poland

Live release of subtitles is a breakthrough in availability of conferences and cultural events for people with hearing disabilities. Now implementation of this technology is possible in Poland. Nearly one million people in Poland suffer from serious problems with hearing , with almost 25% people over 65 experiencing such difficulties. For every d/Deaf person, who prefers translation to sign language, there are ten people with hearing difficulties or full disability. Therefore not only sign language interpreter should be used, but also other solutions should be applied, such as an induction loop — useful for hearing aid device users— and live subtitles (simultaneous transmission of text -STT). STT role is to display the course of current event in real time (or almost real time) on the screen in written form. It is especially important in contexts where comprehension is a priority, e.g. during debates, conferences and lectures. The subtitles are created by speech recognition software, operated by respeakers who repeat what is spoken and correct on the fly text as recognized by the program. This method of live subtitling is similar to simultaneous interpretation, but within the Polish language —it can be understood as translation of a spoken language to a written one. Unlike cinema or theater, these subtitles are created on the fly.

This solution is very popular in the UK and other countries. Subtitles for e.g. BBC live programs are based on respeaking. In the future, it will probably be used also in the Polish television.
In 2013, live subtitles were tested during two conferences: in Polish Parliament (June) and at the President's Palace (September). They were also tested in live online broadcast. It was confirmed that the task is technically possible and the quality is suitable for conference purposes.

The requirement to provide live subtitles during live broadcasts was not introduced in Polish regulations defining the required availability of websites of entities realizing public tasks due to technological reasons, despite the fact that they are defined in international standards (WCAG 2.0. AA). Until recently, there was no voice recognition software that would be advanced enough for this task. However, such programs now exist, as well as respeakers who are able to create subtitles in real time. Therefore, if we want our events to be accessible to people with hearing disabilities, enabling them to freely participate in the discussion, such software is worth using.

Participants of the project include The Visible Foundation, Dostępni.eu, Polish Foundation for Hard of Hearing People, and IT Department of Polish Parliament. We work with Polish program Magic Scribe developed by Unikkon Integral. More information about the progress and the organization of accessible events is available in the film made by the Dostępni.eu website (version with Polish subtitles and Polish sign language translation).
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6cclCx27rc

For more information, contact:
Monika Szczygielska
monika@widzialni.org

International Congress of Late and Sudden Deafened, March 2014 in the Netherlands

STICHTING PLOTSDOVEN
VOOR PLOTS- EN LAATDOVEN

In March 2014 the Foundation for the Sudden Deaf will celebrate its 25th birthday. A choicely moment to bring the target group and their interests to the attention of the public at large. The foundation will realise this in several ways, in particular by organising an international symposium in March 2014.

The Foundation supports the interests of people who have suddenly or gradually became deaf. Losing one´s sense of hearing suddenly or in a relatively short span of time is a traumatic experience. This deafness has far reaching effects on multiple aspects of life. All that was once a matter of course, is now being hampered by communication problems. It is as if one´s world collapses, sometimes described as´ living under a glass bell´. Many of these people become isolated.

The Foundation supports their interests, encourages contact between members, emphasises the possibilities still existing, provides information, support and diversion. It is estimated that there are 9000 people in The Netherlands that have become deaf suddenly or in a relatively short span of time. Sudden loss of the sense of hearing can in principle befall to anybody at any age. Known causes are meningitis, a brain tumour, a traffic accident and a fall from a staircase. Often, however, the cause of sudden deafness is not known.

The activities of the Foundation are ever increasing. More and more people with sudden loss of hearing find their way to the Foundation and become a member. At the time of its 25th anniversary, the Foundation will make an effort to make itself known to the public at large, emphasising the nature of the deficiency and the consequences for those who suddenly have lost their sense of hearing.

When talking to people, it is evident that many of us know somebody with impaired hearing. For most people, however, sudden deafness is an unknown phenomenon and an invisible handicap. We hope that this activity will contribute to prevent those who are effected from becoming isolated as a result of ignorance and lack of understanding.

In the media, much attention will be given to the work of the Foundation during the anniversary year. Extra effort will be made to stimulate scientific research and bring this to the attention of the public. In particular, the Foundation for the Sudden Deaf will focus its efforts on the three-day international symposium, which will be held on **March 27, 28 and 29, 2014**.

The symposium will be accessible for all.
One can register for the symposium via our website www.stichtingplotsdoven.nl
Contact : congres2014@stichtingplotsdoven.nl.

