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[Cochlear Implant Users Demand Improved Accessibility to Communication during the Pandemic](#)



EUROCIU
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF COCHLEAR IMPLANT USERS a.s.b.l.

Cochlear Implant Users Demand Improved Accessibility to Communication during the Pandemic

Context:

The current pandemic is already having a disproportionate impact on hearing-impaired persons with cochlear implants. They face:

- Disruption of essential services and support.
- Higher risk of serious illness or death due to the greater presence of other health conditions.
- Exclusion from important health information and mainstream health provision.
- Living in an inaccessible world where barriers to goods and services are everywhere.

Taking into account:

The United Nations Convention Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNCRPD, was ratified by 163 countries. Among them, all European countries in the European Union.

- UNCRPD Article 9 ensures accessibility to information and communication. Take measures to eliminate barriers to accessibility to information, communication and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.
- UNCRPD Article 24 ensures access to inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.

The Accessibility Act was approved last year by the European Union and it set accessibility requirements for several products and services, including emergency services.

The European Cochlear Implant Users' Association, EURO-CIU Demands:

1. **Accessible Emergency number:** Most countries still do not have an accessible emergency number. They keep telling citizens to telephone if they need assistance. A global written alternative must be made available.
2. **Accessible Official communication:** Most countries have issued new reports, regulations, laws, etc. but have not made them accessible to persons with hearing loss. Governmental and official communication must be accessible with live speech-to-text captioning.
3. **Accessible Education:** Online education is being hastily adopted without considering the needs of hearing-impaired and cochlear implant students. Cochlear implant users cannot follow online classes without subtitles or if they cannot lip-read their teachers. Pupils are assigned a lot of written homework but without adequate explanation. Without classroom support, there is no-one to give context or ensure that the student understands what is required. Where students normally use note takers or other support, the service should continue to be provided while they are learning remotely. Education must be accessible for all students.
4. **Accessible Labour:** Working from home typically requires online work meetings. Cochlear Implant users normally need transcription to follow online meetings. Speech-to-text facilities should be subsidized by the government to ensure accessibility in working life.
5. **Inclusion of Essential services for cochlear implant users:** If CI users who use disposable batteries are quarantined, hospitalised or are not allowed out following #StayAtHome campaigns, they need to be able to have batteries delivered to them. This service must be considered essential. Without batteries, the communication chain for CI users breaks down.
6. **Accessible Masks:** Face masks make communication between deaf people and, particularly, medical professionals unnecessarily challenging. This accessibility problem could be easily solved by the widespread use of masks with a clear window through which lips can be read.
7. **Alternative Transcription Services:** Normal face-to-face interpretation services, such as speech-to-text, may suffer during the pandemic. At this time, we urge countries to rapidly adopt and support remote captioning services. In many cases the services or technology already exist but authorities do not fund them.

We must not forget Cochlear Implant Users and Hearing Loss persons during emergencies. EURO-CIU urges everyone to stay at home and respect the rules issued by their governments but remember **#StayingAtHome** does not mean isolation. Now is the moment to be inclusive and accessible to get society through this together.

About EURO-CIU www.eurociu.eu

EURO-CIU is a non-governmental and non-profit association, established in Luxembourg in 1995. The association consist of 33 national member associations from 25 European countries. Altogether, EURO-CIU represents around 220.000 cochlear implant (CI) users across Europe, approximately 40% of whom are children and 60% adults, especially people who have lost their hearing at an old age.

Other considerations for Persons with Disabilities from European Disability Forum:

<http://www.edf-feph.org/newsroom/news/open-letter-leaders-eu-and-eu-countries-covid-19-disability-inclusive-response>

For more information: info@eurociu.eu

Quotes from specific countries CONTACT OUR MEMBERS: <http://eurociu.eu/membership>

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[EURO-CIU 25 anniversary celebration in October](#)



The European Parliament Health InterGroup has approved EURO-CIU 25 anniversary Celebration in Brussels. We will collaborate with them to organize a meeting with delegates and Members of the Parliament. The date is not closed but it will be probably during the first half of October. We will keep you updated. **#EURO-CIU25** [@eurociu](#) [@EuroParl_EN](#) [@MyEDF](#)

[Teresa Amat \(President\)](#)

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[Message from Editor](#)



We once more have some interesting articles - many thanks to those who have sent us articles - it's always good to hear what is happening in our member countries. And thanks also to the cochlear implant companies for keeping us up to date.

Have you noticed our new special "25 years logo" (above this message)? This is an exciting year for us, celebrating 25 years of EURO-CIU, and further information about our celebrations will follow in due course.

Please feel free to forward this Newsletter to Members of Parliament, friends, colleagues and members of your own organisations. We are keen to increase the number of people who can read about the benefits of cochlear implantation. Let's get the message across, particularly as we develop our work, about which you can read in this newsletter.

The next edition of the EURO-CIU Newsletter will be due in June, so please let me have your articles and jpg photos by Monday 1 June 2020. Just e-mail them to me at newsletter@eurociu.eu

With every good wish.

Brian Archbold (Editor)

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[EURO-CIU's logo and website](#)



EURO-CIU renewed its logo and web address two years ago. Unfortunately, even after reminders, some associations still show the old logo and address. So, please can I ask you to take a moment to check that your member association's web pages have a working link to www.eurociu.eu and prominently display the new logo? If need be, please work with your local webmasters to ensure that information gets corrected. This small step will help EURO-CIU to project a consistent image and will also make it easy for your association members to find us.

If you want to include a brief text about EURO-CIU, we propose "EURO-CIU is a non-governmental and non-profit association, established in Luxembourg in 1995, consisting of 33 national member associations from 25 European countries. Altogether EURO-CIU represents around 220,000 cochlear implant users across Europe, approximately 60% of whom are adults and 40% children."

It is important that the EURO-CIU website shows correct information for your association too. Please visit www.eurociu.eu/membership and tell us whenever any of your details change.

Robert Mandara
Vice-President

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[Cancellation of European Friendship Week \(EFW\)](#)





Due to the Coronavirus outbreak, EURO-CIU very much regrets that we have had to cancel this year's European Friendship Week. We acknowledge that many young people across Europe will have been disappointed in this decision, but the safety of our young people and those accompanying them is crucial, and we had no other option.

EFW2021 will be discussed at the General Assembly - but again, we can't say when that will take place.

Keep safe.

EURO-CIU

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[EURO-CIU supporting partner of MOSAICS, a European Industrial Doctorate project](#)

MOSAICS

Hearing Matters



(Photo: the MOSAICS logo and ESRs left to right: Enrico Migliorini, Loes Beckers, Nikki Tromp, Ignacio Calderon de Palma)

In the last Newsletter of EURO-CIU we informed you that EURO-CIU became a supporting partner of the European Industrial Doctorate project, called 'MOSAICS'. It is a European project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 framework programme for research and innovation under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 860718 in which 4 Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) will be trained to become experts in auditory implants to achieve minimized outcome spread and maximized participation in society. The ESRs will have the unique opportunity to be part of a multidisciplinary training programme, learning from the industrial excellence of the largest global hearing implant manufacturer and from the outstanding research expertise of the leaders in the field of hearing research.

After an intense recruitment period, during which they received many excellent applications, they've recruited four talented Early Stage Researchers (ESRs). Loes, Nikki, Enrico and Ignacio started their PhD within the MOSAICS project in February 2020. They are now looking forward to the first network training week, planned on 6-8 April 2020.

This 3-day training meeting will take place at the Cochlear Research Campus in Mechelen (Belgium). One of the topics (on April 7) is to inform the students on some patient journeys of CI-candidates. They asked EURO-CIU to give some input on this topic and Robert Mandara from Finland and Katerina Nova from Czech Republic will represent EURO-CIU at this meeting together with their scientific advisor Leo De Raeye.

We hope to deliver some more information on the content of this meeting in the next EURO-CIU newsletter.

Leo De Raeye

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CI DAY 25th February 2020 I want to hear. Can you hear me?



To celebrate International Cochlear Implant Day on 25th February 2020, the European CI users' associations wanted to make their voices heard loud and clear: I want to hear. Can you hear me? Their message is communicated through two videos showing people who are fully integrated into school and work life, thanks to their cochlear implants.

The first video "**The School**" features a **10-year-old girl** who, thanks to early diagnosis, **simultaneous bilateral cochlear implantation** at the age of 9 months, and subsequent rehabilitation, **hears and speaks normally**. She is doing very well at school and does not need support teachers.

The second video: "**The businessman**" features a 40-year-old man who suffered from progressive hearing loss. He underwent **sequential bilateral cochlear implant surgery** and was able to continue working as a **successful businessman**.

To provide adults and children with the best possible hearing functionality, we call for comprehensive **neonatal and adult hearing screening**, **prompt provision of hearing aids or cochlear implants** where needed, and **specialized rehabilitation that includes speech**

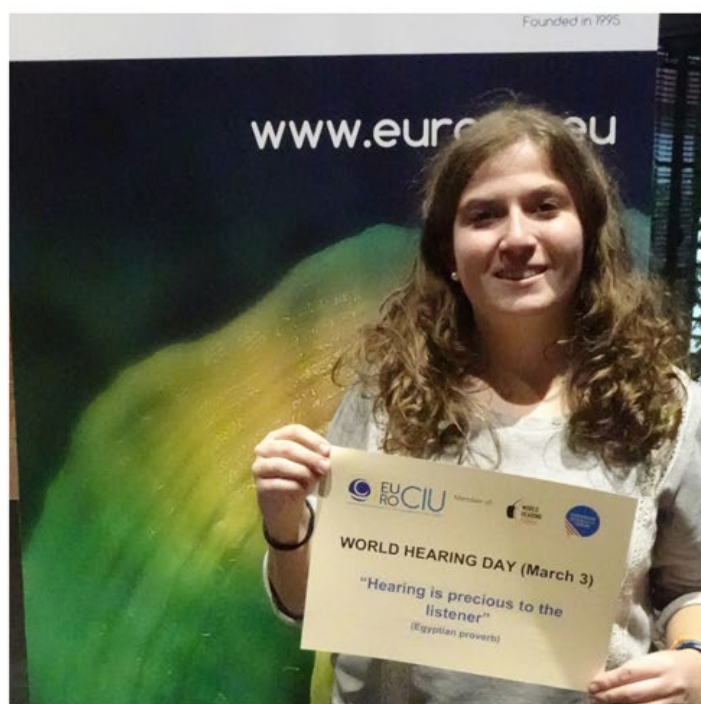
therapy. Time is of the essence.

