

# Ifhohyp News



The International  
Federation hard of  
hearing youth  
people  
newsmagazine  
April 2004

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## School and Education for Hard of Hearing People in....**SWEDEN**



I decided to talk with a friend to me, Tina, and interview her. She told me about her story as hard of hearing through the schooltime. I think her story is the most ordinary in Sweden. I didn't want to tell about myself because I'm in a smaller group of hoh people, I did my primary schooltime in a deaf school and then in the second upper school integrated among hearing people, with sign interpreters. I can say that sign language have a strong position in Sweden, even for hoh people in some places in the country as a complement to the speech. Well, here comes Tina...

Some hard of hearing people (hoh) take their whole time in school integrated among hearing people, other choose a class with only hoh people (mostly) in the third part of primary school or in the second upper school. I choosed hoh-class in the second upper school by more reasons. One was that I knew the line in school I wanted to take should have 30-40 pupils in the first year before making the direction, and another reason was a personality reason. I fought much with my parents, I didn't feel any akin with my friends; it felt as I had grown away from them and I was tired of Helsingborg where I lived and wanted a new environment. The second upper school for hoh and deaf people is in a town names Örebro. The class for hoh is naming RGH. RGH is good in many ways. We were seven pupils in the class and got much more time by the teachers than I should got in a "ordinary" class, and the contact with the teachers and classmates was much more personally - we come each other much nearlier. But one bad thing was that it felt as we was in a protected world, isolated from the hearing world in the school. (The school have mostly hearing pupils, with some classes for hoh and deaf people) The teachers thought that because we were in a hoh-class we should only spend time with hoh and absolutely not have lessons or activities with hearing people. It felt discriminating that we were forced to make four years in the school and not three years which is the ordinary for hearing people. We couldn't choose it by ourselves, and during the second year we been tired of that. We protested, and explained we though we succeed the school the same good as whoever (as hearing people). The first reaction from my headteacher (who was my favourite teacher) I will never forget; "What? No, you will never success that." Thanks for that support... But it been as we wanted and the last year we readed two year in one (the third and fourth together) which was unbelievable hard but very nice when we took the upper-secondary final examination together with our hearing friends (which we had got in spite of the teachers' believing it was not possible).

Article written by Kim Juhanidotter



The time between the day nursery and the last year in primary school I had a "hearing-teacher". It was good first, until about the second part of school. Then I begin to think it was awkward and hard to be reminded about my hearing impairment every time he (or she) came into the classroom to "borrow" me for a while. When we did so, we talked about the schoolwork, if it was something I needed help for, or help before tests and so on. Good basic idea, but I didn't need so much help what I can remember (it's possible I remember wrong!)... We talked about how I felt and how the technical things worked. In the third part it was worst – I didn't want to tell my class I hearded bad, the "hearing-teacher" came against my will and she was always so critical against me. She said "oooh, Jennie has been so cute. She is so clever, bla bla bla" about another hoh girl in my age in Helsingborg but never anything positive about me. When I told I wanted to move to Örebro and RGH she said she doesn't think I should do it at all, what shall I do there, me who even don't use my hearing aids. Moreover, she said, it's so many young girls who be pregnant when they come to Örebro and referred to that I should be it too if I wasn't careful because I was so "flirty and charming" for boys. Bullshit, I say, you don't lack your judgement if you are moving, do you?

On the day nursery I had two wonderful hearing-teachers. They teached me to write and read a bit before I began school and had a bit talk-training with me.

At the university... I have not use loop system. Last spring I told one of my lecturer I were hoh and had a bit difficult to hear what the other students asked but that he hearded fine and he could repeat what they said. It worked fine, but we had three lecturers more and to them I didn't say anything. I used my hearing aids some times when we were in the lecture hall, a big room, but it didn't work so good. So I used note-help (it will say, I got a copying-card for 500 copies so I could copy friends' notes) and that worked very good. They were my ears when I didn't hear. In every university it shall be one disability-coordinator who we can go to if we need help/loop system etc. It's best to do it early, preferably before the course is starting so they eventually can place lectures to rooms which already have loop system.

I have had loop system and hearing aids during whole my schooltime but not always use it. In the third part of primary school the boys used to take the microphone and shout in it when the teacher wasn't near – hard!! So I stopped to use my aids and didn't remind the teachers to take the microphone on when they forgot it.