By Janice Schacter Lintz , Chair of the Hearing Access Program

How can **Hotels and Resorts** Provide **Effective Access** for People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing?

According to Johns Hopkins researchers, approximately 48 million Americans report some degree of hearing loss. Since communication needs differ, these forms of communication access should be available:

1- Assistive listening system/devices
2- CART (realtime captioning) and qualified interpreters upon request

Service Desks such as Registration, Concierge, and Restaurant Check-In

An induction loop should be installed at these locations. This allows a person with a telecoil-equipped hearing aid/cochlear implant (HA/CI) to understand someone speaking into the microphone by simply switching the HA/CI to the T-coil setting.

A TTY (Text Telephone) should be available at the front desk.

Rooms

- Visual Smoke Alarms and Door Alerts

Portable auditory and visual smoke alarms and door knock alerts should be available.

- Televisions with Closed Captioning and an Assistive Listening System

Televisions with screens larger than 13" are required to have built-in captioning. The remote control should have an easy-to-locate closed captioning button.

An assistive listening system should be available for the television. This will also benefit guests in adjacent rooms, since otherwise, people with hearing loss may raise the TV volume to a disturbing level.

- HA/CI-Compatible Telephones

Hotel phones should be HA/CI-compatible and have volume control. TTYs should be available.

- Conference Rooms

An assistive listening system should be available for conference rooms.

- Service animals

Service animals, including hearing dogs, must be permitted without extra charge or conditions.

- Training

An ongoing training program for hotel personnel is needed so that they are aware of communication access provisions.

- Monitoring

Access equipment should be tested at regular intervals

- Publicizing Access

Access information and symbols should be posted at the front desk. Symbols can be found at:

http://www.gag.org/resources/das.php

The phrase "neck loop available" (for FM and infrared assistive listening systems) or "T-coil compatible" (for loop assistive listening systems) should be included under the assistive listening symbol. An alternative T-coil compatible symbol is at www.hearingloop.org.

Access symbols should be displayed in brochures, mailings, advertisements, and on the website. Access information should be located by going to "Visit Us" and then to a section on "Access" or "Accessibility."

UN CRPD and the **European Union**

By Jan Lamby

I hope most of you who are reading this are aware of that the EU itself has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in short the CRPD. Although the optional protocol is not ratified. Like every state that ratify the convention, the EU has to deliver a report to the UN Committee at certain intervals. The European Commission is now preparing the Union's first report to be released during 2014.
The report involves a certain amount of resources, personal as well as collection of data. The EU decided not to create an independent body to do this. Instead they use what is called the EU Framework: A group of people representing the main EU bodies: European Commission; European Parliament Petitions Committee; the European Ombudsman, European Disability Forum, EDF; and the Fundamental Rights Agency, FRA. EDF will be the chair of this group for two years.

One of the steps taken was to invite stakeholders to a Work Forum. The first was held in the end of October, with several representatives of the disability movement at European level.

In the Work Forum there were presentations from those who had experience; representatives from some of the states that already have done this kind of work. Example Austria, who prepared their report in 2012 and Spain.
From Sweden came a representative of the Swedish government to present the plan for their first country report which will be published next year. Sweden is among a group of three that are in focus for a special surveillance from the UN Committee.

We had input from some of the staff at the UN Committee Secretariat in Geneva. We learnt about their experience so far; how the implementation process runs from their point of view.

One important issue is what they called: "The individual communication procedure under the Optional Protocol to the UN CRPD". This is about what to do when you as an individual citizen in a country that has ratified the Optional Protocol, think you have been discriminated in such a way that it violates the convention. We were told under which circumstances the committee can act and deal with a complaint. A crucial steps in this procedure: To "exhaust" all possible means at national level before issuing your complaint etc. Interested in the work of the Committee? Try the link http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndexOld.aspx.

In almost every state that has prepared an implementation report, the disability movement has issued their shadow report or alternative report. Also in the EU the EDF will do this. On October 14 they held what they called a Civil Society meeting to collect the opinions of their members and other representatives of Disabled Persons Organisations, DPOs. The shadow report follows the time schedule of the official report closely. A draft will be published in the beginning of 2014; revised during a second meeting and finally approved by the members at the EDF AGA in May.

So what do we think about the UN CRPD when looking to areas that are important for the hard of hearing people?

