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Press release - EHIMA

Eric Bernard assumes EHIMA Presidency, succeeding Søren Nielsen

Frankfurt, Germany, January 12, 2021. After a two year's term, Demant A/S-CEO Søren Nielsen hands over the EHIMA Presidency to Eric Bernard, CEO of WS Audiology, the company formed from the merger between Sivantos and Widex in 2019. The EHIMA members elected Mr. Bernard unanimously as President for the period 2021-2022.

As EHIMA President, Eric Bernard will be supported by Arnd Kaldowski (Sonova AG) as Vice-President, and Board members Gitte Pugholm Aabo (GN Hearing) and Søren Nielsen (Demant A/S).

Eric Bernard said: "It is an honor to chair EHIMA for the next two years. The first president of this association was Widex cofounder Erik Westermann, back in 1985, and it has since played an important role in technology standardization and public awareness of treating hearing loss and tinnitus. I want to thank my predecessor Søren Nielsen for his leadership, and I look forward to working closely together with my fellow board members on making more people aware of the importance of hearing."

During Søren Nielsen's Presidency, hearing implant manufacturer MED-EL and Amplifon S.P.A. joined the association. EuroTrak, EHIMA's international series of surveys on hearing loss prevalence and hearing aid uptake, was significantly expanded, now covering 17 countries, the most recent additions being Spain, Korea and the People's Republic of China. Also, the multiyear collaboration of EHIMA members with the Bluetooth® special interest group was brought to fruition, resulting in a new wireless interface for hearing instruments.

"We have made a lot of progress over the last two years and I am grateful to all EHIMA members for making that possible in a joint, industry-wide effort", Søren Nielsen said, reflecting on his Presidency. "I am convinced that we can continue in the same professional spirit for the good of all people who deserve better hearing but are not always aware."

Eric Bernard is the 21st President of EHIMA. Meetings of hearing aid manufacturers at the European level began in 1983. In 1985, EHIMA was founded legally as an association under Belgian law. Albeit the industry is impacted by the Corona-pandemic, data of EHIMA members show that the demand for hearing instruments remains high. This is also reflected by EuroTrak data, which shows that the uptake of hearing instruments grew significantly over the last decade and continues growing.



The European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA)

The European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) represents the world's seven major hearing instrument manufacturers, offering smart hearing aid and implant solutions for people hard of hearing. EHIMA was founded in 1985 and its members are among the world's largest and most advanced hearing instrument 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.

Key Facts on Hearing Loss

- 1 in 10 of the total EU population states a hearing loss.*
- Only 1 in 3 of the hard of hearing people uses hearing instruments.*
- Untreated hearing loss costs EU28 each year 185 billion €. **
- Hearing instruments help to reduce these costs. **

Source: *EuroTrak; **Bridget Shield (2019): Hearing Loss – Numbers and Costs, Brunel University London; both available at www.ehima.com

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