Womens who are hoh is more widely sick-listed for a long time. In my experience the most of the hearing people have three different views about hoh; nothing at all, only positive (they be curious) or prejudiced and see us as strange, with many disabilities, stupid. One friend I have think that hoh is a own small group which can be called for mutual admiration. Don't know exactly how he meant but about that we praise ourselves to the skies. I have got for me that many hoh is unsecure and a bit bad to do what they should be able to do in the life (make more), that they don't dare to say if they be badly handled because they think they are a burden. Other on the other hand is "super-secure" (very secure) on themselves and don't let anyone sit on them.

If someone have a type of impairment (if hear bad enough, think it is if have more than 50 db impairment) he can get compensation. It can be

In the previous numbers : Education and School for HoH people in : Belgium (June 2003), Bulgaria (September 2003), Italy (December 2003)

everything from about €100 per month till up to 1000. (I think! Am not sure.)

In RGH I got 120 euro/month as compensation for food when I lived alone. When I lived in a family I got only the study grant which everybody get, 95 euro. We got the place to live paid and journey home every second week. I heard a rumour the deaf students got 600-1000 euro/month... they drunk quite much alcohol...

Somebody has told me that there is a special employment office in Örebro for hoh/deafs in which we can get help to find a working place. Then we can work there for three or if it was six months, don't remember, and get paid, and if the working place want me left I be permanent employee. (The first time the employer don't pay, it is something other) But I have not checked it out myself.

Some years ago it was a investigation about how many hard of hearing students continued to university. It showed it was about 8 %. Among deaf people it was about 12 %. But the number for hoh people is unsecure because of hidden statistics. The numbers is based on persons registered in the disability-coordinator's list. And many hoh don't register, while it's impossible for deaf people to don't do it, because of the necessary of signing interpreters.

The mostly of the hard of hearing childs is integrated in hearing classes, 80 % (3000 childs). In the "hoh-classes" it is about 350-400 pupils and the special schools have about 500-600 pupils. For the second upper schools the numbers is: Örebro: about 250 pupils. Stockholm: 25-30 pupils and Göteborg 30-40 pupils.

In Sweden there are about 20.000 hard of hearing children under 18 years age. In the age of 16-24 it is about 25.000 persons, and in the age of 25-34 70.803 persons, in 2001.

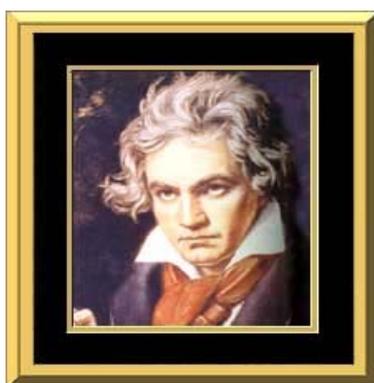
I have got the numerical information from the swedish hard of hearing organization's substituting ombudsman, Hanna Sejlitz. I even asked some questions and here is one of them.

Me: I were thinking about the course UH (young hoh-organization) use to arrange every year, "Hard of hearing – so what?". Is it anything UH makes itself, non-profitly, or is there anything in similar way in the county council's direction?

Hanna: Yes, we arrange that course ourselves, we applicant for money from funds to finance it. The course-material we have made together with a study union. When the knowledge-centres were in the old SIH (The Institute of Disability) they used to arrange "camps for awareness/consciousness" and there they talked about identity and personal development with integrated pupils, also many county councils arranged courses like that. Now when the knowledge-centres don't exist anymore and the county councils is saving money many of these camps have disappeared, unfortunately. But there is other meetings for integrated pupils any time sometimes, but not as camps.

## When HoH People made History:

# Ludwig van Beethoven



(born Bonn, baptized 17 December 1770; died Vienna, 26 March 1827).

He studied first with his father, Johann, a singer and instrumentalist in the service of the Elector of Cologne at Bonn. At 12 he had some music published. In 1787 he went to Vienna, but quickly returned on hearing that his mother was dying. Five years later he went back to Vienna, where he settled. He pursued his studies, first with Haydn, but there was some clash of temperaments and Beethoven studied too with Schenk, Albrechtsberger and Salieri. Until 1794 he was supported by the Elector at Bonn but he found patrons among the music-loving Viennese aristocracy and soon enjoyed success as a piano virtuoso, playing at private houses or palaces rather than in public. His public debut was in 1795; about the same time his first important publications appeared, three piano trios op.1 and three piano sonatas op.2. As a pianist, it was reported, he had fire, brilliance and fantasy as well as depth of feeling. It is naturally in the piano sonatas, writing for his own instrument, that he is at his most original in this period; the *Pathétique* belongs to 1799, the *Moonlight* ('Sonata quasi una fantasia') to 1801, and these represent only the most obvious innovations in style and emotional content. These years also saw the composition of his first three piano concertos, his first two symphonies and a set of six string quartets op.18.

