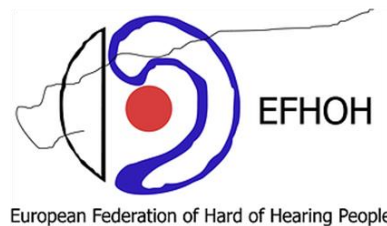


Hearing Awareness _ Lunch Debate

Professional Hearing Care Makes You Smarter and Healthier

European Parliament Brussels – 1st of March 2016

The 2nd joined AEA_EFHOH_EHIMA Hearing Awareness Event at the European Parliament
This time hosted by MEP Ádám Kósa (Hungary, EPP) and MEP Helga Stevens (Belgium, ECR)



MEP Ádám Kósa (Hungary, EPP) Welcome and introduction



MEP Kósa welcomed all and also referred to the Hearing Awareness Week that was organized in April 2013. A total of 225 people, MEPs and staff had their hearing checked during the initiative which attracted wide interest on all three days. "90% of all ears showed normal audiograms, and 10% had a hearing loss of more than 25dB.

Shelly Chadha (WHO Hearing Officer)



Why “Get Smarter & Healthier through Professional Hearing Care” is important for young children

The importance of early detection of hearing loss followed by early intervention with hearing care is very important both for young children as for adults.

The WHO World Hearing Day – 3rd of March - theme this year is “CHILDHOOD HEARING LOSS - ACT NOW, HERE’S HOW!” Dr Chadha sketched the importance by presenting two cases of young girls in India with hearing loss.

**Paul Breckell, (Action on Hearing Loss)
Sue Archbold (Ear Foundation)
The Cost of Untreated Hearing Loss**



Unaided hearing loss costs 170bn Euro in Europe. In a study conducted by Action on Hearing Loss they demonstrate that Less than half people told their colleagues, only 37% told their employer. 14% changed jobs as a result of their hearing loss and 36% who retired early did so directly because of their hearing loss. We save money – and change lives
There is an urgent need to detect hearing loss earlier.

There is a need for national screening programs for adults.

Special need to screen people with dementia

**Hélène Amieva (University of Bordeaux)
Hearing Care Helps Reduce Cognitive Decline**



Hearing loss is independently associated with accelerated cognitive decline in older adults. The opposite trend was observed in the group of individuals with hearing loss using hearing aids - cognitive decline of those wearing hearing aids was not significantly different to that of controls. By restoring at least partially, communication abilities, hearing aids may act as a mean to improve mood, social interactions and cognitively stimulating abilities and consequently may have a positive impact on the rate of cognitive decline

Lidia Smolarek-Best, (EFHOH)
Mark Laureyns (AEA)
Quality Hearing Care – What does it mean?



An important aspect is access to rehabilitation and quality of hearing aid fitting. This is why EFHOH supports EU Standard (EN 15927) 'Services Offered by Hearing Aid Professionals' which sets out the minimum standards on fitting process we should expect from hearing aids professionals directly.

EuroTrak demonstrates clearly that the impact of professional hearing care is much wider than just hearing better – it's changing people's lives. Early awareness is essential – get you hearing checked! As a result of early professional hearing care, you will live longer, happier, healthier and smarter.

Laszlo Gabor Lovász,
The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
and Hearing Loss



Disability is a social notion - always was and up to us to interpret it. Disability is relative – and will always be as people age and change. Change itself can't be seen as a disabling element but an opportunity. Disability shall be seen as part of diversity and drive of innovation - see the example of Graham Bell's innovation (telephone). His mother was deaf and he wanted her to be able to communicate. He eventually invented the telephone and changed everything. Communication without or fewer barriers means a higher level of organized society based on flexibility, diversity and greater level of adaptation. Different customs, cultures, languages, sign languages included, as part of diverging and innovative approaches remain and will remain the strongest asset humans have..

MEP Helga Stevens, (Belgium, ECR)
Conclusion



Very clear and sharp conclusion – listing all the essential points that have been raised during the debate.

Hearing awareness and early screening is essential both for children as for adults. Early quality hearing care is essential and should be accessible for all.

We have an important role to play in Europe to advocate these essential points. Thank you to all participants.