One main area is the impact on the legislation, regulations etc. So far we haven't seen much of impact, some of the regulations abut public transport were issued before the ratification of the Convention. A second area is the implementation in the EU institutions like the European Parliament, the European Commission. How is the accessibility there? Do they have hearing loops in the meeting rooms? Speech-to-text service/reporting (STTR)? As far as EFHOH knows, many of the meeting rooms in the EP can be equipped with hearing loops at request. For the STTR we have no clear picture.

The most accessible meetings are held by the Greens = the Green Parties in the EP; they have provided STTR during several event and seminars.

Except for buildings in general I think you can say the field of culture and education are the most neglected areas to hard of hearing people. One example: The lack of accessibility reduces the possibility for hard of hearing students to join the Erasmus exchange program in Europe.

Another issue that is very important is the access to the 112 emergency number. For many hard of hearing and deaf people it's crucial to be able to reach the 112 in other channels than a voice call. It can be a SMS; via your smartphone/ as a video call. Some states have introduced this possibility, whereas other have not. Here we need continuous pressure from the EU level.

>>> MEDIA RELEASE

THE DISABILITY MOVEMENT CALLS FOR AN INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Vilnius, 16-17 November 2013 | The disability movement met this weekend in Vilnius, Lithuania gathering together representatives of its member organisations all around Europe, as well as representatives of the Lithuanian Republic and European institutions. On the first day of the Board meeting, a European conference took place focusing on: 'Disability and sustainable development. A perspective from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

Opening the conference, **Dovilé Juodkaité**, President of the Lithuanian Forum for the Disabled welcomed this event as the only one focusing on the rights of persons with disabilities within the three pillars: social, economic and environmental of sustainable development and in the frame of the programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU.

EDF President, **Yannis Vardakastanis**, underlined the importance of inclusive development. "It gets more and more understandable that inclusive development cannot be considered as such, unless it takes into account and on board persons with disabilities. Development that does not include persons with disabilities is a direct violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). Development should affect every citizen in society without any exclusion or discrimination", said **Yannis Vardakastanis**.

"Persons with disabilities still face social exclusion. In order to avoid that, we have to provide them with proper and adequate provisions, so that they become equal citizens in our societies with access to all spheres of life. When we talk about Millennium Development Goals, we have to include persons with disabilities with particular attention to women with disabilities. Lithuania is doing its very best to implement the UN CRPD fully. Despite the crisis, we have to find new ways to fight and work towards the integration of persons with disabilities. We have to use the structural funds of the EU in an efficient manner", stressed **Algimanta Pabedinskiene.**

> WE ARE ACTIVE CITIZENS

In the frame of 2013 European Year of Citizens, EDF Board adopted a statement calling on the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and all EU Member States **to involve persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in all decision making processes** at all levels.

> HOW MUCH MORE BEFORE A EUROPEAN ACCESSIBILITY ACT?

During its Board meeting, the disability movement also adopted a resolution on the European Accessibility Act pushing among others for:

- a strong binding legislation with a holistic and broad approach to cover as many services and goods as possible
- links with international and EU standards as tools to guarantee accessibility
- a proposal that will be future proof by focusing on areas of action
- the need to cover both goods and services and their built environment aspects

EDF calls on the European Commission to live up to its commitment to 80 million citizens with disabilities and to present its legislative proposal of the Act before the end of the current term of the European Parliament.

Lila Sylviti | EDF Communication officer | lila.sylviti@edf-feph.org

EASPD
IMPROVING SERVICES
IMPROVING LIVES

Press Release **Istanbul, 29/09/2013**

EASPD conference in Istanbul, 27-28 September 2013

EASPD has just concluded its conference in Istanbul dedicated to the theme of employment. The conference, Employment of persons with disabilities - Raising awareness & employment opportunities, was opened by Commissioner Andor, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies of Turkey, representatives of the ILO and the Council of Europe, the President of the Assembly of European Regions and by EASPD's President Franz Wolfmayr.

The current state of play of employment for persons with disabilities is not easy and has been worsened by the economic crisis that has hit Europe in the last years.
In the last decade a strong movement fighting for mainstreaming set the basis for a revolution in employment schemes for persons with disabilities. Today we acknowledge that many efforts have been done to bring persons with disabilities to the labour market, however, the low success rate of people with disabilities employed shows that the efforts needed to achieve wider employment have been underestimated.