Forward-thinking countries must invest in the prevention and treatment of hearing loss, by providing prompt access to the best technology and state-of-the-art hearing rehabilitation. **Investing saves money.** Properly rehabilitated hearing-impaired people are typically able to work and pay taxes, rather than being a financial burden to society. **Every 1€ invested in treating hearing loss saves 10€ of costs to society further down the line.**

Investing in hearing technology improves lives and saves society money. **The cost of NOT providing hearing technologies has been shown to be greater than the cost of providing them.** For supporting information please see: http://eurociu.eu/media/files/REVISED-EUROPEAN-SPEND-TO-SAVE-SUMMARY_ENGLISH_WEB.pdf

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World Hearing Day 2020: Hearing for life



Don't let hearing loss limit you

On World Hearing Day 2020, WHO highlighted that timely and effective interventions can ensure that people with hearing loss are able to achieve their full potential. It drew attention to the options available in this respect.

Thanks to technical aids such as cochlear implants or hearing aids and breaking the communication barriers with accessibility, with magnetic loops, subtitling, live transcription, etc.

But to get the most out of it, adequate speech therapy rehabilitation is necessary and that these aids are subsidized both in the first instance of surgery, and subsequently its renovations; not only in cases of minors, but especially also in older people.

Several studies show that investing in hearing aids is very profitable socially and economically since it delays other pathologies that are very economically onerous such as senile dementia, Alzheimer's or cognitive impairment.

Key messages for World Hearing Day 2020:

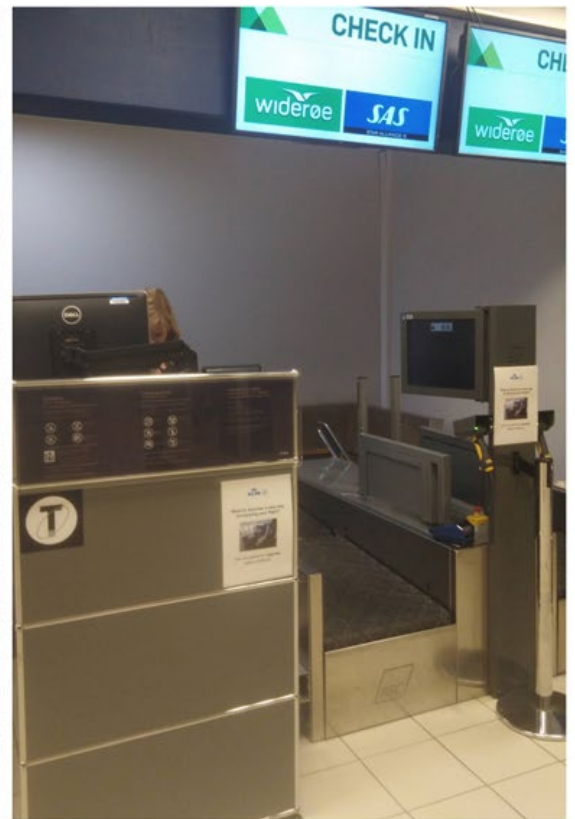
- At all life stages, communication and good hearing health connect us to each other, our communities, and the world.
- For those who have hearing loss, appropriate and timely interventions can facilitate access to education, employment and communication.
- Globally, there is lack of access to interventions to address hearing loss, such as hearing aids.
- Early intervention should be made available through the health systems

[#WorldHearingDay](#)

[Click here for World Hearing Day 2020 advocacy material](#)

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Accessibility in Air Travel



(Photos: Gatwick Airport, the winner of The Accessible Airport Award 2019 and the logo of the induction loop on a desk at Vigra Airport, Norway)

Asking persons with hearing disabilities, cochlear implant users, the most comments from difficulties at airport and during flights, are that announcements cannot be heard.

One said that he always gets nervous at the flight departure gate when passengers are divided in the groups A or B according to the location of their seat. "I do not ever hear those announcements. I am totally dependent on someone hearing, an unknown person, to ask more. Now I am really happy to see that group A or B are already written on my flight tickets."

A special experience occurred to a person who travelled to another part of world. He knew that an airport is huge and there was little time to reach another flight. He informed that he was deaf and needed an assistant to help him to get on the right plane. "When I saw the assistant with a wheelchair, I was very confused. It became clear that in the United States it is part of disability service. Anyway, I got the flight!"

Regulations guide accessibility

There are EC regulations 1107/2006 which state that any person with a disability shall have the same possibility to travel by air as any other person. This includes being provided with assistance that is adapted to the person's need – from the point of arrival at the airport with transport to the point of departure of the airport of arrival. There is also the right to bring mobility equipment and assistive devices that are needed, to get essential information in accessible formats.

The level of accessibility of the airport, as well as the assistance services offered, is important to make the fluent travel experience. Airports are an essential part of the travel chain for all passengers, including passengers with disabilities. Good examples for helping hearing-impaired persons are the flight schedule information which are displayed on the airport monitors. On the service desks there should be installed induction loops for CI and hearing aid users.

If you wish to receive assistance from the staff at the airport you should pre-notify your needs at least 48 hours beforehand at any of the points of sale of tickets. If you give shorter or no pre-notification, the managing body of the airport shall make all reasonable efforts to provide the assistance, but this cannot be guaranteed.

When a passenger with a disability is traveling with a friend, family member or care assistant, that person must be allowed to provide the necessary assistance if desired.

Lufthansa Airline and Finnair inform that they offer assistance to hearing-impaired passengers like separate briefing in the event of delays and other important travel announcements. They will accompany you to the airport exit or look after you until your connecting flight.

A person said that she got great service for the persons with disabilities and the elderly at the airport of Tenerife, Spain. She was helped to go to security check and then waited at lodge. The assistant led her "almost by the hand" to the right gate.

It is essential that the hearing-impaired person mentions her/his disability to the flight attendant to get important announcements. It is duty of the staff to help according the EC regulations. Lufthansa even informs that for longer stopovers in Frankfurt and Munich Airports, they have set up a waiting lounge and can take hearing-impaired passengers there.

The Accessible Airport Award 2020

The Accessible Airport Award in association with the European Disability Forum will return again this year. This award is the good opportunity to showcase airport's good practice examples and get recognition for the work that has already been done. This also could encourage other airports to do the same. On the website of [ACI Europe \(Airport Council International Europe\)](http://www.edf-feph.org/newsroom/news/accessible-airport-award-applications-are-now-open) is found the criteria and registration for competition.

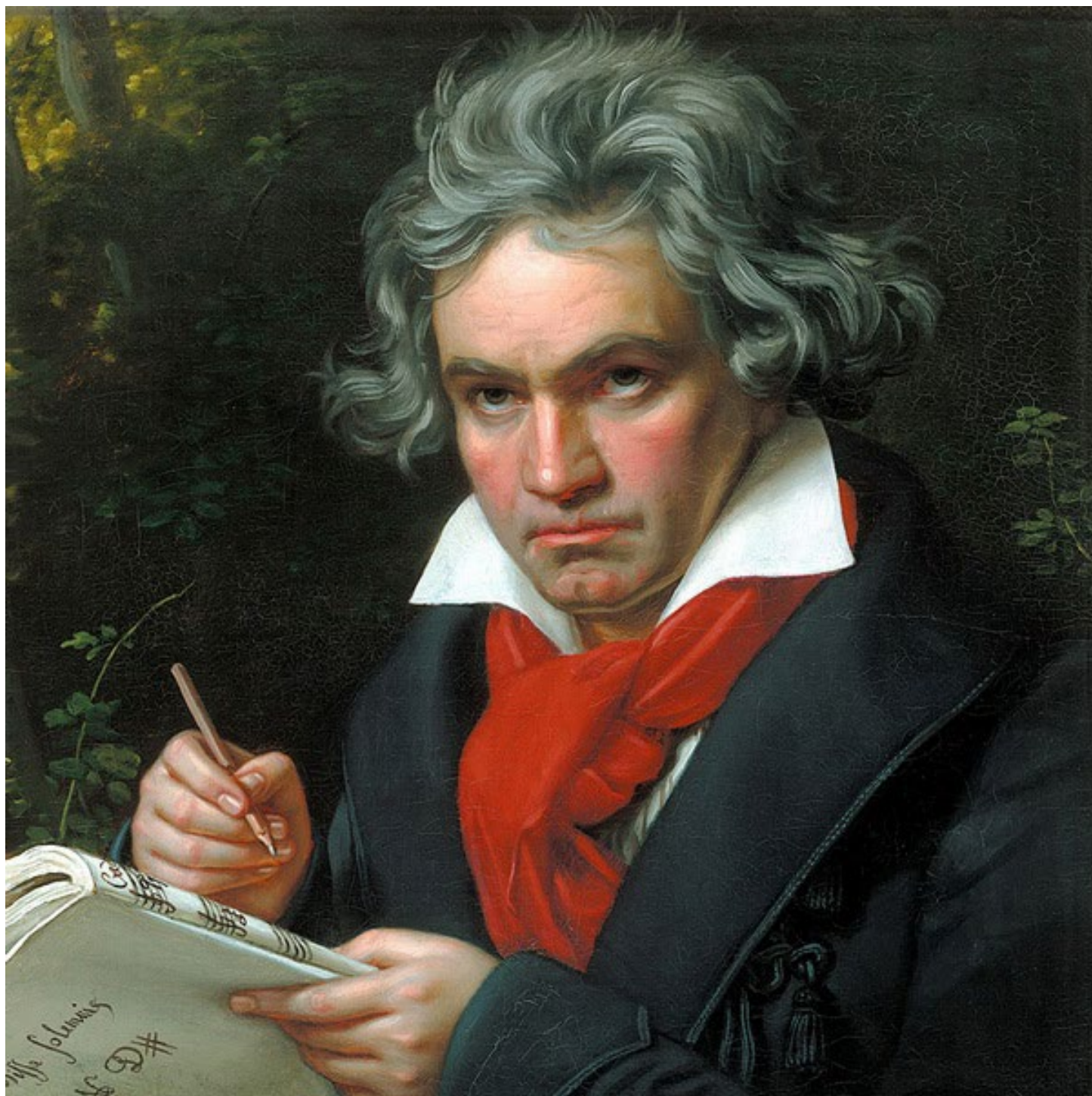
Gatwick Airport was the winner of The Accessible Airport Award 2019

<http://www.edf-feph.org/newsroom/news/accessible-airport-award-applications-are-now-open>

[Sari Hirvonen-Skarbö](#)

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AUSTRIA – CIA – an Anniversary and Role Models



[\(Beethoven Picture by J Stieler. Painted 1819-1820\)](#)

Ludwig van Beethoven spent 35 years of his life in Vienna. Therefore, Austria is commemorating this 250th anniversary with big celebrations. On this occasion, CI-A takes a closer look at Beethoven's hearing loss as well as at that of other famous people.

