



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Funded by
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OUR VISION, MISSION and OBJECTIVES

The **European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH)** exists to represent hard of hearing people at European level in dialogue with the European Union, the members of the European Parliament, and European authorities. Our aim is a Europe where hard of hearing people can live without barriers and can participate on all levels in society. We realize this vision through actions and campaigns, involving members, our partners and supporters.

OUR VISION:

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

OUR MISSION:

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

OUR OBJECTIVES:

To protect, promote and raise awareness on the rights of persons with hearing loss in Europe

Summary of the Report

This report provides an overview of the main achievements and activities of EFHOH in 2024, as well as the challenges and opportunities for the future, and includes efforts coming from:

- **Advocacy:** how EFHOH represented the interests and rights of hard of hearing people in Europe and beyond, through policy work, research, campaigns and events.
- **Capacity building:** how EFHOH supported its staff, members and volunteers to develop their skills, knowledge and competences, through training, mentoring and sharing of good practices.
- **Networking and partnerships:** how EFHOH fostered collaboration and exchange with other stakeholders, such as European institutions, NGOs, professionals and researchers.

- **Communication:** how EFHOH communicated its vision, mission and values to a wider audience, through social media, newsletters, publications and media relations.

The report also includes a financial statement, which shows the income and expenditure of EFHOH in 2024, 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 2024 and what are its plans and ambitions for the future.

Milestones

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People celebrated significant achievements in 2024.

Major accomplishments included:

- **European Union Operational Grant:** This grant comes from the European Commission's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Program. We would like to thank the European Commission for providing the organization with the funding which will enable EFHOH to plan for a sustainable future for years to come.
- **The establishment of a Secretariat in Brussels,** strengthening EFHOH's operational capacity.
- **Surveys and publications** on accessibility, healthcare, and policy implementation, providing valuable data for advocacy.
- **Position statements and policy outreach,** influencing EU disability rights discussions.
- **Successful webinars and training sessions,** equipping members and staff with the tools to advance the rights of hard of hearing people.

EFHOH YEAR IN ACTION

In 2024, EFHOH underwent a major organizational transformation, thanks to Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) funding. This shift moved EFHOH from a volunteer-led structure to a professionally supported organization with a staffed secretariat, enhancing efficiency and impact.

With the establishment of a virtual office in Brussels, EFHOH strengthened its engagement with the European institutions.

Thanks to the funding, key structural developments included the creation of a core leadership team, recruitment of essential staff, establishment of the Secretariat in

Brussels, and the formalization of governance frameworks, such as a Standard Operating Procedure, conflict of interest policies, and expert advisory groups, ensuring transparency and effectiveness.

In 2024, the EFHOH Board and its volunteers actively worked to raise awareness, strengthen relationships, and enhance communication with members and external partners. Board members participated in face-to-face and online meetings, conferences, and workshops, all with the goal of supporting the European hard of hearing community and increasing awareness at all levels of governance and society.

Additionally, CERV funding supported **capacity-building initiatives**, empowering members and volunteers through training and strategic networking. This report outlines these key changes, governance improvements, and EFHOH's strengthened role in advocating for hard of hearing people in Europe.

Throughout 2024, we have also continued to work closely with the Disability Platform and the European Disability Forum (EDF), who have been our great partner for many years. In support of our advocacy work, we have been in contact with several Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other relevant stakeholders.

EFHOH would like to thank our sponsors Cochlear, Medel and Amplifon for supporting our advocacy in 2024. We are proud of our work and grateful to all our members, partners, donors and friends who have supported us along the way. Together, we can make a difference for the hard of hearing community in Europe and beyond.

Advocacy

Position Statements and Policy Outreach

EFHOH expanded its policy engagement through **advocacy campaigns, strategic partnerships, and direct communication with EU institutions**. The organization published several position statements and contributed to high-level discussions on disability rights.

Key policy actions included:

- **Hearing Loss and Mental Health:** EFHOH emphasized the link between hearing care and mental well-being, advocating for better mental health support for hard of hearing individuals.
- **Quality of Hearing Care in Europe:** In collaboration with the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), EFHOH called for accessible and high-quality hearing care across the EU.

- **Auracast and Telecoils Position Statement:** EFHOH advocated for a balanced approach to assistive listening technologies, ensuring accessibility for all hearing aid and cochlear implant users.