1802, however, was a year of crisis for Beethoven, with his realization that the impaired hearing he had noticed for some time was incurable and sure to worsen. That autumn, at a village outside Vienna, Heiligenstadt, he wrote a will-like document addressed to his two brothers, describing his bitter unhappiness over his affliction in terms suggesting that he thought death was near. But he came through with his determination strengthened and entered a new creative phase, generally called his 'middle period'. It is characterized by a heroic tone, evident in the *Eroica* Symphony (no.3, originally to have been dedicated not to a noble patron but to Napoleon), in Symphony no.5, where the sombre mood of the c Minor first movement ('Fate knocking on the door') ultimately yields to a triumphant C Major finale with piccolo, trombones and percussion added to the orchestra, and in his opera *Fidelio*. Here the heroic theme is made explicit by the story, in which (in the post-French Revolution 'rescue opera' tradition) a wife saves her imprisoned husband from murder at the hands of his oppressive political enemy. The three string quartets of this period, op.59, are similarly heroic in scale: the first, lasting some 45 minutes, is conceived with great breadth, and it too embodies a sense of triumph as the intense f Minor Adagio gives way to a jubilant finale in the major embodying (at the request of the dedicatee, Count Razumovsky) a Russian folk

melody.

*Fidelio*, unsuccessful at its premiere, was twice revised by Beethoven and his librettists and successful in its final version of 1814. Here there is more emphasis on the moral force of the story. It deals not only with freedom and justice, and heroism, but also with married love, and in the character of the heroine Leonore, Beethoven's lofty, idealized image of womanhood is to be seen. He did not find it in real life he fell in love several times, usually with aristocratic pupils (some of them married), and each time was either rejected or saw that the woman did not match his ideals. In 1812, however, he wrote a passionate love-letter to an 'Eternally Beloved' (probably Antonie Brentano, a Viennese married to a Frankfurt businessman), but probably the letter was never sent.

With his powerful and expansive middle-period works, which include the *Pastoral* Symphony (no.6, conjuring up his feelings about the countryside, which he loved), Symphony no.7 and Symphony no. 8, Piano Concertos nos.44 (a lyrical work) and 5 (the noble and brilliant *Emperor*) and the Violin Concerto, as well as more chamber works and piano sonatas (such as the *Waldstein* and the *Appassionata*) Beethoven was firmly established as the greatest composer of his time. His piano-playing career had finished in 1808 (a charity appearance in 1814 was a disaster because of his deafness). That year he had considered leaving Vienna for a secure post in Germany, but three Viennese noblemen had banded together to provide him with a steady income and he remained there, although the plan foundered in the ensuing Napoleonic wars in which his patrons suffered and the value of Austrian money declined.

The years after 1812 were relatively unproductive. He seems to have been seriously depressed, by his deafness and the resulting isolation, by the failure of his marital hopes and (from 1815) by anxieties over the custodianship of the son of his late brother, which involved him in legal actions. But he came out of these trials to write his profoundest music, which surely reflects something of what he had been through. There are seven piano sonatas in this, his 'late period', including the turbulent *Hammerklavier* op.106, with its dynamic writing and its harsh, rebarbative fugue, and op.110, which also has fugues and much eccentric writing at the instrument's extremes of compass; there is a great Mass and a Symphony Nr. 9 in d minor, where the extended variation-finale is a setting for soloists and chorus of Schiller's Ode to Joy; and there is a group of string quartets, music on a new plane of spiritual depth, with their exalted ideas, abrupt contrasts and emotional intensity. The traditional four-movement scheme and conventional forms are discarded in favour of designs of six or seven movements, some fugal, some akin to variations (these forms especially attracted him in his late years), some song-like, some martial, one even like a chorale prelude. For Beethoven, the act of composition had always been a struggle, as the tortuous scrawls of his sketchbooks show; in these late works the sense of agonizing effort is a part of the music.