Composer Ludwig van Beethoven was born 250 years ago in Bonn/Germany, but spent 35 years of his life in Vienna. He started losing his hearing at the age of 28 and later became completely deaf. In 1801, aged 31. Beethoven described his symptoms in a letter to his friend, physician Franz Gerhard Wegeler: "...for the last three years my hearing has become weaker and weaker [hearing loss]...my ears continue to hum and buzz day and night [tinnitus]... For almost two years I have ceased to attend social functions, just because I find it impossible to say to people. I am deaf." "In any other profession this might be more tolerable, but in mine such a condition is truly frightful. ...When a little way off I hear none of the high notes of instruments or singers [high frequency loss]. I often can scarcely hear a person if speaking low; I can distinguish the tones, but not the words [reduced speech understanding], and yet I feel it intolerable if anyone shouts to me. [hyperacusis]." *(from: Gutenberg E-book of Beethoven's Letters 1790-1826; Grace Wallace; (c) Project Gutenberg License)*

Bad timing for Beethoven

Beethoven went through various grades of hearing loss, from mild to profound. In his Heiligenstadt Testament the musician describes his loneliness coupled with existential fears. Doctors first tried treating his condition with almond oil and horseradish, but to no avail. Beethoven continued working, using vibrations to "hear". He made his last public appearance as a pianist in 1814. After that, he only played for friends or for himself. For the last nine years of his life, Beethoven only conducted written conversations - about 400 of these so-called conversation notebooks - still exist.

For the 250th anniversary, many events and exhibitions are planned in Vienna to celebrate the life of this restless composer. The Beethoven Museum in Vienna's 19th district, one of his 50 domiciles he lived in, features a special exhibit that lets visitors relive the composer's deteriorating hearing. If he had lived nowadays, Beethoven would have been able to hear for many more years with the help of modern hearing aids, a Vibrant Soundbridge or another hearing implant. After losing all of his hearing, a cochlear implant could have helped him. Unfortunately, Beethoven lived long before these hearing devices were invented. What a bad timing!

Effect of Role Models

Beethoven is not the only well-known person with hearing loss:

In 1792, Spanish painter Francisco de Goya lost his hearing at 46 years of age. Thereafter his work became progressively darker and sombre. His paintings of wars, injustice and insanity- "Las Pinturas Negras (The Black Paintings)" - are exhibited at Prado Museum, Madrid's famous art museum.

Born in 1847, US inventor Thomas Alva Edison's hearing deteriorated when he was still a child. He was severely hearing impaired but never lost his hearing completely. Edison invented the light bulb, the phonograph and many other useful things.

Both Goya and Edison lived before suitable hearing technologies were invented: The first portable hearing aid was only introduced in the late 19th century, the first multichannel cochlear implant was implanted in Vienna in 1977. In Innsbruck the first and then only European CI manufacturer was founded 13 years later.

In the 1980s, the USA had a president with a considerable hearing impairment: Ronald Reagan's hearing loss was likely caused during his years of military service. He wore his hearing aids with confidence and pride. It is role models like him that have made the use of hearing technology in rich industrial countries almost a common and usual sight. Today, cochlear implants are widely known in Europe and users **will not find it impossible to say to people, I am deaf!** Beethoven would be overjoyed.

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[AUSTRIA – ÖCIG 7th symposium in Vienna, 2019](#)



(Photos copyright ÖCIG - Henri-François Baiverlin in centre photo)

The symposium took place in the Ankersaal in Vienna 10 with the title "Growing up with the cochlear implant". The induction system and sign language (Austrian sign language) as well as script interpreters supported us throughout the event!

Introduction and welcome by Markus Raab, ÖCIG President

Introduction words by Henri-François Baiverlin in the name of the EURO-CIU

From the beginning of CI care to today - what will the future bring? (Dipl. Päd. Dr. rer.biol.hum Bodo Bertram)

From stethoscope to cochlear implant (Susann Schmid-Giovannini)

Listening and reading comprehension in children with a cochlear implant (Vera Gollob, M.Sc)

Difficulty listening to noise and possible effects on mental health and the subjective well-being of young CI wearers - What do we know from the literature? (Dr. Maria Huber)

Induction systems and FM systems (VOX, technical assistance, Georg Schwaighofer)

Offers and opportunities of the Ministry of Social Affairs for professional integration (head of department SMS Vienna for professional rehab, Dieter Chmiel)

Information from the CI companies, Advanced Bionics, Cochlear and MED-EL

The audiometry (hearing test with headphones) could be used free of charge by the Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt (AUVA) for 2 hours.

The companies Advanced Bionics, Cochlear, Medical Electronics and your zubeHÖR KG were represented in the anteroom.

The moderation was carried out by Prim. Univ. – Prof. Dr. Gerd Rasp

The next symposium will start in Salzburg in 2021.

We thank our sponsors at the symposium

Henri-François Baiverlin

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CZECH REPUBLIC – Inclusion of hearing-impaired children into the mainstream schools in the Czech Republic

seen by foreign experts



The project focused on the inclusion of hearing-impaired pupils called Zážitek k porozumění - in English “Experience to Understanding”- had started two and half years before, in September 2017. There are nineteen pupils (age 7-11) and their teachers from twelve mainstream schools involved in the project. Our goal is to create easy-to-use methodology for teachers, who have usually no experience in teaching children with hearing loss. That is why we support them not only by the methodology, but also by short animations, by video (see <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZ9b1UZO4ZCjIZJyKYdTHPQ>) leaflets, etc. SUKI is a partner of the project - naturally, as the president of SUKI is at the same time head of the project.

We were very pleased to welcome two foreign experts on the education of children with hearing loss, Dr Sue Archbold (GB) and Mrs Ingela Holmström (SWE) in the very beginning of the year 2020 in Prague and Brno. We visited four schools - five classes - together during a week with quite a tough schedule. The tour was concluded by a seminar at the Masaryk University in Brno, where both experts and us presented a lecture.

What are the conclusions of the week? One of the frequent topics that emerged, during discussions with teachers at schools, was the **acoustics** of classrooms. Sometimes it was really bad – high ceilings, hard surfaces, etc. What can help? Sue Archbold suggested putting sound-absorbing panels on the ceilings – it does not have to be expensive, polystyrene for example. The teacher could also make some decorations or educational materials together with children, made from foam, egg boxes etc. and put it on the walls. But the teacher should also think about the environment that **should not be too colourful or over decorated** – it would distract the child with hearing loss, who could feel quite exhausted in such a place (too many visual attractions).

In classes with poor acoustics and many children, it is necessary to use **FM technologies** to make listening and understanding easier. So far, Czech teachers are not experienced in using these technologies and sometimes they make mistakes. It is necessary to focus on the topic and help them to use it properly.

There was just one teacher who had **spare batteries** for the child with hearing loss. Other teachers didn't think about the technology (as they say – the child should take care of themselves).

Well compensated children have usually very good spoken language, so they don't appear to need any special support. **Teachers don't realize that.**

Some teachers were very **visual** – they provided the child with hearing-loss with sufficient visual clues so that they could feel part of the class. This aspect is essential for their school success (and that is why we focus on the visualisation in our methods).

We were discussing also the **social aspect** of the school time and that is the integration of the child with hearing loss to the group of classmates. Ingela Holström pointed out some escape strategies to be used by children with hearing loss such as reading. If the listening environment is too challenging, even a well-compensated child would start to separate themselves from the group. It is necessary that the teacher, their assistant or after-school assistant actively work on the collective of children (they can play some games that would involve all the children, work on projects, etc.).

As mentioned before – the week was really intense, but I think we have made a lot of work and learned many things. Thank you...!

These activities were only possible by the generosity and support of the schools and teachers who made us so welcome.

Leona Pejcharová

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[ESTONIA - Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the first cochlear implantation in Estonia on International Hearing Day](#)



(Photos clockwise: Some of the delegates, Anne Maisvee with Lord Bruce, Sue Archbold, Tanel Kiik - Estonian Minister of Social Affairs and Epp Müil with Sue Archbold)

International Hearing Day was twice as important and festive in Tallinn - on the one hand we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the launch of the Estonian Implantation Programme. More importantly, however, the conference, targeted at professionals, policymakers, users and families, mapped the main challenges facing rehabilitation and public authorities dealing with hearing loss, and discussed possible solutions.

Guest speakers at the conference were Dr Sue Archbold and The Rt Hon. the Lord Bruce of Bennachie (formerly known as Sir Malcolm Bruce) from the UK. Anton Zehentbauer of Cochlear, Central and Eastern Europe, introduced the latest technological developments for users.

Lord Bruce, a member of the British House of Lords and the creator of the UK Parliamentary Cross-Party Hearing Loss Support Group, gave a very personal insight into how consistent clarification and pressure leads policy-makers to understand the need to deal with hearing problems, especially from the economic perspective: every euro invested in dealing with a hearing loss pays off tenfold.

Sue Archbold trained our parents and professionals for the first time in 2004, and many enjoyed the reunion. Sue emphasized the need to deal with hearing loss in a complex way from newborn to senior, and to take into account the specifics of all age groups. Sue also invited politicians, practitioners and interest groups to commence with drawing up the WHO recommended national Action Plan on Hearing Loss in Estonia, which we do not yet have. Only through common agreements and commitments can people with hearing impairment be reintroduced into society.

Two meaningful and active panel discussions took place at the conference. The first focused on education for children with hearing loss and counselling families. The other gave an insight into the situation of audiology as a service in Estonia. We have to admit that compared to many other European countries, we have not enough specialists in the field. Those actively working are overloaded and unable to meet a growing need. The first steps towards a future road-map have already been set during the debate: to initiate the inclusion of audiologists in the list of health care professionals, and to increase the annual number of implantations in Estonia from 14 to 20 in order to assist more adult late deaf people.

