

# easyli Newsletter



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The EASYLI (Easy Listening) project is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Network dedicated to expanding our understanding of how people evaluate the costs and benefits of listening effort, and to applying that knowledge in diverse workplace scenarios.

Bringing together academic and industrial partners, EASYLI trains six PhD candidates in an ambitious interdisciplinary research program. Our candidates investigate listening effort and fatigue in everyday life, examine behavioral and physiological signatures in controlled laboratory settings, develop virtual acoustic environments, and work to directly assess and improve communication in high-stakes occupational scenarios. Each candidate spends part of their training at an academic institution and part with an industry partner, ensuring their work remains grounded, practical, and closely connected to the needs of end users.

As we reach the first major milestones of the project, we are taking this opportunity to reflect on our progress and look forward to the discoveries still to come.

## EASYTRAIN Project Workshops

As part of the project's structured training program, the EASYLI consortium has completed two EASYTRAIN workshops, bringing together doctoral candidates, senior researchers, and advisory board members. Together, these workshops have strengthened collaboration within the network and supported the reflective integration of research, application, and training.

- **EASYTRAIN 1 (November 2024, Amsterdam):** Hosted by Amsterdam UMC, this marked the first in-person consortium meeting. The event offered a shared introduction to the broad interdisciplinary landscape of listening effort research, featuring expert presentations on fatigue, real-world interventions, and auditory processing, alongside a hands-on demonstration of pupillometry.
- **EASYTRAIN 2 (November 2025, Denmark):** Hosted at the Eriksholm Research Centre, this workshop provided insight into long-term, industry-driven research shaping hearing aid development. Doctoral candidates presented progress from their studies, complemented by presentations from Oticon researchers and interactive laboratory demonstrations.

## EASYLI on the Move: The Great European Swap

The EASYLI project has officially entered its second phase, marking a major milestone in our dual recruitment scheme! Designed to foster collaboration between academic and non-academic partners, Phase 2 sees our candidates transitioning to new placements to gain hands-on experience in both industry and applied research.

### Danaé | VU Amsterdam → Eriksholm Research Centre

Danaé has swapped the sleek skyscrapers and buzzing energy of VU Amsterdam’s Zuidas campus—where she developed the EASYLI ambulatory toolbox—for a calmer environment at Eriksholm Research Centre, surrounded by quiet fields and cows. Her toolbox combines subjective Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) with physiological measures to understand the everyday costs and benefits of listening effort. Now, she’s heading into the next phase: testing its usefulness in a clinical setting at Eriksholm’s test clinic.

Danaé's Travel Log: From Skyscrapers to Silos



**Eray** | *Fraunhofer IDMT → CeoTronics AG*

Eray has moved from Fraunhofer Institute for Digital Media Technology IDMT to CeoTronics AG. After working on machine learning and audio signal processing approaches to improve acoustic technologies in occupational settings, he is bringing these methods to CeoTronics AG. Here, he will continue developing and applying them in a more product-oriented industry environment.

**Johannes** | *Eriksholm Research Centre → Amsterdam UMC*

Johannes has moved from Denmark to the Netherlands. After collecting data on listening engagement decisions in an experiment at Eriksholm Research Centre, he is now busy analyzing the data and putting it into writing. His upcoming task will be to use this acquired knowledge to test workplace interventions.

**Julia** | *Eriksholm Research Centre & University of Manchester*

Julia is primarily based at Eriksholm Research Centre throughout the project, complemented by several shorter secondments at the University of Manchester. This arrangement is made possible by conducting the survey and qualitative interviews as online studies. The subsequent intervention study, building on knowledge gained about individual factors contributing to listening-related fatigue, will take place at Eriksholm's facilities.

**Ali** | *Hörzentrum Oldenburg → Liverpool John Moores University*

Ali has traded German bratwurst for Liverpool scouse, moving from Germany to the UK. After spending his first six months learning & refining virtual acoustic environments, he is now shifting focus to measure the brain's response to listening effort using fNIRS and DOT. With the pilot study wrapped up, data collection is in full swing. Ali's current daily battles involve fighting "physiological noise" for a clean DOT signal and convincing participants that a fiber-optic brain cap is the biggest thing to hit Liverpool since the Beatles. While he is set to continue his work at LJMU, his location remains in a 'quantum state' pending visa renewal. If you see him back in Oldenburg earlier than expected, just assume the British bureaucracy won the second round!



## Nuno | Hinfact/ISAE-SUPAERO → VUmc Amsterdam

Nuno has relocated from Toulouse to Amsterdam. As part of his project, "Listening effort characterization during aircraft operations," he successfully collected data in a flight simulator and is currently analyzing the results and writing his manuscript.

## Outreach & Conferences

### DAGA Conference (March 2026, Dresden)

The EASYLI project was represented at the DAGA Conference in Dresden, where Jan Rennies presented the project's framework and objectives as a poster presentation. This provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the acoustics community and discuss our interdisciplinary approach to optimizing the cost-benefit ratio of listening effort. The lively discussions and feedback received further highlight the project's relevance to current acoustic research.

### EFHOH Annual Meeting (April 2026, Brussels)

The EFHOH invited the EASYLI consortium to present the project at their Annual Meeting. Adriana Zekveld presented the aims and scope of EASYLI, describing how our scientific findings relate to EFHOH's goal to support hard-of-hearing individuals at work. EFHOH is an Associated Partner, and this conference provided a great opportunity to share our preliminary results. The audience was particularly enthusiastic about EASYLI's aim to assess which factors make listening worthwhile effort, alongside our focus on the adverse outcomes of listening effort.



## Outlook: Looking Ahead to Summer and Beyond

As our doctoral candidates settle into their new secondments across Europe, the momentum of the EASYLI project continues to build. The coming months promise even more opportunities for collaboration and knowledge exchange. This June, many of our network members will head to Italy to share insights and connect with the wider auditory research community at the HeAL (Hearing Across the Lifespan) conference in Padova. We are, of course, strictly going for the science, but the prospect of a warm Italian summer, excellent *espresso*, and authentic *gelato* certainly doesn't hurt!

Following the summer, we are already busy preparing for our next major network milestone: the EASYTRAIN 3 workshop, which will be hosted in Oldenburg in September. We wish all our candidates the best of luck as they navigate the exciting challenges of this second phase, and we look forward to the discoveries these new collaborations will bring!

### EASY – Glossary

EMA (Ecological Momentary Assessment): A method where participants report their thoughts or feelings in real-time in their natural environment (usually via a smartphone app).

fNIRS (Functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy): A non-invasive brain imaging technique that measures blood oxygen levels to track brain activity.

DOT (Diffuse Optical Tomography): An advanced imaging method that uses light to create 3D maps of what is happening inside the body or brain.

Occupational Settings such as First-respondents, Bartenders, etc.

Pupillometry: The measurement of pupil diameter; in this project, it is used as a physiological marker of how much effort someone is using to listen.

Virtual Acoustic Environments: Digitally simulated sound spaces used to test how people hear in complex settings like offices or cockpits.

EFHOH (European Federation of Hard of Hearing People): An organization representing the interests of hard-of-hearing people at the European level.

DAGA: The annual German conference on acoustics.