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EU research programs in audiology and hearing

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There is a growing tendency to harmonize research activities for audiology and hearing in Europe. Such harmonization may benefit for European's leading position in high level hearing research, hearing health care services, audiological training and hearing instrument industry. Research and development programs that are funded by the European Commission can play an essential role to keep this leading position. In the past 7 years the European Commission has funded hearing research for about 60 Million Euro as part of the FP6 and FP5 programs. This relates to about 25 multi-national projects, with funding budgets ranging from a few hundred thousand for a small project up to around 10 million Euro for a large Integrated Project. Some 2 to 5 Million Euro has been made available for individual fellowships in the Marie-Curie program. It is noted that EU funding is still a relative small part on all European funded hearing research. Most other research is based on national research programs or initiated from hearing aid/device manufacturers. The potential to improve on quality is large when national groups will cooperate together. By that it is possible to harmonize on diagnostic methods and rehabilitation procedures between countries, addressing the different cultural and language based differences. This may lead to an Europe wide increase of quality and better efficiency in hearing care. Also institutes will learn to cooperate across national borders and build on a shared competence. Motivated groups should be supported to make such networks and alliances, for which a strong presence into the new European FP7 program should be stimulated. This talk will discuss a number of successful Projects of the last years and directions for future European research.