Musical taste in Vienna had changed during the first decades of the 19th century; the public were chiefly interested in light Italian opera (especially Rossini) and easygoing chamber music and songs, to suit the prevalent bourgeois taste. Yet the Viennese were conscious of Beethoven's greatness: they applauded the Choral Symphony even though, understandably, they found it difficult, and though baffled by the late quartets they sensed their extraordinary visionary qualities. His reputation went far beyond Vienna: the late Mass was first heard in St. Petersburg, and the initial commission that produced the Choral Symphony had come from the Philharmonic Society of London. When, early in 1827, he died, 10,000 are said to have attended the funeral. He had become a public figure, as no composer had done before. Unlike composers of the preceding generation, he had never been a purveyor of music to the nobility he had lived into the age - indeed helped create it - of the artist as hero and the property of mankind at large.

# HoH...ollywood !

( when HoH people/characters go to the cinema...)



## Angel of Vengeance

(also known as : “Ms. 45”)

Directed by Abel Ferrara

Year: 1981

**Synopsis:** A mute woman gets raped twice coming home from work and decides to take matters into her own hands. She dresses suggestively and roams the streets alone, reaking vengeance upon anyone who tries to take advantage of her. Eventually her secret life spills over into her regular life in the fashion industry.

**With:**

Zoë Tamerlis ....	Thana
Albert Sinkys ....	Albert
Darlene Stuto	Laurie
Helen McGara	Carol
Nike Zachmanoglou	Pamela
Abel Ferrara ....	Rapist



## Sur Mes Levres

(also know as: “Read my Lips”)

Year :2001

Directed by Jacques Audiard

**Synopsis:** Young secretary Carla is a long-time employee of a property development company. Loyal and hardworking, first to arrive and last to leave, Carla is beginning to chafe at the limitations of her career and is looking to move up. But as a 35-five-year-old woman with a hearing deficiency, she is not sure how to climb out of her humdrum life, though she is confident in her own abilities. Into her life comes Paul Angeli, a new trainee she decides to hire. Paul is 25 years old and completely unskilled, but Carla covers for him when the need arises because of his other qualities - he's a thief, fresh out of jail and very good-looking. It's a case of good meeting bad

**With:**

Vincent Cassel	....	Paul
Emmanuelle Devos	....	Carla
Olivier Gourmet	....	Marchand
Olivier Perrier	....	Masson
Olivia Bonamy	....	Annie