EFHOH actively engaged and communicated with policymakers in Brussels, such as European Parliament President Roberta Metsola and Members of European Parliament (MEPs). EFHOH reached out to MEPs involved in disability rights for future collaborations and disseminated raising-awareness materials on hearing access.

EFHOH strengthened its collaboration with the European Commission through active participation in the **Disability Platform**, increasing engagement with EU policymakers and reinforcing the organization's influence on disability-related policies. By working closely with strategic dialogue partners and attending key advocacy events, EFHOH contributed to discussions on accessibility, inclusion, and the rights of hard of hearing people across Europe.

EFHOH members have played an active role in European Disability Forum's **Board, Youth and Women's Committee**, contributing to discussions on the specific challenges faced by young people and women with hearing loss. Additionally, EFHOH representatives have been engaged within EDF's board, ensuring that the interests of hard of hearing individuals are well represented in broader European disability policies.

The **AccessibleEU Centre** was launched in 2022 and aims to support the implementation of EU accessibility legislation by facilitating access to relevant knowledge, best practices, and resources. EFHOH works closely with the Centre and participates in the events, sharing good practice, that hard of hearing people inclusion is ensured in all areas of Centre work.

EFHOH is an active partner of the **World Hearing Forum**, a global network led by the World Health Organization to promote ear and hearing care worldwide. EFHOH contributes to policy discussions, awareness campaigns, and initiatives that support hearing accessibility and inclusion, such as the World Hearing Day and the Make Listening Safe Workstream.

In 2022, the EU Commission launched its **Disability Employment Package** to support Member States in ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy social inclusion and economic autonomy through employment. The Package is part of the ESRPD and is in line with the UN CRPD. EFHOH supports the package and informs the EU Commission on how well the right to work, and employment is realised in the EU for hard of hearing persons as well as which barriers remain.

Surveys and Publications

EFHOH strengthened its evidence-based advocacy 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 influencing policy and raising awareness among European decision-makers.

- [Accessibility to Healthcare Services for Hard of Hearing People in Europe](#)
- [Hard of Hearing Women in Europe](#)
- [Audiovisual Media Services Directive \(AVMSD\) Implementation in Europe](#)
- Membership Mapping Survey

These reports strengthened EFHOH's advocacy efforts and contributed to ongoing policy discussions in Brussels and across Europe.

Capacity Building

A crucial part of EFHOH's capacity-building strategy was the **delivery of training and webinars** to equip members, volunteers, and staff with the knowledge and tools to advance hearing accessibility.

Key training initiatives in 2024 included:

- **"Towards Union of Equality" Workshop (April):** Held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, as part of the Empowering Hard of Hearing Citizens (EHOHC) project. The session focused on the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ESRPD) 2021–2030 and its impact on the hard of hearing community.
- **UNCRPD Training on Alternative Reporting (September):** A partnership with EDF to train EFHOH members on **engaging with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) review process** and submitting alternative reports.
- **Three Members Meetings (March, July, October):** Providing members with updates, advocacy training, and networking opportunities.

EFHOH conducted **study visits to Italy and Spain**, enabling exchanges with organizations working in hearing loss field of expertise.

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.

On 28-29th November 2024, EFHOH participated in the **European Days of Persons with Disabilities 2024** in Brussels. The event, organized by the European Commission and the European Disability Forum, focused on the progress of the EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021–2030, marking the midpoint of its implementation. EFHOH President Lidia Best underlined the need for effective communication for people with hearing loss, stating: *“If we don’t have effective communication, we feel left out”*. She stressed the need for hearing loops and speech-to-text in public spaces to ensure full participation in public spaces.

In October 2024, EFHOH President Lidia Best attended **Apple Health Summit** at Apple HQ, Cupertino, USA. Presentations related to role of technology and innovation in Safe Listening, hearing access, heart conditions, mental health were part of the Summit. Lidia and Mark Laureyns, President of the European Hearing Aids Professionals Association (AEA), were also holding bilateral meetings related to hearing loss and prevention with staff at Apple.

In 2024 EFHOH met with **Google** in London to discuss hearing access features in **Google Maps** such as Auracast, Hearing Loops and Assistive Listening Systems.