It was also decided to launch training courses for regional special needs educators and speech therapists, since only specialists gathered in larger centres have so far not been able to cover the entire national need.

(Note: 1.3 million people live in Estonia. 192 patients have received an inner ear implant over the past 20 years, including 144 children and 48 adults, 44 bilateral users.)

Epp Müil & Anne Maisvee

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GERMANY - Teenie weekend of BayCIV e.V. 2019



"Visit to the headquarters of Sonova AG in Switzerland"

Weekend seminar for hearing-impaired children and teenagers with their families.

Children's perspective:

10 "fOHRum" families took part.

After a long and exhausting bus ride (all participants were picked up at different locations) we arrived at the youth hostel where we immediately went to dinner.

To get to know each other, we played together with our parents funny introductory games, which made everyone laugh. Then children and parents separated to different groups. The parents to chat, we children and teenagers to play cards so we got to know each other a little better.

The next day we went to the Lake Dwelling Museum in Uhldingen at Lake Constance, where we inspected the various cottages. It was very interesting. We also saw a film in the "Archaeorama" (a multimedia narration machine) in which children tried to live there as in ancient times. A very interesting experiment.

In the afternoon we took the bus again for a ride to the climbing forest in Immenstaad. Despite the cold and wet weather conditions, I really enjoyed the stay.

In the evening our supervisors surprised us with a Halloween scavenger hunt (I only say HORST) and a nice party afterwards in the disco.

After a much too short night (with far too many sweets), we and our parents drove to Switzerland (by bus) on Friday. This should be the highlight of our extended teenie weekend. We visited Sonova, a manufacturer of hearing aids. We got an insight into the production of the hearing aid- and cochlear implant manufacturer, about material, work and logistics. We learned a lot about the company, including charity projects and research. We were introduced to the latest devices.

We could also win lots of prizes in a Kahoot! - quiz about the company. During lunch break, we could serve ourselves at the lunch buffet for the staff. That was very delicious.

Some of us already knew him, the others met him that day the first time: Simon Ollert. He is a hearing aid user, plays football and is committed to hearing-impaired children and young people, even abroad. He is Phonak's official ambassador in Germany. We were allowed to ask him questions and afterwards he showed us the best tricks in football.

After an autograph session, we unfortunately had to start the return journey (by bus).

We arrived at the youth hostel just in time for dinner.

Again we separated from the adults to play funny games until 10pm! Then it was bedtime, because the next morning we had to be on the bus with packed suitcases.

For me, the highlights of this long teenage weekend were the climbing forest and the company exploration.

Many thanks to Andrea Grätz for always organizing such great weekends for us!

Melina Brand

Parent's perspective:

BayCIV organized a weekend for teens during the autumn holidays. Not only teenagers were invited, parents and siblings were also allowed to join.

The destination of the trip was Constance at Lake Constance. We quickly got to know each other with the help of a funny learning game.

While the children visited the Lake Dwelling Museum and the climbing forest, the parents went to the isle of Mainau where we had an exchange of experiences by hot coffee and delicious cakes.

In the evening, the supervisors invited the children to a creepy Halloween party.

The next day we visited the Phonak headquarters in Switzerland. This was a real highlight of the journey because we were allowed to visit the production lines of hearing aids. The new technical achievements of hearing aids, including Cochlear Implants, were explained.

Simon Ollert, a soccer player and hearing aid user, gave an insight into his career as a soccer player and encouraged the teenagers to go their own way.

Many thanks to the supervisors for the beautiful programme and to Andrea Grätz for organizing it. It was a great weekend. We enjoyed it very much and we are looking forward to the next event.

Gabi

More information about the Lake Dwelling Museum can be found here: <https://www.pfahlbauten.com/>

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ITALY – AGUAV



(Photo: Dr. Eliana Cristofari on the left, and with Beatrice Cusmai - Vice President of AGUAV)

AGUAV kicked off the cycle of information seminars on hearing, how to preserve it and the possibilities that exist to restore hearing functionality in those who have lost it. Dr. Eliana Cristofari, with passion and exceptional communication skills, dedicated a morning to the

students of the High School of Human Sciences of Monticello, to the North of Italy, near Como Lake.

Dr. Cristofari is the Responsible manager of Varese Audiovestibology department, the Varese centre being a national reference for cochlear implants, a great technological innovation that has made it possible to overcome disabling deafness. Doctor Eliana Cristofari coordinates a group of 5 doctors, 8 audiology technicians, 6 speech therapists and 5 pedagogists in addition to the nursing staff. A real multidisciplinary team, because - as the doctor said to the boys - it is not enough to cure the pathology, it is also necessary to take care of the patient's life and, in the case of young patients, also in the school environment.

The doctor underlined in front of an audience made up mainly of students of the Lyceum of Human Sciences, how communication affects us and is the basis of the ability to interact with the world: to relate to relatives, friends and colleagues, to have a job, to have one productive lifestyle and maintain our health and well-being through social ties. "Hearing loss takes away our ability to communicate, thus influencing every aspect of our life. Unfortunately, the impact of deafness is often diminished or ignored with serious consequences in relationship life and, when it comes to young people, with negative consequences on school achievement", said Dr Cristofari.

The work of Dr. Cristofari's team has been supported for over twenty years by the AGUAV association founded by about a hundred families who have seen their children or adult family members emerge from the silence with exceptional results achieved at the Varese Audiovestibology. Hearing impaired or deaf people who have regained their hearing functionality have been able to lead lives like hearing people, without barriers.

AGUAV financially supports the hospital service, according to the principle of subsidiarity, through the FAV Foundation (70% of the costs from AGUAV and 30% from the 5x1000). AGUAV pays the salaries of speech therapists, doctors and educationalists. It also promotes scientific information (raising awareness among Lombardy institutions and the national press) and training (for example, with a course aimed at all teachers of all levels and degrees "Deafness, prospects for educational intervention"). The Vice President of AGUAV, Beatrice Cusmai (also EURO-CIU Secretary) underlined that nowadays it is possible to restore the hearing function thanks to technology and to specialized doctors and their teams. So, it is important to create an international protocol according with the results obtained by the "best teams".

AGUAV informs and supports families who move from all over Italy to take care of their children (through low-cost accommodation offered in collaboration with the non-profit organization "Il Ponte del Sorriso"). It is the only Italian association that is part of EURO-CIU.

Beatrice Cusmai, AGUAV

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[ROMANIA – “Together for Hearing”](#)



National conference of associations that support hearing impaired people in Romania with participation of Cochlear Implant Centres and Universities

Post-conference message

Author: Gál Katalin

On the initiative of Perspective Association for Hearing Impaired Children from Romania, the second edition of the national conference of associations that provide support for hearing impaired people in Romania took place between 31st of January and 2nd of February 2020, in Vulcan, Braşov county. The main idea of this meeting was **"Together for Hearing"**.

The Perspective Association for Hearing Impaired Children from Romania realized during its work that the main goal can only be reached together, with all associations from the country which work in this field. Moreover, we had special guests, physicians from the Cochlear Implant Centres and academics from Romanian Universities.

Based on the needs and the problems encountered in the establishment of the associations, the event aimed to unite forces for efficient treatment of deafness, to discuss the practical aspects of National Cochlear Implant Programme, especially replacement of the sound processors, as well as to debate certain topics that have become relevant lately.

We wanted to create the possibility of a meeting between specialists working in the medical, university and therapeutical fields and the chance of networking.

We debated: the replacement of sound processors in the National Programme of Treatment of Deafness with implantable hearing devices, the implantation procedure and its wearing from one centre to the other, the need of a National Register of Cochlear Implants and Bone Anchored Hearing Systems, the importance of providing psychological support to families, insuring of a successful rehabilitation, specialist education on the field of auditory-verbal rehabilitation in Romanian universities, new laws on the operation of the associations.

The guest presented the activity of Cochlear Implant Centres from Iași, Târgu Mureș, Craiova and Prof. Dr. Dan Mârțu, the physician who made first cochlear implant surgery in our country in March 2000, offered us useful information on the beginnings of this revolutionary device in Romania.

The participators proposed some actions like:

- Initiation of negotiations with the National Health Insurance House as regarding the refund - even if partially – of auditory-verbal rehabilitation therapies, insuring the post-warranty reparations as well as consumables for the devices
- Cooperation with the Health Ministry for perfecting the laws needed to ensure psychological support for affected families, as well as asking for information on the Newborn Auditory Screening database which could be the base of the National Register of Cochlear Implants and Bone Anchored Hearing Systems, discussion on the audiology specialists education.

The participants agreed on the importance of the sharing authentic information at national level and suggested creating an online portal to parents and public, containing relevant information on the subject of hearing impairment and on the National Programme of Treatment of Deafness with implantable hearing devices. This online portal would be connected to all hospitals in our country.

Based on the discussions with the academics on the auditory-verbal therapists training the need for accreditation of a postgraduate course has arisen. It could be a successful collaboration with associations and universities of profile.

We thank all for the participation and involvement of the representatives of the Cochlear Implant Centres, Dr. Dan Mârțu, Dr. Sebastian Cozma, Dr. Luminița Rădulescu, Dr. Oana-Roxana Bitere, Dr. Adriana Neagoș, Dr. Mariana Totolin; as well as thanks for academics, Dr. Alois Gherghuț from Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iași and Dr. Viorel Agheană from University of Bucharest.

Many thanks to "Ascultă Viata" Association, "Lumea Sunetelor" Association, "Darul Sunetului" Association, "Hallóka" Association, "Trăiește Evoluază Ocrotește" Association, "Koala RAV" Association, "Glas Cristalini" Association, "Să auzim glasul mamei" Association, "Auzi. Înțelegi. Trăiești" Association, "Speranța Sarei" Association, "Vreau să Aud" Association and last but not least to "Perspective pentru Copiii Hipoacuzici" Association.

Warm thanks to S.C. Fix Import Export S.R.L., Cochlear distributor in Romania, especially to Mr. Sönke Martin for participation and sponsoring the event!

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SPAIN – Cochlear Implant Day in Spain



The cochlear implant is a technical aid to relieve deep sensorineural deafness. Currently, in Spain there are about 17,500 cochlear implant users, 40% children and 60% adults. The first I.C. was held on February 25, 1957, in France, and was carried out by Dr. Djournio and Eyriès. André Djournio, medical physics professor specializing in the uses of electricity on the field of physiology, and Charles Eyriès,

reputed otologist, were the first to return the hearing to a total deaf person by electrically stimulating the acoustic cells inside the inner ear.

