EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE

Smart regulations

Opportunity to design for diverse consumer needs

ITU-D Workshop 29 September 2026
Lidia Best - Vice Rapporteur SG1/5
President European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

European Federation of Hard of Hearing (EFHOH)

- A European Federation of national associations working across the EU and geographical Europe to further the **rights of persons who are hard of hearing.**

- **OUR COLLECTIVE VISION**:

- A Europe **where hard of hearing people can live without barriers**, and have **the opportunity to participate** in all levels of society

EFHOH

Funded by the European Union

Smart Regulations for All?

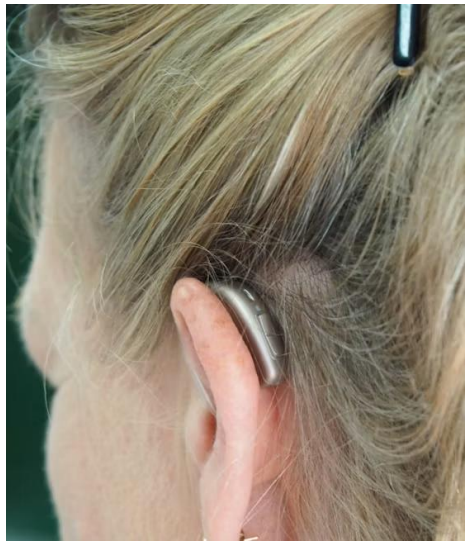
An estimated 1.3 billion people experience **significant disability**.

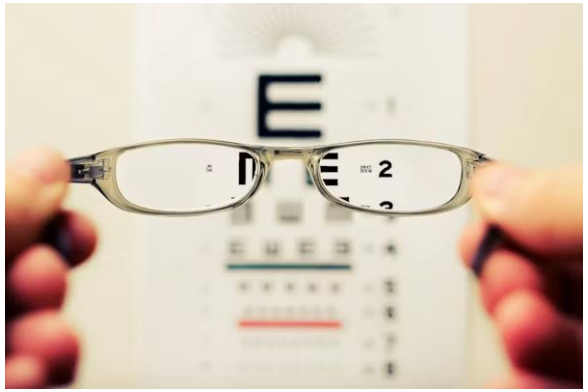
This represents 16% of the world's population

1 in 6 of us

Hearing, seeing, mobility and cognition are changing over a person's lifetime



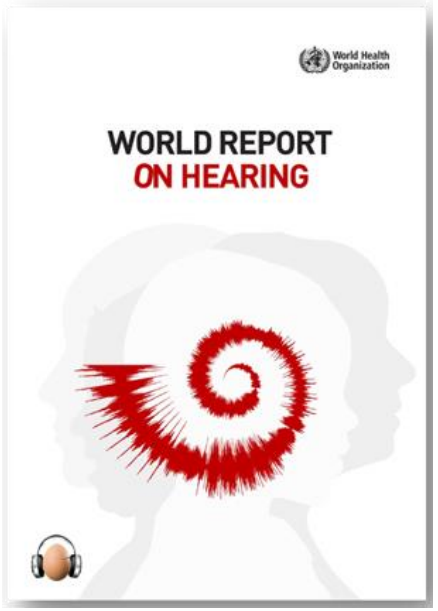






Photos: Unsplush

Insights from the data on hearing loss prevalence





On prevalence:
The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that by 2050, **nearly 2.5 billion** people are projected to have some degree of hearing loss
In the **European Region**, approximately 190 million people have some hearing loss or deafness. This represents **20%** of the population. In other words, **1 in 5** have some hearing loss or deafness (WHO).
On average, **11.1% of the population of the European Union, Norway, Switzerland, and UK, or 59 million people, self – reported hearing loss.** Among the population of 65+-year-olds, this proportion rises to 20.7% (EFHOH).

Getting the numbers right on Hearing Loss, Hearing Care and Hearing Aid Use in Europe (2024)
WHO, Deafness and Hearing Loss (2025)

Who are we excluding?

- Health Services moved to telephone consultation
- Services moved to digital only access, apps, chats
- Services rapid response teams- mostly phonelines
- Accessibility of audiovisual media?
- Personal banking moved to apps and telephone

Human centric approach

- Intersectional approach, providing flexible systems that recognise human diversity.
- The regulations must work for all, regardless of their abilities.
- When we plan and include persons with disabilities and older persons, we build the society for all.

Multifaced communications and service access points –

phone, Relay Service, email, SMS, letter, in person

Using data to support smart regulations

- Considering social and behavioural interventions alongside technological ones.
- User experience driven and real-life experience
- Consulting with all consumer groups
- Co- production with consumer groups

Smart Regulations offer opportunity to regulate where technology complements existing structures, rather than replace them without consultation.

THANK YOU

contact

www.efhoh.org

office@efhoh.org