



EHIMA statement concerning Auracast

The EHIMA member companies are committed to providing products and services that improve quality of life for people with hearing challenges. From the beginning, EHIMA has supported the development of the new Bluetooth LE Audio standards that will bring significant new benefits to users of hearing aids and cochlear implants. Bluetooth is a mainstream technology that is the most widely used system for sending audio signals to personal devices like earbuds, headsets and soon also hearing instruments.

The Bluetooth LE Audio standards bring many improvements and one of the key new features is the Auracast™ system that can broadcast audio to any number of receivers. Auracast also enables multiple audio signals to be transmitted simultaneously which opens up opportunities like multi-language versions of the same audio content, for instance. This triggers the question of how to connect to the desired signal. Hearing instruments are tiny devices with very limited user interfaces, and it may be beneficial to use an assistant device like a smartphone to identify the desired signal and instruct the hearing instrument to connect to it.

EHIMA is well aware that some users of hearing instruments are unable or reluctant to use a smartphone. Therefore, the EHIMA member companies will strive for solutions that allow for reception of Auracast without the need of a smartphone. On the other hand, in situations where many relevant audio signals are available or privacy is required and streams are encrypted, the use of an assistant device will greatly facilitate the process of connecting to the desired signal. This process could be very similar to the way we connect our smartphones to the internet which is done by many people, young or old, every day.

Auracast is developed as a *universal standard* to stream audio *directly* to the hearing instruments. An assistant device is merely used to facilitate the connecting process and not part of the audio streaming itself. This is very different from audio over Wi-Fi, for instance, where audio signals are first sent to a smartphone or other device and forwarded to the hearing instruments.

EHIMA is committed to go ahead with Auracast as a very attractive system for providing audio signals to users of hearing instruments and every manufacturer will of course do its utmost to provide solutions that match the needs of hearing instrument users.