EFHOH has strengthened its collaboration with **Mobile & Wireless Forum**, playing a key role in adding new features to their **Global Accessibility Reporting Initiative (GARI)** which supports consumer search for accessible features. During last review we added Safe Listening, Hearing Aids Compatibility and now Auracast features to database. Sabine Lobning, of Mobile and Wireless also supported EFHOH webinar on European Accessibility Act (EAA).

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.

EFHOH continues collaborating on standards and advocacy with **Accessible Europe** departments to ensure hard of hearing perspectives are part of the standards and developments.

The annual **Zero Project Conference** has become a unique global meeting place to innovate for disability inclusion. EFHOH Team, President, General Secretary and Youth

representative participated in Zero Project Conference “Inclusive Education ad ICTs”. EFHOH President moderated one of the panels on deaf education and our Youth representative, Paulina Lewandowska participated in a panel gathering Youth representation.

EFHOH and the **European Hearing Aids Professionals Association (AEA)** continue attending each other’s conferences. In Milan, both organisations launched [a joint position statement](#) advocating for quality hearing care, symbolising the unity between hearing care users and hearing care professionals.

Communication

EFHOH actively utilizes social media platforms to advocate for stronger legislation, promote assistive technologies, and engage with a wider audience. These platforms play a key role in campaign promotion, public education, and advocacy engagement, ensuring that the needs of the hard of hearing community remain visible.

Facebook: We continue using the [EFHOH Facebook Page](#) to post updates and communications for members’ information.

X (formerly Twitter): EFHOH continues to update our X account, [@EFHOH](#).

LinkedIn: EFHOH has launched a [LinkedIn page](#) to target members and EU policymakers. You can find us on LinkedIn here.

Instagram: EFHOH has also been updating younger audiences on [our Instagram](#).

Website & Newsletter:

The EFHOH website serves as a key resource for policy updates, advocacy efforts, and research publications. It provides access to official statements, reports, and event information, ensuring members and stakeholders stay informed. Website updates were carried out by EFHOH’s Communications Officer Giorgia Roccia, alongside volunteer Jonathan Elebjörk Wahlström.

Additionally, EFHOH’s monthly newsletter delivers key updates, event highlights, and advocacy insights, strengthening engagement with members and external audiences. In 2024, six editions of the newsletter were published and shared with members and wider audiences, with the support of Communications Officer Giorgia Roccia.

Campaigns

European Hearing Access Week Campaign:

A major highlight of EFHOH's communication efforts in 2024 was the launch of **European Hearing Access Week**, 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 advocacy efforts across Europe, engaging policymakers, organizations, and the public in discussions on accessibility and inclusion.

Webinars

In 2024, EFHOH organised a series of webinars that engaged a wide range of participants across Europe and beyond. The sessions covered critical topics such as assistive listening systems, the European Accessibility Act, and advancements in hearing access technology.

- **World Hearing Day 2024 – 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 Jaroslaw Duda (Poland), the virtual event emphasized the importance of hearing accessibility and inclusion at the policy level.
- **Zero Project Webinar (April):** In collaboration with Zero Project, EFHOH co-hosted a webinar highlighting opportunities for hard of hearing organizations and innovators to showcase impactful projects at the upcoming Zero Project Conference 2025.
- **European Accessibility Act (EAA) Webinar (September):** Addressing the impact of the EAA on accessibility for hard of hearing individuals and preparations for its implementation in 2025.
- **Assistive Listening Systems Webinar (September):** A deep dive into technologies supporting hearing accessibility, including hearing loops and other assistive devices.
- **Hearing Loops or Auracast? Why Not Both? (October):** Advocating for a dual approach to assistive listening technologies, bringing together experts and policymakers.
- **Experiences of Women with Hearing Loss Webinar (November):** Focusing on gender-specific challenges faced by hard of hearing women, based on EFHOH's survey findings.

Projects

EFHOH is one of partners of the **International Summer School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth Workers** ERASMUS Plus Project, which is coordinated by our member SUITA (Poland). Lidia Best and Claire Landesman took part in the project facilitation trainings in English Language in International advocacy and Teaching assertiveness for hard of hearing people.