Therefore, AICE Federation chose and promoted on February 25 to celebrate Cochlear Implant Day, as it was the date of the beginning of this great medical and not being significant for any particular brand. A date on which all cochlear implant users and professionals can feel identified. We celebrated it for the first time in 2009 throughout Spain, also adding the user entities and medical community of Latin America. At present it is a worldwide celebration that takes place in more than 60 countries.

It is an opportunity to collect and analyse where we are, set goals in the fight against hearing problems and communicate them to society.

Throughout Spain, we have organized activities of all kinds: Courses, Conferences, training talks, visits, leisure and cultural activities and brotherhood meals. They have been attended by otolaryngologists, hearing and acoustics professionals, musicians, comedians, circus artists; and of course, cochlear implant users, family and friends.

Likewise, AICE Federation has managed to involve sport. For the sixth year, the Cochlear Implant Solidarity Race was held in Albacete in which more than 380 athletes participated. The children, cochlear implant users, of AICE went out to the field with the soccer players of F.C. Sevilla, in a UEFA Cup match, which also had space in "A Balón Parado", program of F.C. Sevilla Television; and with the football players of Albacete Balompié.

At the same time, the celebration also allows politicians to know first-hand the needs of cochlear implant users, from the users themselves. In the same Parliament of Cantabria its President, Joaquín Gómez, officially recognized the work of AICE Cantabria and the Federation in Cantabria.

In this visibility, different media join us, as RTVE, Gaceta Médica, La Razón, Sevilla FC Televisión, Radio Ser Algeciras, 20 minutos, Servimedia, Diari de la Discapacitat, Europa Press Aragón, El Digital de albacete, Diario de Castilla-La Mancha, El Diario Montañés.

All Areas have been covered with activities in which we have also claimed inequalities in access to the cochlear implant, by the elder people, or in the renewal of processors in certain Autonomous Communities, thinking of options for the future.

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[UK - Celebrating World Hearing Day 2020 in UK Houses of Parliament](#)



(Photo: Lilian Greenwood MP and Lidia Best)

3rd of March 2020 saw **Lilian Greenwood MP** together with National Association of Deafened People hosting an event in the UK Parliament on the occasion of **World Hearing Day**. The event was a drop-in, where MPs and their staff could participate in a lip-reading challenge with a lip-reading tutor and gain knowledge on effective communication tips with Trustees and volunteers of NADP. We tailored our key messaging around this year's WHO theme for World Hearing Day 2020 'Don't Let Hearing Loss Limit You' and the need for access to quality of hearing care and assistive technologies.

Over 45 Members of Parliament from across the UK and from all the major parties attended our event. MPs had the chance to learn of the different assistive technologies available to hard of hearing and deafened people. This included a speech to text service with our real-time captioner who supported conversations, possibilities of remote captioning, a captioned telephone. We also handed out leaflets on the different communications support available in UK. It was surprising to find that even those that had a hearing loss themselves were not aware of different communication support such real-time remote captioning (speech to text) so it was fantastic to see MPs fully engaging in the demonstrations. Most importantly, MPs responded positively to our briefings with tips on making their constituencies more accessible. Many MPs took our quick '5 phrases lip reading challenge' and it was fun to see them competing against each other to see who could do it best. One of the highlights that we had not anticipated were that many MPs who had only scheduled to drop in for a photo showed their support by getting involved in the exercises and speaking to us.

We had a separate area related to the World Health Organisation's initiative 'Make Listening Safe' where MPs learned more about listening to loud music with unsafe levels and were given a chance to download the '[hearWHO](#)' app to test their own hearing and received advice about next steps, should they be worried.

The direct result of this effort is that many of MPs want to work with us in the future and we created increased awareness of the WHO initiative thanks to MPs tweeting, posting on Facebook and [blogging](#) about us as well as awareness of needs of deafened and hard of hearing people.

Thank you for celebrating World Hearing Day with us this year!

[Lidia Best \(Chairman of National Association of Deafened People / Member of World Hearing Forum Make Listening Safe Workgroup\)](#)

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[UK – THE EAR FOUNDATION](#)



(Photo: Sarah Allen)

Many of you will already know the sad news about **the closure of The Ear Foundation** on 6th March. We understand that this will come as a shock to many people and particularly those who have worked so hard and contributed to its success.

The Ear Foundation celebrated its 30th birthday in 2019 providing a wonderful opportunity to reflect on this fantastic organisation and all that it has achieved since 1989. During this time the opportunities for people with hearing loss have been transformed by technology, research, family-centred care and education; The Ear Foundation is proud to have been a driving force in many of these changes.

However, rising costs and overheads, increased competition for charitable grants and cuts to training budgets in health and education have had a substantial impact on our charity finances. Staff and trustees have worked hard to address these issues, making changes to staffing, services, increasing grant applications and selling the residential building, Marjorie Sherman House. Unfortunately, this has not resolved our financial challenges and we have had to take the difficult decision to sell the remaining Ear Foundation property and cease trading in a positive, solvent and ethical manner, enabling the charity to leave a financial legacy.

Much has changed for people with hearing loss since we opened 30 years ago, and The Ear Foundation is proud to have been a driving force in many of these changes. The Ear Foundation team is very grateful for the support and friendship of the EURO-CIU over the years.

Despite the latest technology and all that it offers, there continues to be a need for person-centred, family-friendly and practical support and training. It is for this reason that a number of current staff are setting up a new charity to provide services which will continue to make a difference to the everyday lives of deaf children, adults and their families. Our plan was for this charity, Hear Together, to continue to run our popular and successful European Friendship Week (EFW). However, today we have reached the difficult decision to cancel EFW due to the spread of the coronavirus, Covid-19. This is very disappointing news, but we hope that we can offer this wonderful opportunity for European teenage cochlear implant users in 2021.

Finally, a huge thank you to you for supporting The Ear Foundation and being a part of making it such a special organisation. We very much hope that you will continue to be involved with our work. Please keep in touch at <https://www.earfoundation.org.uk/> or info@hearttogether.org.uk

Sarah Allen

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[European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association – A big step for users of hearing instruments? Five questions on Bluetooth LE Audio](#)

Broadcast enables Audio Sharing!



Public TVs



Multi-Language



Assistive Listening



(Photo - bottom-right - Dr. Stefan Zimmer)

Early this year the Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) announced LE Audio, the next generation of Bluetooth audio. Hearing instrument manufacturers claim that with LE Audio, users of hearing instruments will benefit from high quality sound from many types of media directly in their hearing instruments. We asked EHIMA Secretary General Stefan Zimmer about the new technology.

What are Bluetooth and the Bluetooth SIG? With close to 4 billion products shipping per year, Bluetooth technology is the global standard for simple, secure wireless connections. Formed in 1998, the Bluetooth SIG is the not-for-profit trade association that oversees Bluetooth technology. In support of more than 35,000 member companies, Bluetooth SIG facilitates the collaboration of its members to create new and enhanced specifications that expand the technology and drive global interoperability.

How are hearing instrument manufacturers involved? Since 2013, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA) has been collaborating with Bluetooth SIG to develop a new suite of standards which bring improved features and performance, specifically for users of hearing instruments.

What are the main benefits for users of hearing instruments? Besides lower energy consumption, higher sound quality at lower data rates and a new multi-streaming option, especially the broadcast capability (called Audio Sharing) is very impactful. **(1)** It allows to stream sound to great numbers of hearing instrument users in public venues as well as in private homes. Although hearing instruments do a great job in alleviating hearing loss, many users still have a need for a better signal-to-noise ratio than people with normal hearing, in order to understand information distributed as audio signals.

But we already have telecoils in many places, so where is the additional benefit? With Audio Sharing it will be possible to offer an improved alternative to loop systems, alleviating some of their drawbacks, such as mono only and high cost of installation. Instead, users will be able to listen to high quality, stereo music in theatres, concerts and churches as well as to voice messages from public information infrastructure. Used in public transportation, LE transmitters will allow hearing instrument users to be up to date on information pertaining to their journey. Both public and private venues will find installation of these systems much more economical, resulting in increased accessibility for anyone with hearing loss.

Last question: When? The necessary infrastructure for Audio Sharing is, of course, not yet in place. Therefore, according to a joint statement (2) by the International Hearing Access Committee, loop systems will continue to play an important role in the next years. On the road towards broad implementation of Audio Sharing, especially in public venues, EHIMA will continue to work with hearing instrument user groups as well as with Bluetooth SIG to maximize the benefits of this pioneering technology for all users of hearing instruments.

(1) For details of the new technology and its features see the BT LE Audio technology website <https://www.bluetooth.com/learn-about-bluetooth/bluetooth-technology/le-audio/>

(2) The statement can be downloaded from <https://www.ehima.com/documents/>

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Cochlear nominations invited for 2020 European Audiologist of the Year Award



(Photo: On the left, Paula Cook, an audiologist from Aston Hearing in Buckinghamshire in the UK. She won European Audiologist of the Year in 2019 and is pictured at the awards night, The Evening of Excellence)

The hunt for Europe's top audiologist has begun as online entries open for this year's 'European Audiologist of the Year' competition.

Entries for the Audiologist of the Year competition for 2020 will close on Friday 26th June. Nominations are invited from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain, The Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland. For more information and to download the step-by-step guide or make a nomination please visit: <http://www.audiologistoftheyear.eu>

The award is organised by RAYOVAC®, a world-leading hearing aid battery manufacturer*, together with sponsors Audio Infos, a leading publication for the audiology industry, the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA), which represents the major European hearing instrument manufacturers, offering smart hearing aid and implant solutions for people hard of hearing, and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH).

Europe's top audiologist will receive not only the recognition from their peers in the Industry, as the award is presented at an Evening of Excellence at EUHA, later in the year but also a cash prize, a PR package to help them promote their practice or department, as well as a year's subscription to Audio Infos magazine. The patient who submits the winning entry will also receive a cash prize.

Paula Brinson-Pyke, Marketing Director at RAYOVAC® said: "The competition continues to grow and this year we have made it even easier for audiologists and their nominating patients to enter, by bringing the application process online. This is being supported by a step-by-step

entry guide which interested audiologists and patients can review for advice on crafting a winning entry. We are looking forward to another bumper year of applications for 2020."

