

# HELIOSCOPE

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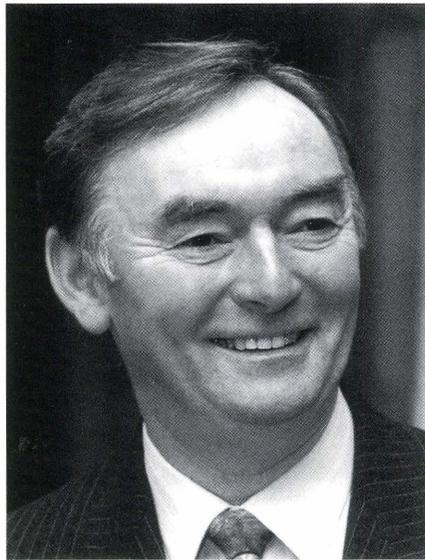


## THEME

### The European Disability Forum

European Anti-discrimination legislation: Yes or no?  
HELIOS II: Exchange and information activities  
Supplement: Profiles of European NGOs

E U R O P E A N   D I S A B I L I T Y   M A G A Z I N E



*I am convinced that  
the European Disability Magazine  
will become a  
valuable tool in our work*

Over the past decade, new perspectives for ensuring full participation of disabled people within the European Union have emerged. The view of disability as an individual tragedy is being replaced by an exciting new era in which the disability movement embraces human rights, equalisation of opportunities and independent living as a philosophy for empowerment and self determination. Knowledge and understanding of problems, legislation and practice have improved substantially throughout the Member States. The interests of disabled people are being reflected in mainstream Community programmes and initiatives. Most importantly, organisations of and for disabled people are making their voice heard at all political levels. This has been demonstrated by their active participation in discussions about the future of European employment and social policy as we approach the millennium.

It is now evident that the development of the European Union is taking place in far more difficult conditions than expected. Unemployment is rising sharply. Increasingly large sections of the population are threatened by poverty and social exclusion. And statistics reveal that disabled citizens are amongst those most likely to encounter such marginalisation.

Various community programmes and initiatives have shown that we can counter these

trends. Further progress will only be made if issues are addressed in a coherent, rather than ad hoc way and that all the partners concerned are given the opportunity to innovate, influence and respond.

The need for vision and imagination has never been greater. I am convinced that the European Disability Magazine will become a valuable tool in our work towards equal opportunities for disabled people in Europe. Its

tasks are twofold: the provision of practical information to enhance the development of effective links between disability activists, decision makers and professionals at local, regional, national and European level; and the promotion of awareness of the public at large about equal opportunities, integration and what this really means to the estimated 10% of the population of the Union who suffer from some form of permanent disability.

*Pádraig Flynn,  
member of the European Commission responsible for Social Affairs and Employment*

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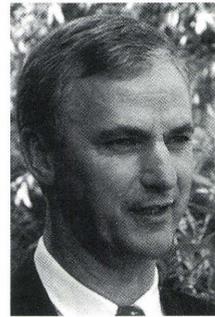
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*Philippe Lamoral  
 Editor and Director of the HELIOS  
 Team of experts which assists the  
 Commission in the implementation of  
 the HELIOS programme.*

**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

Ensuring equal opportunities requires the recognition and appreciation of the individuality and distinct nature of every human being. It also demands that people have the right to fully develop their personality, and individual strengths and goals. Though the elimination of physical barriers is crucial, meaningful changes for disabled people are only possible if attitudinal barriers constructed by other members of our society are broken down at the same time. Some progress has already been made but much remains to be achieved. Information and communication are fundamental in overcoming misconceptions and negative stereotyping.

This Magazine will report regularly on the developments in European social and employment policy which are of interest to disabled people and those who work with them. Issues to be covered range from results of the HELIOS II programme, and the introduction of mainstream Community initiatives, the activities of non-governmental organisations, to news from the European Parliament and individual Member States.

Each issue will be devoted to a major theme and will also publish contrasting and sometimes controversial view points.

We felt it appropriate that the spotlight in the first issue should fall on the European Disability Forum, which is establishing itself as a platform for the representation of the interests of disabled people in the Union.

We are grateful to all of you who with suggestions, ideas and articles have contributed to this issue of the Magazine. Please let us know about issues and news which might be covered in future editions. Much can be learned from exchange and constructive dialogue.

*The texts of the first issue of HELIOS Magazine are available on audio cassettes in French, German and English from the HELIOS Information Service, 79 Avenue de Cortenberg, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium. The texts are also available on diskette in the nine official languages of the European Union.*



## The European Disability Forum: its role and its future

*“We affirm that disabled people should share equally in all the rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities of their community, and should receive all support in reaching their full potential enjoying whatever improvement of living conditions and quality of life which may result from social and economic development”*

*Statement of Commitment to the United Nations’ worldwide Action programme for disabled people, signed by EU officials, national government representatives, representatives of Disability organisations and disabled people throughout the Union to mark the First European Day of Disabled People, on 3 December 1993*

*The past decade has witnessed a radical change in the relationship between European institutions and disabled people, and their organisations.*



3. 12. 1993:  
The European Parliament  
of disabled people,  
an international and  
European precedent



Johan Wesemann (NL) is Director General of the European Community Regional Secretariat of the World Federation of the Deaf. He has worked extensively both at national and European level in advancing the interests of deaf people. He was elected as Chair of the Forum by its members in April 1993.

The recent "European Disabled People's Parliament", which convened in Brussels on 3 December 1993, on the occasion of the first "European Day of Disabled People", is just one among a number of examples of disabled people urging their communities to improve policies and attitudes from grass roots level upwards.

Consultation with disabled people, through their representative organisations, is also a fundamental premise of HELIOS II. This is manifested by the European Disability Forum, which was set up in April 1993 as one of the key consultative bodies assisting the Commission in the implementation of the programme. We discussed its aims, challenges and perspectives with Johan Wesemann, Chair of the Forum.