EFHOH is a partner in the EASILY project, a groundbreaking study exploring the benefits and challenges of listening efforts in the workplace. With input from four universities, top hearing companies, and six doctoral researchers, EASILY aims to assess interventions that support better listening environments. EFHOH board members Claire Landesmann and Alf Lindberg represent EFHOH in the project, sharing insights on our work and on creating more inclusive workplaces.

Financial Report

This report gives an overview of the financial situation of the year 2024. We are pleased to share that EFHOH has had a positive financial result. The balances of our bank accounts in ABN AMRO Bank in Netherlands and cash account were:

Current account:	
40.21.25.576	€ 144.727,57

Savings account:	
40.21.30.642	€ 40.553,34

Assets in the year 2024	€ 185.280,91
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EU grant	€ 107.905,58
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EFHOH Treasurer, Darja Pajk provides support and financial advice to the board. Darja also works closely with the President and accountant Koen Swaans.

See detailed information in the Financial Report document for more information.

EFHOH Annual General Meeting (AGM)

EFHOH held its AGM 2024 on 19 April in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in partnership with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Clubs Association of Slovenia (ZDGNS).

Elections:

- Morten Buan (Norway) re-elected as Vice President.

- Alf Lindberg (Sweden) re-elected as Board Member.
- Asa Olsen (Faroe Islands) and Patrick Hennings (Germany) continue on the Nomination Committee, with Halla B. Thorkelsson (Iceland) pending confirmation.
- Petra Feinkohl elected as Auditor for 2025.

Other key decisions:

- A 10% membership fee increase for 2025 was approved.
- Tallinn, Estonia, was approved as the host city for AGM 2025, with *Employment and Noise Damage* as the topic.

See detailed information in the AGM Minutes document.

On April 20, EFHOH and ZDGNS hosted a conference titled “*Navigating Mental Health and Hearing Loss*”, which focused on the impact of hearing loss on mental health and inclusion. Speakers discussed gaps in rehabilitation, hearing health services, and mental health support, concluding with the *Changing Mindsets on Hearing Loss and Mental Health* call to action, signed by EFHOH, IFHOH, and ZDGNS.

Members, the EFHOH Board, and Organisational Structure

EFHOH Organisational Structure

EFHOH transitioned from a volunteer-run structure to a professionally supported Secretariat, thanks to CERV 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 2024:

Role	Name	Country	Duration
President	Lidia Best	United Kingdom	2023-2025
Vice President	Morten Buan	Norway	2024-2026
General Secretary	Claire Sabler Landesmann	Austria	2023-2025
Treasurer	Darja Pajk	Slovenia	2023-2025
Board Member	Alf Lindeberg	Sweden	2024- 2026

Board Meetings

In 2024, the board of EFHOH held nine meetings, two of them in-person, and seven online.

Date	Location
January 17	Online
March 1	Online
April 18	Ljubljana, Slovenia
May 5	Online
June 12	Online
August 6	Online
September 18	Online
October 30	Online
November 27	Brussels, Belgium

Members

EFHOH has 29 General Members, 2 Associate Members, and 3 individual members.

EFHOH also has contact persons in countries where we do not have members yet.

In 2024 EFHOH welcomed Unga Hörselskadade as a new member.

Last words

Finally, the board members want to thank everyone – partners, individual persons, members, member organizations, co-operating organizations and, finally, the sponsors who, in lots of different ways, have given support to EFHOH in the work to make a create a barrier-free Europe for all hard of hearing citizens.

United in Hearing Access for hard of hearing people in Europe

EFHOH Board

January

2025

Lidia Best,

Morten Buan,

Darja Pajk,

Alf Lindberg,

Claire Sabler Landesmann

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
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

2024 Events Agenda

March 5	Lunch Debate: “World Hearing Day 2024 — Changing Mindsets”
March 15	Members Meeting
April 12	Zero Project Webinar
April 19	EFHOH Annual General Meeting and Conference
April 20	“Towards Union of Equality” Workshop
July 2	Members Meeting
September 10	Assistive Listening Systems Webinar
September 19	European Accessibility Act - Are We There Yet?
September 25	UNCRPD Training
October 4	Members Meeting
October 30	Hearing Loops or Auracast? Why Not Both?
November 25	Experiences of Women with Hearing Loss: Make Our Issues Visible!