## **Marianna Ucria**

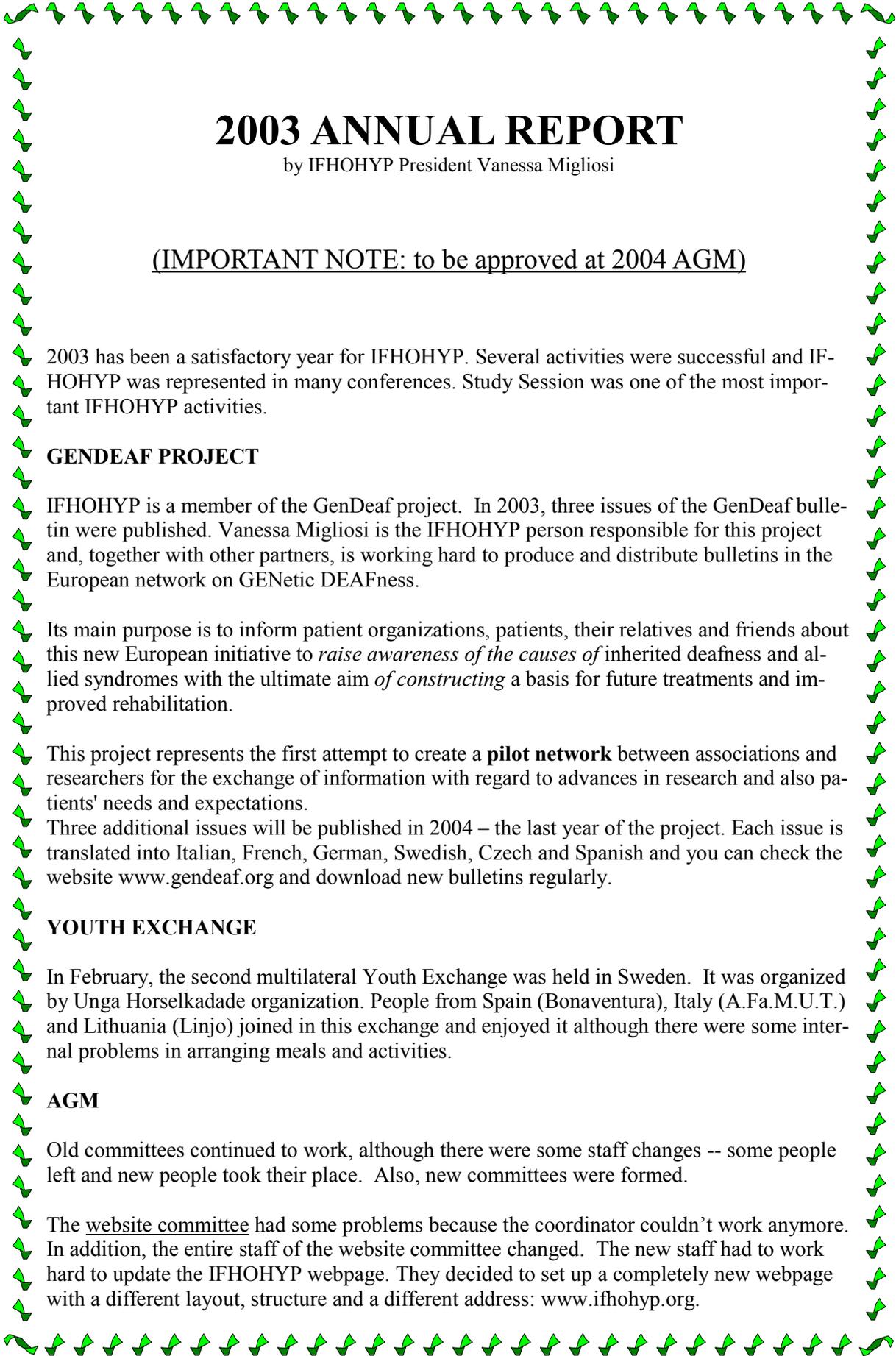
**Year : 1997**

**Directed by Roberto Faenza**

**Synopsis:** In the middle of the XVIII Century, a beautiful deaf and mute girl tries to get respect and credit in the society. But it's quite impossible....

**With:**

**Emmanuelle Laborit**  
**Roberto Herlitzka**  
**Eva Grieco**  
**Laura Morante**  
**Philip Noiret**



# 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

by IFHOHYP President Vanessa Migliosi

(IMPORTANT NOTE: to be approved at 2004 AGM)

2003 has been a satisfactory year for IFHOHYP. Several activities were successful and IFHOHYP was represented in many conferences. Study Session was one of the most important IFHOHYP activities.

## **GENDEAF PROJECT**

IFHOHYP is a member of the GenDeaf project. In 2003, three issues of the GenDeaf bulletin were published. Vanessa Migliosi is the IFHOHYP person responsible for this project and, together with other partners, is working hard to produce and distribute bulletins in the European network on GENetic DEAFness.

Its main purpose is to inform patient organizations, patients, their relatives and friends about this new European initiative to *raise awareness of the causes of inherited deafness* and allied syndromes with the ultimate aim *of constructing* a basis for future treatments and improved rehabilitation.

This project represents the first attempt to create a **pilot network** between associations and researchers for the exchange of information with regard to advances in research and also patients' needs and expectations.

Three additional issues will be published in 2004 – the last year of the project. Each issue is translated into Italian, French, German, Swedish, Czech and Spanish and you can check the website [www.gendeaf.org](http://www.gendeaf.org) and download new bulletins regularly.

## **YOUTH EXCHANGE**

In February, the second multilateral Youth Exchange was held in Sweden. It was organized by Unga Horselkadade organization. People from Spain (Bonaventura), Italy (A.Fa.M.U.T.) and Lithuania (Linjo) joined in this exchange and enjoyed it although there were some internal problems in arranging meals and activities.

## **AGM**

Old committees continued to work, although there were some staff changes -- some people left and new people took their place. Also, new committees were formed.

The website committee had some problems because the coordinator couldn't work anymore. In addition, the entire staff of the website committee changed. The new staff had to work hard to update the IFHOHYP webpage. They decided to set up a completely new webpage with a different layout, structure and a different address: [www.ifhohyp.org](http://www.ifhohyp.org).

