



**Press Release, March 2, 2018**

## **How to prevent hearing loss and how to reduce its impact**

**On the occasion of World Hearing Day, a lunch debate under the headline “Hear the Future – and prepare for it” will be held at the European Parliament in Brussels, March 6th.**

Hearing loss is on the rise, both globally and in Europe, but how can we prevent it and how can we reduce its impact?

These issues will be discussed at a lunch debate at the European Parliament in Brussels on March 6th. The lunch debate will be hosted by MEP Renate Sommer (Germany, EPP) together with co-host MEP Heinz Becker (Austria, EPP)

The speakers and participants in the debate are:

- Dr Shelly Chadha, World Health Organization, WHO
- Professor H el ene Amieva, Inserm, Bordeaux
- Professor emerita Bridget Shield, South Bank University, London
- Lidia Best, European Federation of the Hard of Hearing, EFHOH
- Anne-Sophie Parent, Age Platform Europe
- Mark Laureyns, European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals, AEA

Professor H el ene Amieva will present new findings on the impact of untreated hearing loss and professional hearing care and the importance of hearing aids for independence. Professor Bridget Shield will present new data on the costs of untreated hearing loss in Europe.

Dr Shelly Chadha, WHO, will talk about the theme of World Hearing Day 2018 “Hear the Future - and prepare for it”. Lidia Best, EFHOH, will give an overview of the importance of earlier debates. Mark Laureyns, AEA, will talk about the relationship between hearing loss and cognition, while Anne-Sophie Parent, Age Platform Europe will talk about the role of independence in relation to hearing loss.

“As the awareness of hearing loss is becoming stronger, it is now the right time to talk about preparing for the future in relation to hearing loss and effective interventions”, says Lidia Best, Vice-President of the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH).

“Professional Hearing Care and the use of hearing aids does not only lead to better hearing and understanding, but also activates people to stay independent and to keep enjoying life to the fullest”, says Mark Laureyns, President the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA).

The lunch debate will take place at the European Parliament in Brussels, Tuesday March 6th from 10.30 to 12.30 in Room 6 Q 1. Representatives from the media are welcome to participate, if they register as a press representative at the European Parliament.

For further information: [hear-it AISBL](http://hear-it.org), email: [editor@hear-it.org](mailto:editor@hear-it.org), phone +32 487 86 20 83



**The organisations behind the lunch debate are:**

**The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH)** is a non-profit European non-governmental organisation consisting of and for the hard of hearing, late deafened persons, those living with tinnitus, hyperacusis, Ménière's disease and cochlear implants, as well as parent organisations and professional organisations. EFHOH's aim is a Europe where the hard of hearing can live without barriers and have the opportunity to participate at all levels in society. EFHOH membership currently represents 21 different countries and over 52 million hard of hearing people across the EU. [www.efhoh.org](http://www.efhoh.org)

**AGE Platform Europe** is a European network of non-profit organisations of and for persons aged 50+, which aims to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. Its work focuses on a wide range of policy areas that impact older and retired persons. These include issues of anti-discrimination, employment of older workers and active ageing, social protection, pension reforms, social inclusion, health, elder abuse, intergenerational solidarity, research, accessibility of public transport and their environment as well as new technologies (ICT). [www.age-platform.eu](http://www.age-platform.eu)

**The European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA)** was founded in 1970 as the European umbrella organisation for "Hearing Aid Professionals". It is an association of national professional organisations representing a total of 22,000 hearing care professionals in 14 countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Malta, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the UK. AEA strives to improve the quality of hearing care services, ensure a transparent, fair and competitive market and safeguard freedom of choice in the interest of the end-user. [www.aea-audio.org](http://www.aea-audio.org)

**The European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA)** represents the six major European hearing instrument manufacturers, producing up to 90% of the hearing aids manufactured in Europe. EHIMA was founded in 1985 and its members are among the world's largest and most advanced hearing aid manufacturers. Members of EHIMA develop, manufacture and market hearing instruments on a large scale in one or more countries in Europe as well as exporting their products worldwide. [www.ehima.com](http://www.ehima.com)