

The Coalition on Hearing loss and Disability demands concrete actions to tackle hearing loss and improve access to hearing technologies



"Innovative hearing devices, such as cochlear implants, can make a real change in the lives of people with severe hearing loss. We must ensure access to these technologies to overcome any barrier to communication and quality of life"

John Bowis, Health First Europe Honorary President

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Health First Europe, the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH), the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), AGE Platform Europe, Euro CIU, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA), the Ear Foundation and the International Federation of ORL Societies (IFOS) join hands to promote actions to tackle the impacts of hearing loss and improve access to hearing devices.

Our Coalition aims to raise awareness among European policy-makers on the social and economic impact of hearing loss and, therefore, to facilitate the adoption of "ad-hoc" effective policies. For this purpose, today **the Coalition presents for the first time the Manifesto on Hearing Loss and Disability**: throughout its calls for action, we want to protect the participation of people with hearing loss in their communities as well as stress the need to develop a concrete strategy for hearing care into primary health care system.

In Europe 10% of the total population (52 million people) self-report to experience hearing loss, 73% consult a medical professional, but only 50% are referred to hearing care professionals.

Mark Laureyns, AEA President, remarks that *"Hearing loss is a huge problem for the health of Europe's citizens: this disability puts huge pressure on Europe's social care systems if left untreated. It is time to act to improve access to innovative hearing technologies and professional hearing care!"*

"Together we have produced the Manifesto to ensure that the needs of persons with hearing loss are at the heart of public policies: EU institutions are called to take the lead in ensuring that access to professional hearing care is a right and to develop a European strategy on hearing loss focused on equality, prevention and rehabilitation", said **Marcel Bobeldijk, EFHOH President**.

"As Europe's population ages, the burden of hearing loss will increase. We must act to protect older people's rights and promote their participation in society!" **Anne-Sophie Parent, Sec. Gen. AGE Platform Europe**

Teresa Amat, Euro-CIU President, commented *"in line with the principles of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU should take the lead in ensuring access specify our collective to assistive technologies such as cochlear implants and enhancing participation and inclusion to our group as citizens with full rights in our society"*.

You can download the Manifesto and read our calls for action here.

We welcome anyone who supports our goals to promote the Manifesto and to spread our message!

Follow our campaign on Twitter and LinkedIn #TogetherToHear

For more information, please contact: info@healthfirsteurope.org

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