The newsletter committee continued to work hard and smoothly. The committee coordinator published four newsletter issues. All of the articles were very interesting.

The IFHOH 2004 congress committee co-operated with the Finnish Federation of HOH Youth to prepare a Youth Forum to be held in parallel with the IFHOH 2004 Congress.

The Study Session committee worked hard and succeeded in organizing the 2003 Study Session titled "Building communication: breaking barriers and stereotypes" which took place on 12-19 October 2003 in European Youth Centre, Strasbourg.

New committees were created: the convention of adhesion committee, which will prepare a convention of adhesion to be signed by IFHOHYP member organization; the English course committee, which will organize an English language course; the membership fee committee which will establish IFHOHYP membership fees; the conference and/or seminars committee, a group of people who are available to participate in meetings as IFHOHYP representative.

### **CONFERENCE in Athens: "Towards a barrier free Europe for young people with disabilities"**

Young people represent the future of Europe, therefore, it is essential to include the voice of young people with disabilities in the youth society today in Europe. This was done at the European Youth Conference on 16-17 May 2003 in Athens. This event resulted in a joint statement by representatives of both mainstream youth organizations and organizations of young people with disabilities who have brought forward the importance of participation of young disabled people into mainstream youth activities and policies ([http://www.edf-feph.org/en/policy/youth/youth\\_news.htm](http://www.edf-feph.org/en/policy/youth/youth_news.htm)). Vanessa Migliosi and Karina Chupina participated in this conference. Vanessa gave a speech which represented a testimony about her life and being hard of hearing. Karina ran a wonderful workshop about Information and Participation in which she spoke about: "Empowerment of disabled youth through active participation and access to information in Europe: challenges and barriers."

### **SUMMER CAMP**

In July- August 2003, a wonderful Summer Camp was organized in Holland. The Dutch HOH organization (SHJO) did a great job in successfully arranging this event! About 70 people from all over Europe participated and IFHOHYP will never stop saying thanks to SHJO for their hard work.

**STUDY SESSION IN STRASBOURG:** *"Building communication: breaking barriers and stereotypes", 12-19 October 2003, European Youth Centre Strasbourg, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe.*

Karina Chupina was a course director of this study session. She applied for the study session and organised it together with international team (Jennie Westh, Denmark, Markku Kunnas, Finland, Ervinas Klimavicius, Lithuania, and Arturas Deltuva, Lithuania, external trainer).

The overall aim of the study session was to increase participation of hard of hearing youth in the civil society and empower hard of hearing youth in informing society about their needs. The objectives were 1) to help participants in building their self-confidence and im-

prove their ability to address disability concerns to the public and 2) to develop personal communication skills and provide communication tools for effective participation in group work and in organizations.

At this study session, 29 participants from 14 countries were present (30 participants from 15 countries were expected). It was the biggest number of countries and organizations of hard of hearing youth ever involved in an IFHOHYP study sessions since 1994!

The session was a great success. You can see a full report of the study session (with photos, descriptions of activities and methods) prepared by Karina Chupina with the help of the Team and participants at [www.ifhohyp.org](http://www.ifhohyp.org).

### **EDF**

IFHOHYP recognizes the importance of increasing the impact of HOH young people in European politics. Therefore, in February 2002, IFHOHYP became an associate member of the European Disability Forum (EDF).

However, we are sad to report that IFHOHYP was not able to pay the 2003 EDF membership dues (because of a lack of financial resources). I hope that this won't happen again in the future.

The mission of EDF is to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination of disabled people and to guarantee and protect their fundamental human rights by means of active involvement in policy development and campaigns on disability rights at the EU level.

### **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Vanessa Migliosi, who was appointed last year as a member of the Council of Europe Youth Advisory Council, represented EDF and IFHOHYP in the Advisory Council meeting which took place in Budapest on 3-4 November 2003.

The Advisory Council is composed of 30 members from various organizations such as the World Organization of the Scout Movement, Muslim Youth, some national youth councils, European Youth Against Violence Network, International Union of Socialist Youth, United for Intercultural Action, Young Business and Professional Women, International Young Nature Friends, etc... Also present were representatives of the European Youth Forum.

Vanessa was the only representative of a disability organization (EDF) and felt that there is a lot of work to be done, as most of the Advisory Council members have never really been in contact with young disabled people or been concerned with disability issues.