#### *What is unique about the Disability Forum?*

The fact that it brings together European organisations representing specific disabilities or addressing specific issues relating to integration, national councils of and for disabled people, and the social partners. For the first time, a Forum at European level covers the whole spectrum of disability issues, and is able to discuss and influence real issues affecting disabled people.

#### *How would you describe Forum meetings from the layman's point of view?*

We meet in principle three times a year. Items discussed to date include HELIOS II priority themes, evaluation of each of the aspects of HELIOS, the EURO-programmes of NGO activities

co-financed through HELIOS, the planning of the "European Day of Disabled Persons" which takes place on 3 December, and a European-wide study into violence and discrimination. I feel that we have evolved considerably since we began our work. During initial meetings we had to get used to both cultural and philosophical differences between organisations, and the challenge of presenting a collective viewpoint to the Commission. I am confident that the Forum will become an increasingly credible and powerful instrument through which to influence EU developments – but this all takes time, commitment and trust from all our members.

*The Forum members represent a heterogeneous group: disabled people, professionals, social partners – all with varied cultural, social and political backgrounds and different aspirations, and working at different levels.*

#### *How do you compromise within the Forum?*

My primary role is that of a moderator. Together with my Vice Chair, Mr. Paul Boulinier, I aim to arrive at conclusions which are acceptable to all parties, but are not so vague as to become meaningless. It is a major test: no organisation should come away from our meetings feeling that it has compromised on basic ideals. There is however a willingness and a dynamic among the members of the Forum to cooperate not only in a passive way, but to be proactive – and this is equally true both within the formal meetings of the Forum and other actions and initiatives undertaken by its members.

*What about wider issues which require concerted political action at a European level?*

The Council decision on HELIOS II is unequivocal: the Forum's role is confined to giving a point of view on appropriate aspects of the HELIOS programme, although implicitly, this does embrace cooperation with other Community programmes and initiatives. Personally, I feel strongly that an important



*Paul Boulinier, Vice chair of the Forum, Chair of the "Conseil français des personnes handicapées pour les questions européennes"*

medium-term objective would be to expand the role of the Forum, making direct consultation in relation to all other EU actions, programmes and initiatives with a possible impact on the lives of disabled people obligatory. This was a recurring theme in the Forum members' responses to the *Green Paper on Social Policy – Options for the Union*. The concept of «mainstreaming» is crucial: disabled people should not be marginalised or segregated in EU policy; but for this to be successful, an appropriate consultation mechanism is needed – with accountability to disabled people through our own organisations.

*What are the possibilities for individuals to bring in their opinion at a European level – via the NGOs?*

The individual's voice must be heard – without this voice, umbrella structures at European and at national level become elitist, remote or irrelevant. The democratic structure of disability



organisations should mean that the individual has a channel through his or her local organisation, which in turn feeds into its national organisation – in most cases, both as a member of the national council in the respective Member State and a member of a European organisation working with the Forum. Like many of our organisations, I am acutely aware that this process is largely dependent upon effective two-way exchanges of accessible and relevant information with 'grass-roots' organisations.

*Over the past decade, the UN decade of disabled persons, the political muscle of NGOs has begun to be felt at all levels. What are, in your opinion, the perspectives for the year 2000?*

I have already mentioned the need, in my view, for the Forum to have a broader remit – an important step linked to this is a new cooperation emerging with European networks representing other interests in the social policy field: for example, the Migrants Forum, the European Anti-Poverty Network, the Women's lobby, the Youth Forum etc. All of us are concerned by the very real threat of a 'dual' society emerging in Europe composed of 'workers', on the one hand, and 'non-workers', on the other. The ensuing economic and social gulf is destructive and dangerous. In the disability field we are confronted with statistics which illustrate that the employment scenario for disabled people is particularly grave. As we approach the end of the millenium, I believe that combating the crisis will dominate the work of the disability movement at European, national and local level. ■

**The European Disability Forum** is composed of 12 European Non-Governmental organisations, 12 National Disability Councils from the Member States or representative national NGOs, and representatives of both sides of industry. Alongside the Liaison Group and the Advisory Committee, which consists of government representatives from each of the Member States, the Forum is one of the key consultative bodies assisting the Commission in the implementation of HELIOS II.

The 12 European NGOs on the Forum were selected in accordance with 12 key sectors: 6 relating to specific disability issues (visual disability; hearing disability; motor disability; learning difficulties; mental health; specific and medical impairments and disabilities) and 6 relating to integration issues (prevention, early intervention, functional rehabilitation; Education; Vocational Training and Employment; Independent Living; the Family and the Elderly; Social, economic and legal protection). Within the

Forum, the NGOs play a coordinating role and voice the interests of almost 80 European "partner" NGOs who, working within their respective sectors, collectively represent over 800 organisations throughout the European Union working at regional or national level. See our supplement section for a profile on each of the European NGO members of the Forum.

# The value of a collective voice at national level - the disability councils

*Substantial discrepancies exist both between and within the Member States with regard to the addressing of disability issues and corresponding legislative provisions.*

National Disability Councils play a major role in informing the Forum on developments in their countries. In turn, they are important catalysts for information dissemination on the results of HELIOS II at a national level – particularly through annual information days. Here are two examples.

## THE DISABILITY FEDERATION OF IRELAND

As representative of the Disability Federation of Ireland, I perceive the current role of the national Councils within the Forum to be essentially two-fold: information provision and consultation. Like the European NGOs we meet informally to explore common ideas and develop co-operation. I believe that our roles could be enlarged significantly in the future – and we need to focus on a clear definition of our responsibilities in this context. Because of its structure, the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is in an excellent position to disseminate information on HELIOS

effectively, and to consult its members about issues being addressed within the Forum. But this clearly depends upon the quality of information provided from both national and European sources, and has been somewhat ad hoc to date. I would hope to see improvements in this area.

HELIOS support to each national council for one European conference per annum which addresses a single national priority issue is proving successful. In 1993, DFI organised a meeting entitled “Pursuing excellence – ensuring quality in the Voluntary Social Services”. Another meeting is planned for this year, entitled “protecting children’s rights – identification and prevention of abuse of disabled children”. Again, participants will come from throughout Ireland and speakers will be from Member States where significant work has already been undertaken in this field.