Winner of the European Audiologist of the Year title in 2019, Paula Cook of Aston Hearing in Amersham, impressed the judges by going above and beyond in her dedication to patient care, travelling to Turkey and giving up her holiday time to fit a former patient and her neighbour with hearing aids.

Describing her feelings on winning the award she said: "I am really honoured to have been crowned European Audiologist of the Year 2019. Who would have thought that my journey, starting with my children being born with a hearing loss, would bring me here? It's amazing."

General Secretary of EHIMA, Dr Stefan Zimmer, said: "We are delighted to support the Audiologist of the Year 2020 competition and showcase the outcomes of exceptional patient care. Audiologists across Europe are having a profound impact on their patients' lives, affecting them at a deep and emotional level.

"This impact is what the judges are looking for in a winning entry. What audiologists are doing through outstanding patient care and through the sharing and application of new technologies can be life-changing for patients. This award is about so much more than hearing."

Like the Audiologist of the Year on Facebook on www.facebook.com/AudiologistoftheYear or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/AOTY_EU.

*Based on internal company estimates of worldwide market share.

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WORLD NEWS - American Cochlear Implant (ACI) Alliance



We have published three significant videos from CI2019. You may wish to share links to these videos with parents, recipients, and family members. <https://www.acialliance.org/page/ci2019videos>

- Dr. John K Niparko Memorial Lecture: Nina Kraus PhD on Sound processing in healthy and hurting brain: What have we learned from music and concussion?
- Kennedy Patlan Inspires Attendees: Young adult traces her CI journey from early childhood to her position in a national nonprofit.
- Beyond the CI: The Role of Therapy, Education, and Family Engagement: CI clinicians explore resilience, parent engagement, parent child interactions, and getting the word out.

VETERANS WITH HEARING LOSS LACK FULL ACCESS TO COCHLEAR IMPLANTS

ACI Alliance members include clinicians who provide cochlear implant services in a range of health plan settings including the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). <https://www.acialliance.org/page/Veterans>

Although the VHA is diligent about selection of experienced, highly skilled clinicians to perform the surgery and needed audiology follow-up, the VHA lags dramatically behind other health care providers in referring candidates for cochlear implantation, creating a major coverage gap amongst veterans with hearing loss who do not benefit sufficiently from hearing aids (HAs). Aspects of the VA delivery system further complicate the CI process.

- Deployment to a war zone increases risk of hearing loss, with 1 in 3 returning with measurable hearing loss, which can worsen over time.
- In 2018, over 1,228,000 veterans received disability compensation for hearing loss.
- In 2019, the VA made purchases of \$14 million for cochlear implant systems for first time surgeries. Utilizing a Medicare average reimbursement of \$27,000 per implant system, an estimated 518 veterans received cochlear implants in the VA system (up from 477 individuals in 2016).
- A total of 812,761 hearing aids were dispensed in the VA system in 2019 (an estimated 406,380 individuals if we assume each patient was fit with two hearing aids).
- VHA audiologists are trained to fit hearing aids and provide assistive devices, but many are unfamiliar with current CI candidacy testing and outcomes. Veterans report not having been told of their CI candidacy by their VA audiologist.
- Long surgical wait times and the complexities of traveling to a VA center that performs the CI surgery remains an access issue for many.
- Cochlear implant clinicians outside of the VHA system have reported seeing veterans who were not counseled about their CI candidacy because of age or the type of hearing loss they had. Neither are valid reasons for not referring.
- Utilization of cochlear implants by individuals receiving hearing services in the VHA system in 2019 was less than that for those in the general hearing health system by a factor of one-sixth. That proportion has gotten worse since 2016 when the proportion was one-quarter.
- CI candidacy numbers were computed using a conservative 5% estimate of those using hearing aids for both the VHA and general population.

Supporting Data VHA vs US General Hearing Health System (2019)

Est adults fit with HAs VHA 406,380; US 1.65M

Est CI adult candidates (5% of HA users) VHA 20,320; US 82,300

Est. adults implanted with CI VHA 518; US 12,400

Ratio VHA 2.5%; US 15%

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[WORLD NEWS - American Cochlear Implant Alliance to Honor Ann Geers PhD with Lifetime Achievement Award for Advancing Pediatric Cochlear Implantation](#)



(Photo: Dr Ann Geers)

American Cochlear Implant Alliance will recognize the lifetime achievements of Ann Geers PhD at the upcoming CI2020 International, the 16th Conference on Cochlear Implants and Other Implantable Technologies. The award recognizes Geers' work in advancing cochlear implant care and follow-up for deaf children over her more than 40-year career in research on language development in children with hearing loss. The prize was to have been given at the international cochlear implant conference in Orlando, FL. This award recognises Dr. Geers' unique contributions that have benefitted children around the world.

Dr. Ann Geers is a Developmental Psychologist with a life-long interest in speech and language acquisition by children with hearing loss. At Central Institute for the Deaf and Washington University in St. Louis, she collaborated with educators to develop a program of clinical

research in childhood deafness that focused on creating objective assessment techniques and documenting outcomes of listening and spoken language instruction.

With the advent of cochlear implantation as a treatment for childhood deafness, Dr. Geers' work helped set the stage for national studies of the factors associated with maximizing language development from sensory aids. In her dual leadership roles in applied research and clinical studies, she was able to seek and participate in NIH funded research as well as work with students just beginning their professional work in the field.

Ann's appointment at the Department of Behavioral and Brain Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas allowed her to expand her collaborations to include the nationwide NIH-funded longitudinal study Child Development after Cochlear Implantation, which followed children's progress annually for more than ten years.

Dr. Geers has published over 100 articles and book chapters and presented her work around the world. She has been honest and bold in publication of findings—even when those findings were deemed controversial and opposed by groups promoting a different point of view.

For her tenacity in demonstrating how early intervention focused on listening and spoken language development can benefit children with all levels of hearing loss, we will honor Dr. Geers with the ACI Alliance 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award.

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[WORLD NEWS - KYRGYZSTAN – First fitting is a big event](#)



The initial adjustment at the first fitting is always a special event for a child with a CI system and their parents. Parents' expectations are high and the reaction of the child when the speech processor is switched on is very important for everyone involved in the operation. It is always touching to see how different the children's reactions to the first encounter with noise are. While some children are amazed at this new phenomenon or start smiling, others start to cry, overwhelmed by the emotions involved.

Nevertheless, it is an unforgettable experience that makes the importance of a CI provision even clearer, witnessing the transition from a life in total silence without an acoustic connection, especially to the family, into the world of sounds, voices. It is an amazing experience when a child hears the mother's voice for the first time.

Such reactions could also be observed in the first fitting of the 11 children and the young adult in Bishkek in December 2019. The 12 candidates were among the 49 in Kyrgyzstan already been successfully supplied with a CI system organized by the German Lehnhardt Foundation (www.lehnhardt-stiftung.org) under the direction of its President, Ms. Dr. Lehnhardt Goriany and her team who intensively accompanied them on their way into the world of hearing.

Again, there were some of these children who burst into tears and who had to be reassured by the audiologist and their parents before continuing to tune the speech processor. However, the majority of the children accepted the change positively.

The first fitting is always made by an audiologist approximately four weeks after the operation. The Lehnhardt Foundation can now offer further adjustments online, which means greater flexibility can be achieved

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RELATED CONGRESS - Nordic Advocacy Meeting



On 23rd January, fourteen representatives from Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and the UK took part in the Nordic Advocacy Meeting in Copenhagen. The aim was to identify the primary specific cochlear implant challenges facing the Nordic countries and to consider how they might be overcome. Many common and familiar themes emerged, particularly around access to bilateral cochlear implants for adults, the long and variable intervals between processor renewals, peer support, referral pathways, waiting lists, funding and regional variations of care. The need for strong peer support groups, more qualified audiologists, and proper after care for life were expressed quite strongly in the meeting, suggesting that these issues are of growing importance to cochlear implant users.

The discussion was primarily guided and kept on track by Sue Archbold and Brian Lamb, while Lotta Vedholm (of Cochlear) shared interesting data so that we could compare the situation in each of our countries. We also shared the International Consensus Statement on Adult CI, and the parts of particular relevance to the Nordic countries, along with the use of the Spend2Save documents in our different languages. Brian Lamb offered us very helpful advice and insight for framing our arguments so that they are more readily grasped and remembered by decision makers.

The whole meeting was exceptionally well-planned and organised. Consequently, we accomplished a great deal in a very short space of time. On the basis of this, I strongly recommend associations to meet and compare situations with their neighbours.

Robert Mandara
Vice-President

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RELATED CONGRESS - HEAL (HEaring Across the Lifespan) 2020 conference



Cernobbio, Lake Como, Italy

27-29 August 2020 (Please note new dates)

HEAL Conferences (also known as the Lake Como Conferences) have long been known for being a place to meet with old colleagues, make new contacts and friends with some 400 to 500 colleagues from – literally – all around the world. These international events offer an invaluable opportunity for attendees to hear about and experience the latest technologies in hearing care, evidence-based research and best practices to improve the quality of life for the hearing impaired, enhancing cooperation and exchange among all those who are part of this multifaceted community, in a truly international and multidisciplinary forum exploring all domains ranging from infant to adult hearing.

The Scientific Program typically includes some 300 presentations from a panel of speakers among the most qualified top-notch researchers and clinicians worldwide. In HEAL 2020 the program promises to be just as exciting and fulfilling as in the previous meetings. To develop the spirit of the Conference, the program schedule is arranged to maximize opportunities for interaction among attendees and leading exhibitors.

The Program will be complemented by a comprehensive exhibit. Ample time will be allowed for all participants to visit the exhibits and speak with exhibit representatives. Most promising, and not to be missed, are also the presentations included in the New Technologies Area.

Last but not least, the enchanting and magic surroundings of Lake Como are the ideal background scenario that will make HEAL 2020 an unforgettable experience, once again.

The recent outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) is creating growing concern all over the world, so this conference (originally scheduled for 4-6 June 2020) has been postponed to 27-29 August 2020.

[Click here to go to the website.](#)

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[RELATED CONGRESS – American Cochlear Implant Alliance – CI2020 International Conference](#)



After closely monitoring developments related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak and assessing its current and potential impact, the American Cochlear Implant Alliance has made the difficult but important decision to cancel the CI2020 International Conference, March 18-21, 2020 in Orlando, FL.

