



# HEAR-ECO E-newsletter January-March 2019

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## **I**ntroduction

Welcome to the fourth HEAR-ECO E-newsletter!

In the beginning of this year some of the early stage researchers (ESRs) have started their first HEAR-ECO studies, while others focused on documenting findings from their groundwork. Here you can read what happened in January, February and March 2019.

## **HEAR-ECO Progress Check with the European Commission**

**Date:** 1.03.19

**Place:** VU University medical center, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

**Participants:** Fellows: Bethany Plain, Defne Alfandari, Hidde Pielage, Patrycja Książek, Sergio Aguirre, Tirdad Seifi Ala, Seniors: Adriana Zekveld, Dorothea Wendt, Michael Richter, Niels Henrik Meedom, Sophia Kramer, William Whitmer, European Commission (EC) project officer: Patricia Rischitor.

On the first day of March 2019 the HEAR-ECO team welcomed the EC project officer Patricia Rischitor for the first EC progress check. During the day presentations were given by each of the ESRs about their studies and training. Additionally, the project seniors shared their visions for HEAR-ECO and provided an update on the project's progress. Patricia Rischitor explained the procedures and technical requirements involved with being part of an EU project, including the timeline for further EC progress checks. She also had separate meetings with the HEAR-ECO supervisors and the students to discuss organizational factors associated with the project. All in all, the visit was a positive experience for the HEAR-ECO team members and increased confidence in the success of the project.



ESRs and Seniors together with the EC project officer Patricia Rischitor

## First HEAR-ECO studies in progress!

**Date:** 1.02.19-now

**Places:** VU medical center, the Netherlands; Eriksholm Research Centre, Denmark; University of Nottingham, Hearing Sciences – Scottish Section, United Kingdom

**Involved:** Bethany Plain, Defne Alfandari, Hidde Pielage, Tirdad Seifi Ala, Patrycja Ksiazek (author of the summary)

The first studies for four ESRs have been designed, set up, and are now in the testing phase. With their experiments, Bethany and Tirdad want to investigate the interplay between listening effort and motivation during speech perception tasks using different outcome measures. Defne designed her study to look more into cognitive and motivational fatigue effects on effort. Finally, Hidde is interested in the social impact on the listening effort, and designed his study as such. All use physiological measures to quantify the cognitive aspects of listening. They expect that the listening effort will be highest in difficult, yet manageable situations and that intrinsic motivation may lead to increased effort. Hopefully, the studies' results will provide valuable insights into listening task performance, the impact of motivation on these tasks, and the usefulness of the chosen outcome measures. The outcomes of these studies will be used in combined studies that will be performed during our secondment in Denmark!



Bethany and Hidde before their first study visits.

Meanwhile, here is what ESRs have to say about their studies:

Bethany: *"I'm enjoying testing participants! It's nice to finally put months of reading and designing the experiment into practice."*

Defne: *"I've finished my pilot test and started with the full-scale experiment. Many participants have signed up already, and so far testing is going great."*

Hidde: *"Since it is a first study there are some technical difficulties. However, this proves to be a great learning experience and grants me many insights in relevant factors that might be of interest in future experimental work."*

Tirdad: *"Everything is running smoothly. The biggest problem (like any other study) is to recruit subjects. But other than that there were some technical issues that we could solve with the help of other people from Eriksholm."*



Defne on the day of sending out invitation letters to participants.

## Introducing Patrycja



Patrycja Ksiazek  
 RESEARCH FELLOW (ESR)

“The objective of my project so far has been to discover a reliable method for evaluating listening effort based on the pupillary responses. This task requires understanding of the human physiology, cognition and hearing as well as advanced signal processing. It is exciting that HEAR-ECO has a potential to facilitate advancement in both hearing care and in using sensors such as eye trackers to support our daily lives.

Apart from the project-specific work, I’ve grown as a researcher e.g by presenting research concepts to diverse audience or reporting my research to the scientific community. Thanks to my teammates I’ve learned what I need to improve on a personal level as well. It’s been a great adventure so far and I’m looking forward to spend even more time with fellow ESRs during our secondment!”

## Upcoming in the HEAR-ECO calendar:

**5th International Conference on Cognitive Hearing Science for Communication**

**Dates:** 9-12.06.19

**Location:** Linnaeus Centre HEAD, Linköping, Sweden

**Information:** Tirdad Seifi Ala and Patrycja Ksiazek are going to present the outcomes of their groundwork to researchers in the field from around the world.

**HEAR-ECO Sync Week**

**Dates:** 1-5.07.19

**Location:** Eriksholm Research Centre, Snekkersten, Denmark

**Information:** All ESRs and Seniors will meet in Eriksholm to design and draft their combined studies. It will be also a beginning of the industrial secondment for the ESRs.

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For more information, visit our website: [www.hear-eco.eu](http://www.hear-eco.eu) or follow us   @EcoHear