The Disability Federation’s active membership within Mobility International – the NGO representing the sector

relating to independent living in the Disability Forum – provides a good infrastructure from which to base DFI’s European activity and collaboration. Similarly, many of our members are also members of other European NGOs. The role of the national councils and the European NGOs is complementary and I believe that taken together our work is intrinsic to both European and national policy developments in the disability field.

DFI was selected as the national NGO representative within the European Disability Forum. Although it is not a formal “National Council of Disabled People”, it has over 50 affiliated members, and very close links with other representative disability interest groups.

*By Roger Acton, Chief Executive of the Disability Federation of Ireland.*

## GREECE – HELIOS NATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Consultation between the Greek government, the National Federation of Disabled people, and national NGOs has been intensive right from the onset of HELIOS II – with an increasing number of leading disabled people at the forefront of the discussions. We cooperated closely on the designation of the 52 Greek participants in the programme’s exchange and information activities and, more recently, in January, in the organisation of the HELIOS national information day. But, most importantly, we are about to set up a HELIOS Coordination Committee which is to meet four times per year. The Committee will bring together Greek members of the Forum and the Advisory Committee, and liaise continuously with participants of exchange and information activities. This national network should maximise co-operation within HELIOS II. It should ensure that the programme can be of substance and support to all its Greek partners, and that its results are being effectively implemented. A similar Coordination Committee (Continued on page 21)



# Involvement in disability issues: the social partners

*The entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty has opened up new perspectives for Community action in the social field by giving a stronger role to the Social Partners – and thus created more scope for dialogue between NGOs and representatives of both sides of industry.*

As members of the European Disability Forum, UNICE, the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe, and ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation, address disability issues within the overall context of the general economic situation and the development of human resources in the European Union. (Contact addresses on page 24)

## THE UNION OF INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYERS' CONFEDERATIONS OF EUROPE (UNICE)

UNICE was created in 1958 in order to represent the interests of European enterprises vis-à-vis the Community institutions. It is composed of 33 national member federations from 25 countries (the European Union, the EFTA states, Cyprus, Malta, San Marino, Turkey, the Czech and the Slovak Republics and Poland). Employers' activities in the social field are not limited to relations with EU officials. Since the mid-1980s, UNICE has been engaged in a Social Dialogue at European level with ETUC. On issues related to equal opportunities, employers' representatives are also in contact with various

NGOs representing groups with specific needs.

UNICE strongly supports the need to integrate disabled people in the open labour market and to maximise their potential contribution to economic growth. However, it believes that this can only be achieved if companies' needs and possibilities are taken into account. In the European Disability Forum, UNICE puts forward business arguments in the discussions on how to overcome the difficulties encountered by disabled people on the labour market. By doing this, it wishes to achieve two objectives: bring the requirements of private enterprises to the attention of NGOs and public authorities, and raise awareness amongst employers about the genuine possibilities for economic integration of disabled people. The Commission can stimulate the development of constructive partnerships by organising exchanges of information on positive practices in the field of training, support services and employment opportunities or by providing financial assistance for pilot projects.

*For further information contact  
Thérèse de Liedekerke, UNICE,  
Brussels*

## THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNIONS CONFEDERATION (ETUC)

The European Trades Union Confederation is an alliance of national trade union centres across Europe. The ETUC attempts to influence workers, unions, employers and authorities at every level, particularly the European level. Our objectives are to promote solidarity, especially on an international basis, and thus improve employment and social conditions for working people and their families. On disability issues, we oppose discrimination, and seek to promote employment opportunities for disabled people.

In the future our immediate plan is to establish an ETUC network on disability. We also seek to promote European level action to counter discrimination against disabled people, a European disabled people's Employment quota, and a European Code of Good Practices.

On 4 and 5 November 1993 we held the first ever international trade union conference on disability. Among other achievements, this conference agreed the following declaration:

"European trade unionists declare our support for disabled people's human rights, and our opposition to the discrimination faced by people with physical, mental and sensory disabilities. In particular, we demand that disabled people should have:

- an equal right to training
- an equal right to employment and
- an equal right to dignity."

*By Richard Exell –  
Disability Policy Officer –  
Trades Union Congress, London* ■

**SUPPLEMENT**

*The democratic voice  
of  
disabled people*

## **Profiles of the European NGO members of the Helios II Disability Forum**

**Apart from the initiatives described in each profile,  
many of the European NGO members of the Forum have undertaken  
studies and research, and regularly publish a newsletter.**

**Within the Forum, they voice the interests of almost 80 European «partner»  
NGOs working within their respective sectors, who collectively represent  
over 800 organisations throughout the European Union working  
at regional or national level. European NGOs may be contacted  
at the address mentioned below each profile.**

### **EUROPEAN BLIND UNION (EBU)**

*Coordinating NGO in the sector relating to "Visual Disability"*

***"To open up ways which will guarantee  
blind and visually impaired people in  
Europe a dignified and active existence,  
to the same extent as every other citizen"***

**F**ounded in 1984, through a merger of two European organisations for the blind, the European Blind Union represents the organisations for blind people of forty two European countries. It holds its general assembly every three years and is managed by an Executive Committee of eleven members. It also includes twelve specialised committees, each composed of nine members and dealing with technical matters: cooperation with organisations for blind and visually impaired people in the developing countries, culture and information, mobility and guide dogs,

professional and social integration, employment, social security, technical aids and services, the interests of deaf-blind people, multihandicapped blind people, vision impaired people, young blind people, elderly blind people as well as blind women. Cooperation with the institutions of the European Union is handled by a special Committee, The Commission of the E.B.U. with the E.U, which is composed of representatives of organisations of the European Blind Union in the twelve Member States. The European Blind Union takes an active part

in the community programmes and initiatives HELIOS, HORIZON, TIDE and PHARE. Its short term objective : to improve the standard of living of blind and visually impaired people. In the long term the European Blind Union attempts, in its capacity of a political interest group, to improve their social and professional integration and to extend its cooperation with the decision making bodies of the Commission and the European Parliament. Our aim is indeed that all directives of the Union will take into account the specific needs of blind and visually impaired people.