The Advisory Council discussed which actions and activities to support in the coming years, including two big activities: a campaign for culture and peace and a globalization event in 2004. Vanessa proposed that the Advisory Council include disability as a transversal theme in both these campaigns as well as the necessity to foster participation of young disabled people in all Council of Europe activities.

EDF and its youth committee will explore ways to ensure disability is included in Council of Europe campaigns and will strengthen its cooperation with the European Youth Forum to follow up with its work at the EU level.

Find out more about the activities of the Youth Council of the Council of Europe on their webpage: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Co-operation/Youth/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Youth/)

### **Consultative Meeting on Recommendation on promotion of participation of minority youth, European Youth Centre Budapest, Directorate of Youth and Sport**

Karina Chupina was an invited expert at this meeting and represented IFHOHYP and European Human Bridges integrated network that involves both disabled and non-disabled young people across Europe. She made a presentation on the concerns and challenges of youth with disabilities (including obstacles to disability youth participation), the role of the Recommendation in relation to disability youth concerns and the possible focus of Recommendation from perspective of disability youth (including measures that can be undertaken for increasing participation of disabled young people). Karina would like to thank those members of IFHOHYP who made contributions to this presentation.

The Recommendation is supposed to be issued by the Council of Europe in 2005.

Karina Chupina has recently been accepted to the **Pool of Trainers of Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe**. Karina is the first trainer with a disability in the Trainers' Pool. Karina will now be able to promote disability issues on a wider level through trainings and the international Trainers' Pool, to spread information about existing trainings in Europe to IFHOHYP and youth with disabilities, to encourage disability participation in these trainings and to integrate youth with disabilities in non-formal education. Already more disabled young people and deaf/hard of hearing people are participating in mainstream trainings (e.g. in a Long-term training course titled "Diversity and Cohesion," Karina will be one of the trainers and two deaf/hard of hearing young people from Denmark and Poland were selected to participate in this course). An article by Karina Chupina titled "Role of European trainings, participation and Arts in inclusion of youth with disabilities" will be available soon on the Training-Youth website (Partnership between Council of Europe and European Commission on youth worker training) [www.training-youth.net/site/publications/coyote/coyote.htm](http://www.training-youth.net/site/publications/coyote/coyote.htm).

In response to Karina's request, an **induction loop system** has been installed in the European Youth Centre Budapest (before it was available only in European Youth Centre in Strasbourg). Now, hard of hearing youth have better access to trainings, international meetings and study sessions of the Council of Europe Youth Sector.

With this trend, we hope that more important institutions will be made accessible for youth with hearing disability.

### **CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF THE DISABLED PEOPLE IN ROME, ITALY**

Vanessa Migliosi participated in the Closing Ceremony of the EYDP which was held 5-7 December, in Rome, under EU Italian Presidency. Only a very limited number of delegates were allowed to attend this Ceremony and Vanessa was happy to be invited.

#### *Successes and positive achievements:*

In general terms, the European Year of People with Disabilities represented a very significant advancement of disability causes and contributed to put disabled people at the centre of the political agenda.

There have been positive results in terms of visibility of disabled people, mainstreaming of

disability, building alliances with other stakeholders, and promoting new image and rights.

*Disappointments:*

From a legislative point of view, the EYPD 2003 did not reach the objectives that were set initially:

- Our major objective: the Disability specific directive, forbidding discrimination in all aspects of life and employment, has not been achieved yet;
- the implementation of the equal treatment directive has also been disappointing in terms of quality and timing. Only 3 member States (including Italy) respected the deadline.

Conference in Brussels,  
"Access to the Information Society for deaf, hard of hearing and speech  
impaired people." 25 February 2004

By Nico Disperati (nico@mcmlink.it)

Wow! It's quite the first time a good conference has been organized by the representatives of HoH people, mainly thanks to RNID, an UK deaf association, in collaboration with

- (1) EU and member state decision makers and experts with manufacturers,
- (2) Network and service providers and
- (3) Broadcasters

to discuss how to increase access to information and communication technology and television.

Is "Information Society" access in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) very important?

Modern society relies more and more on ICT! ICT determines and models many aspects of social life. It can include people but it can also discriminate them. So, the ICT can be an opportunity as well a very big threat: it can raise potential barriers or worsen social conditions.

To mention some of the many problems:

- Television very often lacks subtitles, this is a discriminating factor because HoH people do not have access to all the information that hearing people have all the time.

- Telephones cannot be used by many HoH people.

