



# Position Statement on Auracast and Telecoils

## Call for balanced approach

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People (EFHOH) is committed to advocating for accessible assistive listening technologies that ensure full participation in public and private life for people with hearing loss. With the development of new technologies such as Auracast™, we are observing worrying suggestions that hearing loops, and Telecoils which provide access to them are no longer needed as new system is going to replace them. EFHOH calls for a balanced approach that integrates promotion of both technologies to maintain accessibility across various settings.

EFHOH calls on hearing aids and Cochlear Implants manufacturers to maintain availability of telecoils in their devices for foreseeable future. Telecoils are an essential part of access to hearing loops and other assistive listening systems currently in use by hard of hearing people. Removing telecoils too early risks cutting off access to proven systems before newer technologies like Auracast™ are fully integrated and reliable. EFHOH strongly advocates for the continued inclusion of telecoils in hearing aids and cochlear implants for at least the next decade to ensure access for all.

Auracast™ offers advanced Bluetooth connectivity, allowing hearing aid users to stream personalized audio from multiple sources, enhancing flexibility in both public and private spaces. Despite these innovations, Telecoil remains an essential accessibility feature for many users, offering clear, reliable sound in public spaces relying on hearing loops. Combining both solutions will allow hard of hearing people to use their existing hearing technologies which meet their needs and personal preferences, ensuring flexibility and universal access.

Our position aligns with the principles outlined in the [Budapest Declaration](#), presented during the 2022 World Congress of International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH), which emphasizes the need for Telecoils to remain in use alongside Auracast™ until the newer technology is universally available and fully functional. EFHOH fully supports the Budapest Declaration and continues to call for telecoils to be included in all hearing aids and cochlear implants during this transitional period.

Both technologies play a crucial role in ensuring high-quality, accessible audio experiences for hard of hearing individuals in various settings.

EFHOH calls on Audiologists and Hearing Care Professionals to embrace both solutions. We remind the professionals that they have a crucial role to play in ensuring that hard-of-hearing people are fully informed about options facilitating access to Hearing Loops and Auracast. Telecoils and Auracast features in the hearing devices can co-exist and add to greater independence and choice for hearing aids and cochlear implant users. As frontline hearing care professionals, they are gatekeepers of information and have responsibility to inform their clients about Telecoils and Bluetooth features in their devices. Both features should be demonstrated for greater adoption.

Experts participating in EFHOH webinar on Assistive Listening Systems in September 2024, in collaboration with the International Hearing Loop Manufacturers Association (IHLMA), warned that the path toward widespread Auracast™ adoption faces regulatory and technological barriers. Current European regulations governing radio frequencies and medical devices increase manufacturing costs, slowing the adoption of advanced hearing technologies. Additionally, there is widespread concern regarding user acceptance, particularly among older individuals who might prefer the familiarity and straightforward operation of telecoil based systems.

Experts also highlighted the importance of infrastructure readiness. The effectiveness of Auracast™ relies on public spaces being equipped with the necessary technology to support it. Currently, many locations lack this infrastructure, which could limit Auracast™'s overall impact on accessibility for individuals with hearing loss. Ensuring compatibility and equal access is essential so that users do not lose access to reliable telecoil based connections as they transition to newer technologies.

Until Auracast™ reaches its full potential, compatibility and availability, EFHOH upholds the position that maintaining telecoil feature and providing access to hearing loops is essential for safeguarding inclusive hearing access across Europe for at least the next 10 to 15 years. By prioritizing assistive technology compatibility and advocating for inclusive regulations, EFHOH aims to ensure that people with hearing loss can benefit from both current and emerging technologies in their daily lives.

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### **About EFHOH**

The European Federation of Hard of Hearing People represents interest of 59 million of hard of hearing people in Europe. Our network consists of national organisations for hard of hearing and deafened people. Our vision is Europe where hard of hearing people can live without barriers and participate at all levels of society.