#### **EBU**

***European Blind Union,  
Commission for Liaising with the  
EU***

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**ECRS - WFD/EUROPEAN COMMUNITY REGIONAL SECRETARIAT OF  
THE WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to Listening Disabilities*

## *“The European Coalition of Deaf People”*

**F**ounded in 1985, the European Community Regional Secretariat of the World Federation of the Deaf promotes and protects the interests and needs of deaf people in the hearing world. Emancipation, equal rights and the recognition of deaf people's way of life by their hearing fellow-citizens are essential to our work. We are a linguistic and therefore cultural minority, because we use our own language: sign language.

Our full members are national associations of deaf people within the EU. Affiliated members are European organisations in the deaf field. ECRS conferences and seminars bring together representatives of national deaf communities on a wide range of issues of common concern: Education of deaf children, sign language interpreting, employment and vocational training,

higher education, television services, cultural identity, deaf youths, deaf women, the new regions of Germany, human rights, elderly deaf people etc.

Recommendations resulting from these conferences are subject to ratification and invariably lead to campaigns for their implementation through the European Parliament, the Commission and other EU institutions. ECRS has fought an EC directive that would have curtailed the rights of deaf drivers through mobilising deaf opinion in the EU and pressured authorities to introduce the necessary amendments. It was the driving force behind the European Parliament's Resolution, in 1988, on the official recognition of sign languages used in the Member States. It is vital that we are there to challenge, inform and educate decision-

makers. One of ECRS's priorities is training of deaf community's future leaders and managers. And we will, of course, continue campaigning for bilingualism for deaf people.

**ECRS - WFD**

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of the Deaf*

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**F.I.M.I.T.I.C./FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DES MUTILÉS,  
DES INVALIDES DU TRAVAIL ET DES INVALIDES CIVILS**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to “Motor Disabilities”*

## *“Against the reduction of social rights for disabled people”*

FIMITIC, an international non-governmental umbrella organisation of disability organisations from 30 countries, was founded in Belgium in 1953. It is composed of representatives of disabled people under the management of the people concerned and has advisory status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, as well as with the Council of Europe.

FIMITIC aims at promoting equal opportunities and integration for more than 5 million physically disabled people in the European Union, but also further afield. Its field of action is the improvement of social, professional and social rehabilitation of disabled people. This takes place in the

framework of a programme, which - taking into account developments in economic policies - wants to develop a future oriented, active social policy in favour of disabled people. Their specific needs and challenges will be discussed and elaborated in expert committees and working groups of the FIMITIC. Some of the activities of the FIMITIC are the yearly “World day of disabled people”, as well as a series of seminars and conferences, which cover a wide range of themes: from education and vocational training opportunities for disabled people and their economic integration in the continuously changing labour market, the relevant role of the social partners, via housing and supporting

services, as well as the elimination of architectural and technical barriers, to fundamental principles such as cooperation and equal rights, gene technology and genetics.

**F.I.M.I.T.I.C.**

*Fédération Internationale des  
mutilés, des invalides du travail et  
des invalides civils*

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**INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF SOCIETIES FOR PEOPLE  
WITH MENTAL HANDICAP/EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION (I.L.S.M.H.-E.A.)**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to Intellectual Impairment*

*“Voicing the interests of people  
with learning difficulties”*

**F**ounded in 1988, the ILSMH European Association is recognized as the authoritative voice on matters concerning learning difficulties. In addition to being represented in major European Disability organisations, it arranges a wide range of conferences, working groups and information exchange projects. The ILSMH European Association targets on all persons who have impaired intellectual and adaptive functioning, together with their families. We aim at enhancing opportunities for people with learning difficulties through planned integration within society; at collaborating with member societies and other like-minded organisations in the European Union; and at pressing for improvements in attitudes, services and life-styles. ILSMH is our parent body. Founded in

1960, the League represents almost 200 National Societies in over 80 countries on all 5 continents.

The European Association has been involved with HELIOS since its inception. The focus points of our EUROPROGRAMMES under HELIOS II cover Disability and Family (1994); Work, Occupation and Disability (1995); the severely disabled person (1996); and Education for all (compulsory education - 1997). With regard to future perspectives, we feel that the advent of new members to the Union will add to the level of the debate, and that planned help to Central and Eastern Europe will improve steadily. The Association will work constantly to make clear the hopes and needs of people with learning difficulties and their families throughout Europe.

**I.L.S.M.H.-E.A.**  
*International League of  
Societies for People with Mental  
Handicap European Association*

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**EUROPEAN REGIONAL COUNCIL  
WORLD FEDERATION OF MENTAL HEALTH (E.R.C. - W.F.M.H.)**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to psychological impairment*

*“Dignity, equality, freedom, and  
a supportive environment for people  
with mental health problems”*

**F**ounded in 1985, the European Regional Council - World Federation of Mental Health (E.R.C.-W.F.M.H.) co-ordinates mental health activities in Europe. We aim at improving mental health care in Europe, and taking action when inhumane treatment or psychiatric abuses are being reported. Also, we encourage the involvement of users in mental health service planning and provision.

We advocate for those with mental illness, and promote communication and understanding. Our work includes research projects and pilot programmes, training, consultation, conferences, seminars and workshops, advocacy as well as participation in the biennial World Congress.

Our members are national mental health organisations, NGOs, local associations, consumers, family members, mental health professionals, and anybody interested in mental health, human rights and a healthy environment.

The ERC-WFMH has consultative status with the Council of Europe, the World Health Organisation - European Region and the United Nations (through WFMH). Its main objectives consist in protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of persons defined as mentally ill and their families; in preventing mental health and emotional problems in vulnerable populations; in expanding the understanding of mental health and mental

illness by educating the public as well as policy makers; in increasing the application of existing knowledge, with special reference to prevention; and in promoting high standards of care and the development of policies and practices in the field of mental health.

