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Press Release

Professional Hearing Care Makes You Smarter and Healthier

The vital need to keep on screening people for deafness and to adopt public health strategies that can prevent hearing loss took centre stage at the European Parliament this week. At a March 1 debate organised in cooperation with the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers' Association (EHIMA), the European Association of Hearing Aid Professionals (AEA), and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH), leading MEPs stressed the importance of screening throughout life. As many as 55 million people in the EU have hearing loss, says the WHO, with 10 million in Germany and more than 7 million in Britain, France and Italy.

MEP Ádám Kósa (Hungary, EPP) and MEP Helga Stevens (Belgium, ECR) - both deaf sign-language users – insisted on the vital role of adequate accessibility to the varied communication tools for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Ms Stevens called for early intervention not only because of long-term cost savings for governments and affected individuals but also for well-being and mental health reasons.



As **WHO Hearing Officer Shelly Chadha pointed out, awareness of this issue is gradually increasing.** This is also shown by the fact that professionals have again been discussing related challenges today (Thursday, March 3) at the WHO World Hearing Day in Geneva before an even larger international audience. To secure real developments in this area, Ms Chadha **called on governments to put in place public health strategies which can prevent hearing loss, and to empower people** with hearing issues to take control of their conditions themselves.

Being aware and **tackling the problem at an early stage before 'getting into trouble' is a real game changer.**

As **AEA President Mark Laureyns explained:** *"On the one hand, if you make sure that you get professional hearing care at an early stage, you get close to the same cognitive evolution as people with normal hearing. This means better chances in academic involvement and improved quality of professional life.*

"On the other hand, you will have the ability to participate in group activities, to build better relations with your family, friends, and colleagues, and with members of the society in general. You will also be able to better take care of your physical health and develop a better sense of safety. In short, you will maintain your mental, emotional and physical health and develop confidence in yourself. This is the reason why we chose as our slogan: being smarter and healthier with professional hearing care".

For further information please contact:

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