Franz Wolfmayr, President of EASPD, said that "today there are no more jobs in the open labour market than 15 years ago. This is both in terms of implementation of policies and of human rights enjoyment a failure. We call on action now to avoid further loss in economic and societal added value".

The creation of job potential for both employers and employees with disabilities is a complex but not impossible objective. There is a need for more efficient and concrete resources to organise trainings and reduce the gap between the learning path and the professional environment. Stable funding and legal frameworks are fundamental to boost employment and promote flexibility, mobility and therefore a wider spectrum of employment opportunities that fit the individual needs and skills needs to be available and easy to use.

During the conference an official award was given to the Institute for Social Services (IFS) of Austria with their project Spagat. The winner, as well as all participants of the award competition, proved that real working opportunities for persons with disabilities exist, provided the proper support and structures are put into place. For more information on the contest click here.

EASPD calls for stronger partnerships with all DPOs, with civil society stakeholders, with politicians and with the business world in order for each group to contribute within its field of specialty and ensure common objectives are reached. Iles of excellence exist, but more resources need to be allocated to make them common practice.
EASPD highlights once again the importance of collecting data on disability to create legislative frameworks and tools that fit the actual situation of persons with disabilities and calls on a stronger monitoring of the European Employment Directive.

Further information: Luk Zelderloo, Secretary General EASPD
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All our press releases can be downloaded from www.easpd.eu

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The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) promotes equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems in Europe. EASPD represents 10000 service provider organisations across Europe.

IFHOH Conference:

Overcoming Hearing Barriers

together with

IFHOH Biennial General Meeting (BGM),
EFHOH Annual General Meeting (AGM),

April 5-7, 2014

Jerusalem, Israel

Reminder to register

Dear member of IFHOH,
Dear member of EFHOH,

Registration is open to the above mentioned Conference, BGM and AGM.
Special **early bird low prices** is valid until the **end of December 2013**.
Space is limited. Secure your place.

Many HOH people from all over the world, delegates of national organizations, members of the management boards of IFHOH and EFHOH, are already registered.
Come and join us in these events.
You will also have an opportunity to visit and see the exciting city of Jerusalem.

Please add this message to your newsletter, send it to your friends and members in Email, put it on your website and on your Facebook pages.

Link to the invitation with all the details: http://goo.gl/EXrMiE
Link to the registration form: http://goo.gl/F8K6cK

Please write to: bgm.2014.ifhoh@gmail.com if you have any question about these events.
We will be very glad to help.

Thank you,

Avi Blau
Vice president of IFHOH
The conference organizing committee

EFHOH MEETINGS 2013 & 2014:

2013	**2013**	**2013**	**2013**
5 October	Eastbourne/UK	IFHOH board meeting	Marcel
6-7 October	Eastbourne/UK	3e International Loops Conference	Marcel, Lidia and Jan
24-25 October	Brussels	Work forum on the implementation of the UNCRPD	Jan
28 October	Brussels	Meeting with EHIMA. AEA, CabinetDN	Marcel
1-3 November	London/UK	EFHOH board meeting	All EFHOH board members
15-16 November	Vilnius / Lithuania	EDF board meeting	Knut and Marcel
27 November	Brussels / Belgium	Platform meeting	Jan and Marcel
3-5 December	Brussels / Belgium	European Disability Day theme: *"Accessibility for tourists and residents"*	Lidia and Marcel
2014	**2014**	**2014**	**2014**
4 and 5 April	Jerusalem / Israel	EFHOH AGM and IFHOH BGM	All EFHOH board members
May		EDF AGA	Marcel
10 and 11 October	Essen / Germany	EFHOH Board meeting	All board members
2015	**2015**	**2015**	**2015**
10-12 April	Essen / Germany	EFHOH Annual General Meeting (AGM)	All EFHOH board members
2016	**2016**	**2016**	**2016**
Spring	We look for candidates	EFHOH AGM	All EFHOH board members
23-26	Washington DC/USA	IFHOH World Congress	All EFHOH board members

Version: 19. September 2013

EFHOH - European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People consists of National Associations of/for Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened People, Parents' Organisations and Professional Organisations.

EFHOH comprises the European members of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH) and was established in 1993. It has its own board and secretariat. The federation has non-profitable and benevolent aims and it is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation. EFHOH is a general member of the European Disability Forum (EDF). We also work in good co-operation with IFHOH and our official language is English.

The Board members of the EFHOH carry out their work on an honorary basis.