**E.R.C. - W.F.M.H.**  
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World Federation of Mental Health*

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## AUTISME-EUROPE

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to "Specific and medical impairments, disabilities and handicaps"*

***"People with autism should be able to enjoy the same rights and privileges as the whole European population"***

**A**utisme Europe was founded in January 1983 and is composed of more than 40 national and regional associations, as well as numerous individual members: parents or professionals in the field of autism. Autisme Europe occupies a key position in speeding up research on the causes, the prevention, and the treatment of autism. The organisation encourages specific training programmes and sets up exchange programmes in the framework of HELIOS II. With the support of the Commission it has carried out a comparative study on the structures and services for people with autism, has conducted a survey on the representation and legal protection of people with learning difficulties and has organised

conferences of international repute. The next conference of Autisme Europe will take place in Barcelona in 1996. Several of our member associations participate in the Community initiative HORIZON. We are also considering participation in the European programmes BIOMED and PHARE - the latter contribution in order to meet the requests of our members in the Eastern European countries.

Autisme Europe is determined to continue to develop awareness and comprehension of autism among professionals, decision makers and the general public, and to provide an appropriate legal framework for setting up services and legal protection of autistic people, allowing them - to the extent of their capacities - to make their

own choices in the organisation of their lives.

### **AUTISME EUROPE**

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## REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES ASSOCIATION

*European NGO responsible for the sector relating to "Prevention, early intervention and functional rehabilitation"*

**R**ehabilitation International - European Communities Association (RI-ECA) is part of a worldwide network of organisations for disabled people and rehabilitation organisations/institutions and services. RI has seven expert commissions and is officially represented in international organisations such as the United Nations, UNICEF, the WHO, the ILO, the Council of Europe.

RI-ECA is legally independent of Rehabilitation International and was founded in 1988, to implement cooperation with the European Commission. RI-ECA has the same priorities as RI: prevention of disabilities, rehabilitation and promotion of equal opportunities for disabled people, specifically for European

citizens. Members of RI-ECA are the national secretaries of RI in the countries of the European Union and Austria, where Finland and Sweden participate in their capacity of observers.

Apart from its coordination of exchange and information activities in the functional rehabilitation sector RI-ECA has - in the framework of the HELIOS programme - coordinated the answer of the Forum of disabled people to the Green Book on Social Policy - Options for the Union. Its EUROPROGRAMME 1994, set up in close collaboration with its 4 NGO partners, provides for the co-financing of 17 activities (seminars, conferences, camp for young disabled people). RI-ECA constitutes a platform for the exchange of

ideas, experiences, know-how and practice for the compilation and dissemination of information. In the prospect of the short or medium term accession of new Member States, RI-ECA wishes to start collaborating more closely with these countries by involving them in its projects.

### **REHABILITATION INTERNATIONAL**

*European Communities  
Association*

**RI-ECA**

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## EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION (E.A.S.E.)

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to Education*

### ***“Providing a European platform for discussion and practice-oriented co-operation”***

**W**hereas certain countries have well developed educational systems for people with special needs, the overall situation remains unsatisfactory - at least for certain groups. Founded in 1968, the European Association for Special Education (E.A.S.E.) therefore aims at improving the education and welfare of disabled people. We develop awareness, within our communities, of the educational needs of disabled people. We arrange conferences, symposia and meetings to implement the objectives of the association. Also, we initiate further measures which serve the joint working of the various regional and national organisations.

E.A.S.E has 31 full members (national associations) and 30 associated members (Universities, colleges, individuals and

schools). This comprises approx. 50,000 individual professionals and parents. We have status with the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Nordic Council and UNESCO. An important body within E.A.S.E is the expert group, which is composed of professionals in the area of education, training and research.

Interaction is the key to our activities: we want to enrich national and regional developments through the exchange of ideas and experiences. To cite but one example: learning difficulties are of major concern to us for the moment. Our expert group has pointed out the variety of options and provisions in the EU Member States - some of them focusing on lack of provisions for the target group, others on integration in the mainstream schools and later possibilities for vocational training

and jobs. Without wishing to advocate an ideal formula, E.A.S.E. stimulates wide ranging discussions on the issues. There is an enormous potential for improvement at all levels through a better understanding of what already exists in every part of the European Union.

#### **E.A.S.E**

*European Association for Special Education*

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## **ACTION EUROPÉENNE DES HANDICAPÉS (AEH)**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to “Vocational Training and Employment”*

### ***“To strengthen the social dimension of the Single Market”***

**T**he Action Européenne des Handicapés (AEH) was founded in Luxembourg in 1979, from a merger of member and of user organisations. It is represented in 8 Member States of the Union and maintains close contacts with the European institutions, as well as with international umbrella organisations in the disability field. Its chairman is Minister Walter Hirrlinger.

The objective of the AEH is the permanent improvement of the living and working conditions of the more than 30 million disabled citizens in the European Union. The activities of AEH focus particularly on matters of social and professional integration of disabled people - more specifically taking into account

mobility as the prerequisite for efficient integration. In the framework of HELIOS II, AEH will organize a conference in Belgium on the theme “Questions concerning industrial law in the single market with regard to disabled people” in the autumn of this year.

The AEH considers the possible consequences of the economic recession for the social and disability policy of the Member States to be a major problem for the future. A long term, cautious approach of our aims and policies in the social area could be a solution - taking into account the structures and capacities of social security systems which vary from country to country. Furthermore the AEH is worried about the possibility that the

subsidiarity principle laid down in the Maastricht Treaty could inhibit the development of national disability policies. Here the commitment of the European Parliament and of the European Commission - in their cooperation with supranational non-governmental organisations - will ensure a certain latitude for development.