- Textphones: could be a substitute to the telephone but it is not diffused because there are many incompatible proprietary formats and it is expensive.

- Mobile phones are usually incompatible with hearing aids.

- The SMS facility is extremely useful for HoH people but it is not a reliable service.

Indeed the SMS service was NOT projected as a means for helping the deaf or HoH people to communicate, it was born merely from a casual technical issue. It is not reliable like calling a person directly. There is no facility like interactive TXT messaging (RFC 2793) in mobile phones.

Voice telephoning and Interactive texting are conversational, while Email SMS etc are not conversational.

- The emergency service is not easily reachable by HoH people because it requires hearing the telephone, moreover call centers are not SMS-enabled.

- Lots of instruments for disabled people are very expensive or even obsolete, the excuse being "it is a limited market"... if the market is limited, cost will be higher, consumers are

fewer, and consequently innovation in this sector will be slower.

The key speaker of the conference Erkki Liikanen, the European Commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society, realised that research and solution development for disabled people could also greatly help normal people. He made the example of the new Helsinki trains: these trains are designed to facilitate physically disabled people in the operations of boarding and seating. While traveling in these trains he personally ascertained that many "normal" people were so pleased to travel in these new so-comfortable trains because climbing-on was so easy.

He pointed out that "Design for All" is a very important concept, it can:

- lower the production cost
- broaden the market
- help mass production

Indeed while 'special' products designed only for disabled people usually do fit small markets (and thus are expensive and are not innovative), 'normal' products that are improved with some additional useful features for accessibility (serving also the handicapped) not only have greater quality, they also find broader markets, thus they are cheaper and all kinds of people including disabled ones could benefit.

Television subtitling is useful not only to HoH people, but also to the elderly people, to people of foreign-language and to children.

If research is done with forethought to the needs of disabled people many things could be much better all round.

It is very important to have standards, open and extendable formats and to prevent the typical fragmentation of products that are based on proprietary formats (different textphones that are incompatible).

Internet has been so successful because it benefitted from many open technical specification standards, like those from the ISO/OSI and W3C organisms. The TCP/IP protocol and HTML language format, were conceived by open-minded people, like Vinton Cerf and Tim Berners Lee who were caring of "Design for all", "Accessibility to all". Open minds for an all-inclusive society, regardless of which technology/platform you are using.

What about standards in hardware devices like telephones, mobile phones, TV, Digital TV, and so on?

There are some organisations, like ETSI and CENELEC.

But actually the future of an all-inclusive society is still a hope. There is a lot of work yet to be done!

Various organizations, IFHOHYP, EFHOH but also RNID, EUD, FEPEDA have one goal: 100% in subtitling by 2010 in almost all broadcasts, including private ones.

I hope that initiatives will continue to reinforce the All-Inclusive Society.

What could be done:

- the associations could continue to put pressure on industry and services

- new technologies should be monitored
- subtitling service quality and quantity should be monitored
- laws on accessibility issues should be reinforced
- companies should employ disabled people in research teams: they are a great opportunity for new ideas
- open and extendable standards should be developed and followed
- we should not confuse formats/protocols with the means: if the format is open and standard, there is competition for better means regardless if the means is closed/patented or open
- we should realize that proprietary formats/protocols are a nightmare and unconvient way to progress and to business
- we should learn from good initiatives like W3C (a consortium for defining open standards in internet languages)
- initiatives should be taken to stop absurd patents that can hinder the acceleration of innovation in assistive technologies.— Information Society as an All-Inclusive Society!-

## **IFHOHYP NEWS**

The International Federation  
Hard of Hearing Newsmagazine.

This newsletter is completely free and cannot be sold.

For any question please contact :  
[andreapietrini@inwind.it](mailto:andreapietrini@inwind.it)

## **IFHOHYP BOARD**

-Vanessa Migliosi, President

[mivane@tin.it](mailto:mivane@tin.it) or [vanessamigliosi@tin.it](mailto:vanessamigliosi@tin.it)

-Karina Chupina, Vice-President

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-Ervinas Klimavicius, Treasurer

[kl.ervinas@takas.lt](mailto:kl.ervinas@takas.lt)

-Jennie Marie Westh, Secretary

[jennie@post9.tele.dk](mailto:jennie@post9.tele.dk) or [ladybirddk@hotmail.com](mailto:ladybirddk@hotmail.com)

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