As members of the global community, we recognize the challenge this outbreak is placing on the medical community. Given the rapid evolution and uncertainty surrounding the transmission of COVID-19 and the travel restrictions being enacted by a large and growing number of universities, hospitals and other institutions which have prohibited both international and domestic US travel as well as attendance at meetings, ACI Alliance Leadership have made the difficult but responsible decision to cancel the CI2020 meeting. Given the circumstances, it was impossible for the conference to go forward.

Preparing for the conference involves the time, talent and ideas of many members and volunteers, speakers, presenters, exhibitors, sponsors and event partners. We especially recognize and thank the UNC Scientific Program Committee, which assembled an extraordinary program for all of us. We're grateful for the work and contributions of so many people and deeply disappointed not to be able to hold the meeting as planned.

Please review the [CI2020 COVID-19 webpage](#) to find information to answer your immediate questions regarding cancellations.

We will miss seeing you in Orlando and hope to see you next year in Dallas for CI2021.

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[RELATED CONGRESS - 28th Annual International Conference on Management of the Tinnitus and Hyperacusis Patient](#)



(Photo: Dr Rich Tyler)

The 28th Annual International Conference on Management of the Tinnitus and Hyperacusis Patient will be June 11-12, 2020 at the University of Iowa. The conference is for clinicians and researchers. Manufacturers also share their products. The Guest of Honor will be Hubert Lim, talking about Neuromodulation.

Several speakers from around the world will focus on brain measurement, Apps, internet help, Tinnitus Activities Treatment, patient-centered medical evaluations, distressed patients, cochlear implants for tinnitus, and more.

<https://medicine.uiowa.edu/oto/education/conferences-and-events/international-conference-management-tinnitus-and-hyperacusis>

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[ADVANCED BIONICS - Which sound makes you smile?](#)



World Hearing Day 2020

WHICH SOUND MAKES YOU SMILE?



Last March 3rd we have celebrated WHO's World Hearing Day together with our Facebook community. **These** are the sounds that make us

smile... which ones make YOU smile? We look forward to reading your favourite sounds in the comment section!

Join us on Facebook: [Facebook.com/AdvancedBionics](https://www.facebook.com/AdvancedBionics)

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ADVANCED BIONICS - Chorus brings unprecedented performance to AB's first generation implant recipients



The advertisement features a large image of an elderly couple hiking through a dry, hilly landscape. The man is wearing a blue shirt and khaki pants, and the woman is wearing a red shirt and khaki pants. Both are wearing backpacks and smiling. In the top left corner, the Advanced Bionics logo is displayed, consisting of a blue circle with 'AB' inside, followed by the text 'ADVANCED BIONICS' and 'POWERFUL CONNECTIONS' below it. To the right of the couple, the text 'Hear All Day Anywhere' is written in a large, black, sans-serif font, with 'CHORUS SOUND PROCESSOR' in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font below it. On the right side of the image, there is a product shot of the Chorus Sound Processor, which is a white, rectangular device with a blue top and a small 'AB' logo on the front.

Did you know? There are at least three great reasons to upgrade to our new Chorus™ sound processor.

- **ALL DAY ON A SINGLE BATTERY CHARGE** – whether it's a hike into the wild, or a party into the night, don't have to worry about inconvenient battery changes. The new Lithium-ion rechargeable battery has been designed to give you the confidence to go all day on a single charge.
- **EXCELLENT SPEECH UNDERSTANDING IN NOISE** – thanks to the integrated Roger™ receiver, Chorus offer compatibility with different Roger microphones for different listening situations and lifestyle. Whether it's a family gathering, or lunch out with friends, you can rely on outstanding performance in noisy and challenging situations. **(1), (2)**
- **THE CONFIDENCE TO TAKE IT ANYWHERE YOU WANT** - the dedicated Protective Case is ideal for any environment with excessive water, mud, and dirt. You can enjoy a day at the beach or splashing in a pool, you can hear and stream music with confidence.

With Chorus, the AB first-generation implant recipients can hear all day, anywhere. Contact your local representative and upgrade today!

[AdvancedBionics.com/ChorusUpgrade](https://www.advancedbionics.com/ChorusUpgrade)

(1) Wolfe, Jace; Morais Duke, Mila; Schafer, Erin; Agrawal, Smita Koch, Dawn (2015), *Evaluation of speech recognition of cochlear implant recipients using adaptive, digital remote microphone technology and a speech enhancement sound processing algorithm*, *The American Journal of Audiology*, Volume 5, 2015.

(2) Professor Thibodeau, Linda, PhD (2014), *Comparison of speech recognition with adaptive digital and FM wireless technology by listeners who use hearing aids*, University of Texas, Dallas, USA, *The American Journal of Audiology*. Volume 23, 201-210, June 2014.

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COCHLEAR - Coach yourself around conversations, for you or your child



How to get the Nucleus Smart app for your Nucleus 7 Sound Processor.

- 1 Download the Cochlear Nucleus Smart app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- 2 Log in with your Cochlear Account details or follow the In-app Instructions to create an account.
- 3 For more information about the Nucleus Smart App, visit www.nucleussmartapp.com/faq

When asked, most people express motivation to have “better conversations” (Harris et al, 2016) and we know that the more children are exposed to speech by being engaged in conversations the better they do (Hart & Risley, 1995). The **Hearing Tracker** in the Cochlear™ Nucleus® Smart app for Nucleus 7 Sound Processors shows **Time in Speech**, this is the time that you or your child was exposed to speech, speech in noise, or was involved in listening via an accessory such as the Mini Microphone or direct streaming from an Apple or Android device.

When you look at the hearing tracker take a minute to think about the tallest green bar and ask yourself:

- *Why was there so much speech on this day?*
- *What did I do to add to the speech heard?*
- *Who else talked with me or my child?*

You can also use a simple timeline (like the one below) to help think through your or your child's day, from waking up to going to bed. You can think through a typical day or your ideal day or the day when you or your child heard the most speech. You might also what to think through a typical week.

--WAKE UP-----MORNING-----AFTERNOON-----EVENING-----SLEEP--

As you think through your or your child's day ask yourself:

- *When do I put the processors on?*
- *When do I take them off?*

Wearing the processors for longer is a positive step towards using them for all waking hours.

When do you or your child have conversations?

- *What do you talk about?*
- *What other activities do you do? Could you include more conversations?*
- *Who else talks with you or your child?*
- *Can you involve anyone else in conversations?*

The author Alex Haley said “find the good, then praise it”; a good way of encouraging others to have more conversations with you or your child is to notice when they do and praise them, a simple “thanks, that was nice” is a good start, it might feel strange to say this but others will know that you appreciate their efforts.

What obstacles are there to listening and talking?

- *When there is background noise, what do you notice? What helps?*

When you next see your audiologist ask about the features of your sound processor that might help with conversations when there is background noise (e.g. ForwardFocus) and ask about the accessories that will help you or your child (e.g. the Mini Microphone).

- *What opportunities are there for more listening and conversations?*

To grow your child's listening and language skills, first notice what your child is focused on, e.g. what are they looking at? Then start talking about what's happening. Noticing and talking about the person's focus of attention is a good way for anyone of any age to engage with others in more conversations!

Even before a child has words you take turns in conversations by responding to their gestures, facial expressions and babbles to keep the conversation going, "...the sheer volume of conversation directed at children, not just spoken in their presence, is fundamental to language learning and later success in school" (Hirsh-Pasek in Kamenetz, 2018).

A creative way for anyone to add conversations is to use photos on your phone or in an album or scrapbook to stimulate conversations. This is a great way of adding conversations around topics that are relevant to you or your child's life, experiences and memories.

The old saying "*every little helps*" is rooted in folk wisdom, the kind of advice your grandmother might give. Imagine you add 15 minutes of conversation each day, what might that little time add up to? Well it's exactly 5,475 minutes in the first year, over 27,000 minutes in five years! 27,000 extra minutes helping to grow the listening brain.

When you asked yourself all these questions, what did you discover?

- *Activity? Conversation? Obstacle? Opportunity? Ideas?*

By thinking through your or your child's day in detail you will have a clearer understanding of the helpful things that are happening and the opportunities you have to add more speech to your or your child's day.

Now ask yourself:

- *Thinking about me and my life or my child's life, what do I want to do now?*
- *Why is that important?*

A CI-user said "*I really had wrong expectations. I expected this thing it would just take care of business for me. That just isn't the case. You have to invest, too.*" Harris et al (2016) observed that, "*Attainment of difficult goals entails sustained and intentional effort applied over time.*" To quote another old saying, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step, ask yourself:

- *What will be my next step?*

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COCHLEAR – Small Successes



"Happiness is a habit - cultivate it." Elbert Hubbard

When you see your child or grandchild every day, you don't notice him growing slowly millimetre by millimetre. In the same way, it's all too easy to miss the small, incremental changes in hearing development when you are close to the experience.

Here's an idea that has worked for many families and individuals, allowing them to review their progress and see how all the small steps add up.

Being more positive and optimistic overall means that you are less likely to feel disheartened or overwhelmed when things don't go so well.

Just take a moment or two each day to notice something good that happened. Write down what happened and why it was good. Also, what you did to help make it happen. There are lots of ways to do this:

- In your diary
- On your phone or tablet
- On a wall chart
- In a special book

One family takes time over dinner for everyone to share the best part of their day and make notes in their Happy Book. Another parent keeps a white board in the kitchen and aims to write three good things each day. She takes a quick photo before the board is wiped clean for the next week, so those positives are always there as reminders.

For example:

I sorted out how to stream music from my smartphone directly to my sound processor and hearing aid*. It was great listening to music wherever I was during the day.*

Ben was upset about the sounds in the restaurant so took his processors off and wouldn't talk to anyone for 5 minutes but put them back on himself and started talking to the other kids."

I went to a friend's party, tried Forward Focus and I really enjoyed seeing people that I don't normally get to see in a big group.

Michael phoned on Skype this afternoon and I got to see Sasha at her 1st birthday party. I could hear her laughing when she opened my present.

The Hearing Tracker on my Nucleus Smart App shows that I exceeded my "Time in Speech" goal for a whole week.

On my own, morning coffee in total silence , I'm not used to that these days!

Why not share your small successes, perhaps via social media?