#### **A.E.H.**

*Action Européenne des Handicapés*

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**COFACE / CONFÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE DES ORGANISATIONS  
FAMILIALES DE L'UE**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to "Family and Elderly People" in 1994 and  
1996 (representation on the basis of annual rotation with EUROLINK AGE)*

***"To reveal queries, needs, resources and responsibilities of families and their disabled or elderly members and the answers which can be given to guarantee them equal opportunities, the well-being and quality of life we all wish for ourselves"***

COFACE is composed of the family organisations of the European Union and maintains close contacts with the International Union of Family Organisations. Its objective is to become a pressure group in the EU, as well as a body for exchange and mutual support for its member organisations, presently 72 in the 12 Member States. With regard to families of which one member - child or adult - is

disabled, COFACE created a Commission of families and disabled people about twenty years ago which presently consists of 33 member organisations and meets 3 to 4 times a year. From 1984 it has participated in Community programmes in favour of disabled people, both as an active member and a consultative body. In the framework of HELIOS II, our EUROPROGRAMMES developed in the areas of

social integration and independent living call upon the participation of disabled people - regardless of their age or the nature of their disability - and their families, but also upon professionals who could give the necessary support and the extended social environment including political decision makers who have to be involved in the whole integration process. One of our perspectives and wishes for the year 2000 : that this fresh interest towards families and disabled people will take shape through the implementation of a coherent policy in their favour.

**COFACE**

***Confédération Européenne des  
Organisations Familiales de l'UE***

Mrs. Nadine MEEUS

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**MOBILITY INTERNATIONAL**

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to Independent Living  
(including mobility, housing, access, creativity, tourism and sport)*

***"Ensuring that disability interests are represented in EU Social Policy, and particularly in European actions and programmes"***

**S**et up in the early 80s, Mobility International (MI) is a non-profit making NGO promoting the integration and independence of disabled people through international travel and exchange. We have 120 member organisations worldwide, mainly in Europe, and represent people with all types of disability: be they physical, mental, sensorial or invisible (epilepsy, kidney patients etc).

Our activities include seminars, youth exchanges, training courses, language courses, activity weeks, staff exchanges. We run an information and technical service on EU programmes of interest to

disability organisations. Also, we are working in close cooperation with the Independent Living Movement in the United States and in Europe.

Our 1994 EUROPROGRAMMES include assertiveness/self-confidence-training for young disabled people, staff training in the area of personal relationships and sexuality of mentally disabled people, a youth exchange to Finland, a language and independent living training week in Sicily, a seminar on the use of social dogs in the Netherlands as well as training courses in both Eastern and Western Europe. We are currently working on two European

guides on accessible tourist facilities within Europe for the disabled traveller, and a manual of good practices for the tourist industry in serving disabled clients. Apart from cooperating with the European Commission's Directorate Generals (DGs) V, I, VII and XIII, Mobility International also has status with the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and regularly runs youth projects within Council of Europe countries.

**MOBILITY  
INTERNATIONAL**

Ms. Jackie West

Programme Director

Mr. Trevor Boyle / President

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## EUROLINK AGE

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to "Family and the Elderly" in 1993 and 1995 (represented on the basis of annual rotation with COFACE)*

### ***"Disability and Ageing - a new priority for Europe"***

**E**urolink Age is one of the leading European networks promoting good policy and practice on issues of ageing and older people. It provides policy support (i.e. concrete policy recommendations) and publications for the European Commission. Eurolink Age has members in all EU Member States: elderly people's organisations, the non-governmental sector, policy makers etc. Eurolink Age campaigns to raise awareness on issues affecting older people in the EU; it also coordinates practical programmes and networks in a number of specialist fields.

Europe is ageing. At this moment, a majority of disabled people are over 60 years old. People are living longer: the total number of older people is on the increase. This means that the percentage of those who are both older and disabled is rising as well. Eurolink Age believes that the aim of any policy on disability should be to secure and maintain for all older disabled people a good quality of life and to strive to improve this. This should comprise: autonomy, integration, respect, ownership, social involvement and communication, activity and mobility, privacy and tranquillity. Equality of

opportunity for a full and active life is the key-issue.

Over the past few years Eurolink Age has, in cooperation with European NGOs working in the disability field, developed ideas and plans for EU action in support of the integration, participation and aspirations of people who are both older and disabled.

### **EUROLINK AGE**

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## DISABLED PEOPLES INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

*Coordinating NGO for the sector relating to "Social, economic and legal protection"*

### ***"Disability is not a matter of impairment or of charity: it is a human rights issue"***

**T**he DPI/EC Committee, a sub-region of Disabled Peoples' International, was created in 1981 by disabled people - and we run it. Any organisation of disabled people can join their DPI national Assembly. There are over 100 assemblies world-wide, 17 in Europe and 10 in the EU. We provide a voice for disabled people at all levels to achieve our objective: full and equal participation in society.

We have consultative status with the UN and its agencies, had a substantial input into the UN World Programme of Action, subsequent UN resolutions and recommendations on disability issues, the Special Report on Disability and Human Rights and the Standard Rules on Equalisation of Opportunities.

In the European Union, DPI promotes disabled peoples' human rights with the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council of Europe. We raise awareness on disability issues and challenge public images on disability. We support the development of disabled peoples' own organisation through training, lobbying for resources and the dissemination of information. We are concerned for the inclusion of disabled women and other underrepresented groups of disabled people in policies and programmes.

We believe that only through the implementation of self-determined independent living and the introduction of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation can we achieve our aims. Within HELIOS we co-ordinated in

particular the 1993 European Day of Disabled People activities and the Disabled Peoples' Parliament. We are committed to working with single-impairment or single-issue organisations to achieve the objective of a society for all by the year 2000.

### **DISABLED PEOPLES' INTERNATIONAL**

*European Community Committee*  
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# Enhanced cooperation - better results : the NGO - Europrogrammes

*The European Disability Forum is one illustration of the increased co-operation between the Commission and non-governmental organisations.*

The other major area of co-operation is financial support for activities organised by NGOs in the framework of HELIOS II.

In 1994, the Commission is co-financing more than 250 activities throughout the Union, covering a wide range of disabilities and integration issues. These are essentially working meetings: conferences, seminars, study visits and working groups.

The twelve European NGO members of the Forum play an important co-ordinating role with regard to applications for financial support from European partner organisations and national organisations in their specific field. To give an example: the European Regional Council of the World Federation of Mental Health (ERC-WFMH), as representative of the sector relating to psychological impairment within the Forum, prepares a draft series of activities – or ‘EUROPROGRAMME’ –

which is presented to the Commission. In other words: ERC-WFMH gives an opinion on each of the applications received, according to the following criteria:

- Does the activity have a clearly defined European dimension, with speakers and participants from at least three Member States ?
- Does the event take place within the European Union ?
- Does the subject matter correspond with one or more of the HELIOS annual themes for the year in question ?
- And are disability issues being addressed in the context of equal opportunities and integration of disabled people ?

## **TRANSFERABILITY, COORDINATION AND EVALUATION: ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS**

Also considered are the multiplier effect and the transferability of the results of the activity: how many people will ultimately benefit in terms of exchange of experience and knowledge? Whilst the opinions of the respective consultative bodies are also sought on the proposals, the Commission makes the final decision on activities eligible for financial support. But clearly it relies upon the objectivity and the expert knowledge of the co-ordinating NGOs – as experts in their field – in recommending a well-balanced series of activities: geographically, regarding the themes addressed, and indeed the

needs and priorities of different target groups within the sector.

Co-ordination and coherence govern the impact of the EUROPROGRAMMES. Working with identified priority themes is paramount. However it is important to reiterate the role of the co-ordinating NGOs. One of their tasks is to provide an annual report – with a comprehensive overview of activities undertaken and the necessary follow-up required.

A further aspect inherent to HELIOS II is evaluation. During the last Forum meeting, the Chair presented a number of ideas for internal evaluation both of national and European NGOs, to ensure that the EUROPROGRAMMES of the 12 sectors will ultimately lead to the development of a coherent policy and priorities. The Chair will be sending out evaluation questionnaires to all NGO partners within HELIOS before the end of 1994. These will be valuable instruments, giving both Forum members and European Partner Organisations the opportunity, on an ongoing basis, to reflect upon and possibly modify their respective roles and responsibilities in the context of HELIOS II.

*N. Bedlington, NGO Unit, HELIOS Team of Experts*

## **FUNDING POSSIBILITIES FOR NGOS**

- Subsidies may be awarded for conferences, seminars, study-visits, training courses and other working meetings with a European dimension, addressing HELIOS II annual themes.
- Up to 50 % of eligible expenditure may be awarded.
- The dead-line for activities taking place in 1995 and 1996 is 1 November of the year preceeding the activities.
- General rules and application forms are available from Mr. B. WEHRENS, European Commission, Head of the Division “Integration of disabled people”, DGVE.3, Rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels.

## **What is a European Non-Governmental Organisation?**

To operate as a European Partner Organisation within HELIOS II the European NGO should be composed of national non-profit making organisations from at least two thirds of the EU Member States. The principle remit of the European NGO should relate explicitly to European level co-operation on disability or integration issues, and equal opportunities, and be consistent with the aims of HELIOS II.

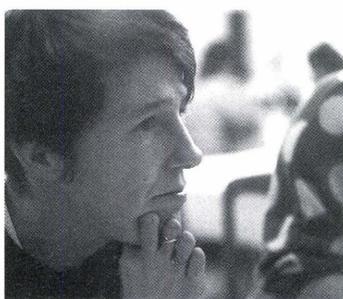


London, 18 May 1994: a disability activist demanding anti-discrimination legislation in the UK

• Photo: Mike Helby, Disability Now

## A European Anti-discrimination Legislation?

*In some countries other marginalized social groups such as ethnic minorities and women have enjoyed the protection of anti-discrimination laws for some time. Recent legislative developments in non-European countries such as the U.S.A., Australia, Japan and Canada have extended these rights to disabled people. Encouraged by this success, disabled people in Europe increasingly voice the need for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation*



Theresia Degener, of German nationality, is a member of Disabled Peoples' International and co-Chair of a project on human rights and disability under the auspices of the "Dutch Council of the Disabled".

### **PRO** Theresia Degener, Germany

It has been said that the introduction of a binding European anti-discrimination law for disabled people is legally impossible and politically unwise. I hold the opposite view.

It is true that the European Council can only act in fields which fall within its power. It would therefore be impossible to have a binding directive covering all aspects of disabled people's lives. However, an anti-discrimination directive could – as a first essential step towards more comprehensive anti-discrimination policies in the EU Member States – focus on employment. Several

European studies have shown that discrimination against disabled people in this area is one of the most serious obstacles in their achieving independent living!

Moreover, both European instruments – the Treaty of Rome and the Maastricht Agreements – do provide sound legal bases for a directive on disability discrimination in employment: Employment discrimination against disabled workers violates one of the four fundamental European Union freedoms – the freedom of movement of workers. An anti-discrimination directive would help to efficiently guarantee the mobility of disabled workers and thus is necessary for achieving the European Union's

objective as laid down in the 1986 Council Recommendation on employment of disabled people, and furthermore emphasized in the Protocol on Social Policy in the Maastricht Agreement. Also, it would counteract distortion of competition which results from differing employer's costs depending on whether their country has quota-systems, and other employment protection laws for disabled people, or not. In other words: the functioning of the Single Market requires that the concept of employment discrimination and the terminology of disability is equally applied in all Member States (though this will be no easy task). Community action programmes on disability have,



Kassel, 31 October 1992: disabled people campaigning for anti-discrimination legislation in Germany  
Photo: dpa.

over the past decade, also revealed the need for legally binding policy guidelines in this area. I therefore do not believe that the principle of subsidiarity according to which the European Union can only act where national legislation is not sufficient, is a legal barrier to such a directive. And since directives have to be transferred into national legislations, the employment and rehabilitation systems of each single country would still be respected.

As to the argument that a European anti-discrimination directive for equal employment opportunities for disabled persons leads to marginalization and emphasises the negative aspects of disability: US experiences in this area prove the opposite. They have shown that anti-discrimination measures for disabled people are the most efficient way to equalize employment opportunities and to initiate a pace of change, because they focus on individual skills and abilities of disabled workers – and not on negative aspects of disability.