The psychologist Martin Seligman (2011), sometimes referred to as the father of positive psychology, says:

"We think too much about what goes wrong and not enough about what goes right in our lives [...] people tend to spend more time thinking about what is bad in life than is helpful. [...] this focus on negative events sets us up for anxiety and depression. One way to keep this from happening is to get better at thinking about and savouring what went well." **

* Available with Nucleus 7 and a [compatible ReSound hearing aid](https://www.cochlear.com/intl/home/support/cochlear-implant-systems/the-nucleus-7-sound-processor/bimodal-compatibility). <https://www.cochlear.com/intl/home/support/cochlear-implant-systems/the-nucleus-7-sound-processor/bimodal-compatibility>

** Seligman, M. 2011, *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*, Nicholas Brearley Publishing, London.

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[COCHLEAR - the MOSAICS project has officially started!](#)



(Photo: the MOSAICS ESRs clockwise from top left: Enrico Migliorini, Loes Beckers, Nikki Tromp, Ignacio Calderon de Palma)

The MOSAICS project, mentioned in the [September 2019 newsletter](#), has officially started!

The project, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 860718, is a European Industrial Doctorate (EID) to train experts in auditory implants for minimised outcome spread and maximized participation in society, comprising 10 partners across 7 countries, with the main beneficiaries being Cochlear Ltd. and Radboud University Medical Center.

The aim is to lead a multidisciplinary study project across the fields of audiology, biophysics, neuroscience, engineering, and psychology, aiming to improve the predictability of the outcomes of adults with cochlear implants (CI). Such predictions provide an opportunity to minimize the variability in outcomes between CI recipients, specifically poor performers, as well as ensure better societal integration and quality of life for these individuals.

Four Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) have been recruited for a four-year PhD program:

- ESR 1 (Objective Measures): Ignacio obtained his Sound Engineering degree from Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He will investigate possible bottlenecks in the information flow in the auditory pathway from peripheral to cortical areas, in order to obtain a better understanding and prediction of outcome of CI systems.
- ESR 2 (Cognition): Loes Beckers obtained her Research Master's degree in Cognitive Neuroscience at Maastricht University. Her task will be to assess different aspects of cognitive abilities as process-related outcome measures within the population of adult CI

candidates and recipients. Furthermore, the interplay between objective measures at cortical levels and cognitive abilities will be examined.

- ESR 3 (Societal Benefit): Nikki Tromp obtained her Master's Degree in Audiology from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She will study the effects of CI on societal benefit, including quality of life, communication profile, social functioning, independence, and work. She aims to create an individualized rehabilitation program, specifically targeting skills needed to improve autonomy and independence of CI recipients, including programs aiding the maintenance or acquisition of employment.
- ESR 4 (Fitting): Enrico Migliorini holds a Master's Degree in Computer Science and Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Milan. He will work on adapting the fitting process of cochlear implants through the use of Machine Learning techniques, aiming to improve performance of recipients, reduce the workload of audiologists, and allow identification of performance barriers due to suboptimal fitting.

More information can be found at <https://www.mosaics-eid.eu/>

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[MED-EL - International World Hearing Day survey reveals: 1/3 of adults have never had their hearing tested](#)



MED-EL Medical Electronics is driven by a mission to overcome hearing loss as a barrier to communication. In light of World Hearing Day 2020, MED-EL asked more than 12,000 people worldwide about their hearing habits. The global study of over 12,000 respondents conducted in 13 countries revealed that nearly a third (31%) of adults have never had a hearing test.

According to WHO, an estimated 466 million people worldwide have disabling hearing loss with 34 million of these being children. Living with unaddressed hearing loss means unknowingly missing out on important sounds and words, making it difficult and tiring to carry out conversations and interact socially. People with hearing loss benefit from early identification – frequent hearing checks thus can help to enable early detection and treatment.

Find the global report to download and further information here: <https://whd.explore-life.com/>

Don't let hearing loss limit you. Hearing for life!

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[MED-EL – Founder Ingeborg Hochmair-Desoyer named new honorary doctor at Uppsala University's Faculty of Medicine](#)



Ingeborg Hochmair-Desoyer's ground-breaking research led to the development of the world's first microelectronic and multi-channel cochlear implant (CI).

This technology enables children who were born with a profound hearing loss to hear and thus develop spoken language. It also allows adults who lost their hearing later in life to hear again. The cochlear implant is thus far the only product able to replace a natural human sense.

Uppsala University's Faculty of Medicine is now naming Ingeborg Hochmair-Desoyer as an honorary doctor – a title awarded to individuals who make outstanding contributions to science or who otherwise help to promote research at the university.

"I am hugely honoured to be named an honorary doctor by Uppsala University's Faculty of Medicine. Working with clinics and universities has always been very important to us. MED-EL developed from research that my husband and I pursued during our years at university," says Ingeborg Hochmair-Desoyer.

Ingeborg Hochmair-Desoyer's research has changed the lives of thousands of people who have been able to hear thanks to the development of the cochlear implant. She is one of the world's leading researchers within this area and together with her husband she developed the first ever microelectronic, multi-channel cochlear implant in the world, which was first successfully implanted in 1977.

From 1990 onwards, she has worked with her husband to develop and operate MED-EL in Innsbruck, Austria. Ingeborg Hochmair-Desoyer runs MED-EL with a firm focus on research and development, supporting successful investigations within the field of hearing all over the world.

[Learn more here.](#)

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[MED-EL – ideas4ears: Child geniuses win a trip to Austria with their ideas to help people with hearing loss!](#)



The ideas4ears children's invention contest challenged children aged between 6-12 years old from across the world to create an invention to improve the quality of life for people with hearing loss.

Overall, 215 children from 28 different countries participated and sent in 171 ideas. From these entries the children with the top 12 worldwide invention ideas were chosen to win a trip to visit MED-EL's Headquarters this June in Innsbruck, Austria.

Now introducing the grand prize winners who will meet the minds behind MED-EL's hearing implant technologies:

- Anuk Gohlke, 11 years old from Geesthacht, Germany (pictured above)
- Aliona and Aryna Vlasenka, 8 and 11 years old from Hrodna, Belarus (joint entry)
- Dylan Monaghan, 10 years old from Rolleston, New Zealand
- Eden Birdsey, 7 years old from KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
- Federico Malagnino, 10 years old from Florence, Italy
- Freya Chipperfield, 9 years old from Sale, United Kingdom
- Kenzi Cayton, 8 years old from Vancouver, USA
- Gergana Petrova Angelova, 9 years old from Ruse, Bulgaria
- Julián Gómez, 12 years old from Medellín, Colombia
- Noël Grolimud, 11 years old from Grenchen, Switzerland
- Renata Bravo Staiti, 9 years old from Godoy Cruz, Argentina
- Tejasveer Sharma, 7 years old from Noida, India

Whilst celebrating children's creativity, ideas4ears aims to engage parents to participate in an interactive activity with their children to improve the whole family's understanding of the challenges associated with hearing loss and deafness as well as the benefits of treatment.

Each entry included written descriptions of their idea and in addition included a video, drawings or even real prototypes. Many of the children's inventions focused on improving their own experiences with hearing implants so they can be a regular kid who enjoys time with their friends, without experiencing further difficulties, bullying or discrimination because of their deafness.

If you are worried about your hearing loss or the hearing loss of a family member contact ideas4ears@medel.com to receive a free information package on hearing and the solutions available.

More good news: Presidential recognition for MED-EL's ideas4ears winner!

On February 11th the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Trinidad a past ideas4ears winner was invited to represent her country at the Science Ministry in Chile.

She impressed everyone with her invention idea to help her sister with hearing loss, even the President of Chile Sebastián Piñera posted this update about her story on his [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) channel! Well done Trinidad!

Follow ideas4ears on Facebook to be kept up to date: www.facebook.com/ideas4ears/

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OTICON MEDICAL - Research to close the gap between school-aged children with and without hearing loss



Children listen and learn in noisy environments. This is a challenge for all children, and especially for those with hearing impairment. It's important to monitor children in all aspects of their auditory, language, cognitive, social, and academic development. The auditory skills measured must reflect the daily challenges faced. A research project is closely following 46 children with hearing devices (32 use cochlear implants) over three years as they transition from day care to school. The research project compares these children to a group of children with normal hearing acuity. The goal is to close the gap between the learning potential of children with and without hearing loss. We want no child with hearing impairment left behind in school.

As part of this project, we measure the ability of children to hear and repeat sentences in noise. By doing so, we want to encourage cochlear implant centres to go beyond self-report, hearing thresholds, and word perception in quiet when assessing how well children can hear and understand. Let's face it: hearing and repeating sentences in noise is a challenge for young children with cochlear implants. Not only does the noise impact on their hearing, they are also learning to focus and sustain their attention and their ability to memorise and recall full sentences is still developing. Children listen to five-word sentences played through loudspeakers together with noise. We show that most children aged six and above can complete the test. Children with greater verbal working memory can hear and repeat sentences in significantly higher levels of noise. We will continue to research realistic measures of everyday performance to support the lifelong assessment and optimizing of people's hearing ability and technology.

This research project is led by Decibel (Danish Association of Children and Youth with Hearing Impairment) and partners include Oticon / Oticon Medical, the cochlear implant rehabilitation centres at Rigshospitalet and Aarhus University Hospital, and the Capital Region of Denmark. The project is funded by the Danish Innovation Foundation and by the William Demant Foundation.

Percy-Smith L, Wischmann S, Josvassen JL, Hallstrom M, Laplante-Lévesque A, Sorgenfrei MG, Caye-Thomasen P. Evaluation of a sentence test in noise in children with hearing impairment. Danish Med J. 2020;67(1):1–5.

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OTICON MEDICAL - "Now I can hear my grandchild" meet Linda, Neuro 2 user



Meet Linda, one of our users, and hear her story of how her life changed after receiving her Oticon Medical Cochlear Implant, the Neuro 2. Linda has lived with a hearing loss since she was 19 years old and it just got worse as the years went by.

Linda is now a proud grandmother and she is finally able to hear her grandchildren. As Linda missed out on hearing many things when her own children grew up, it is a blessing for her being able to hear her grandchildren.

"It's been amazing. It's been overwhelming." – Linda, Neuro 2 user

In this [video](#) you hear Linda's experience as gets her Neuro 2 switched on for the first time and see her become part of life again.

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