Furthermore, anti-discrimination laws point to the negative aspects of power relations within a given society – and this will help to change the paradigm of disability from charity concepts towards civil rights.

### CONTRA

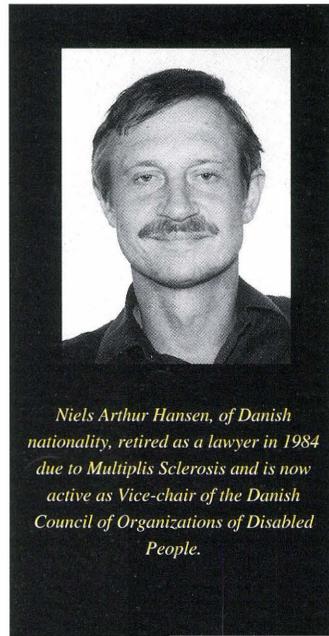
**Niels Arthur Hansen,  
Denmark**

When discussing anti-discrimination, we must keep in mind that the concept of discrimination has two aspects: It implies positive as well as negative attitudes or actions. We refer to negative discrimination where people are – for some reason – being denied the opportunities any member of our society is entitled to. On the other hand, we speak of positive discrimination where people or groups in society benefit from special conditions which are being refused to their other fellow-citizens.

The objective of anti-discrimination legislation for disabled people is to prevent discrimination by prohibition of discriminatory actions. But by introducing such legislation, the

lawmaking body would achieve just the opposite result: discrimination through granting special rights that cannot be enjoyed by all in society.

My argument is in no way a mere elegant play of words. I am seriously concerned about the issue. All over the world, continuous efforts are being made to improve the educational, social and professional lives of disabled people in their communities. And this with the implicit aim of creating a society with equal opportunities and equal rights for all, disabled and non-disabled



Niels Arthur Hansen, of Danish nationality, retired as a lawyer in 1984 due to Multiple Sclerosis and is now active as Vice-chair of the Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People.

people alike. A fundamental principle to reach this objective is, first and foremost, continuous and careful public information. In order to change negative attitudes and misconceptions about disability, we must raise awareness amongst decision-makers, civil servants and all citizens. Each and everyone of us needs to regard disabled people as equal peers, with the same rights and responsibilities. As one European citizen out of ten is disabled, disability is an ordinary part of everyday life – made extraordinary through people's preconceived ideas.

By introducing anti-discrimination legislation, however, we run the risk of presenting disabled people as a group apart: As persons who need special provisions and special laws – and who are therefore different. This may, in turn, create envy, reinforce prejudices and stereotype images and lead to ensuing marginalisation of disabled people in legislative terms. Normalization, mainstreaming, integration – and not segregation – are the key words and the very essence of Danish, and more generally Scandinavian disability policy. Through positive discrimination of disabled people we run the risk of moving towards a society where a major part of the population will regard disabled people as privileged trouble-making outsiders.

Personally, I am therefore reluctant to go for an anti-discrimination legislation. There are, of course, advantages on a short-term basis. But in the long-term, these immediate advantages will undermine our ultimate objective: total equalization of disabled and non-disabled

# Exchange and Information Activities

*In this first issue we present the exchange and information activities between participants chosen by Member States' governments. In our next issue we will talk about the HANDYNET system, on the evaluation report given to the Council and Parliament in July and on its perspectives of growth. The exchange and information activities were started in February 1994. They cover the following four sectors: functional rehabilitation, educational integration, economic integration (including vocational training) and social integration (including independent living). The participants were appointed by the Member States' governments at the end of 1993.*

In addition to the links with the NGOs, HELIOS concentrates on three major types of activities, namely, exchange and information activities, the HANDYNET system and information and awareness raising activities. Considerable importance is also attached to close cooperation with international organizations such as the Council of Europe, UNO, UNESCO and the OECD, and to coordination at European level (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, and the Commission's departments) as well as with national authorities.

## EDUCATION

**Syracuse, Sicily (Italy),  
21-24 April 1994**

Italy. As Yves Montand used to sing, this little band had a chance to see Syracuse (!), but the aim of the gathering had nothing to do with tourism or poetry. Fulvio and his guests make up one of the HELIOS II exchange activities working groups in education. The April meeting in Syracuse was the first study visit on their 1994 schedule, to be followed a few weeks later by a visit to Torben in Amstgarden, Denmark, then to Maria Teresa in Braga, Portugal. The subject of their exchanges is very specific, namely, early intervention in the form of information, guidance and counselling for families.

Study visits by groups of from 4 to 16 people are the first step in exchange activities. They give their participants a chance to discover and compare the practices of sometimes very distant European colleagues. So, 63 groups, including 13 in the education field alone, will conduct three or four study visits each in 1994. The next step will be the holding of eight European seminars—two per sector—at the end of 1994.

analysis in greater depth, especially since one of final objectives is to draft a guide of good practices by the end of HELIOS II.

In preparing their study visits and their subsequent activities, Fulvio and his partners, like all 676 participants in the exchange activities, must follow a number of guidelines:

- The Council Decision of 25 February 1993 setting up the HELIOS II programme specifies the scope of each exchange activity. In the education sector, for example, all levels of education are now embraced, from preschool child-care to higher education. This is a positive addition compared to HELIOS I.

- The impressive list of 'priority themes' drawn up by the Commission and Member States for the entire run of HELIOS II (1993-96).

- From this list of 'priority themes', working themes for 1994 were selected by the participants, *i.e.*, setting up working groups and organizing study visits.

The sixteen working themes in the area of education try to both cover all levels of education and to tackle a few key issues common to this field. For example, can the integration of disabled children and young adults in the educational system be divided into a string of separate elements or 16 subjects for study? Of course not, but to make headway, a systematic approach must be adopted to select a few specific aspects in order to study them better. This theme-based approach is vital and should make it easier to sum up the actual results of the study visits at the European seminars scheduled for late 1994.

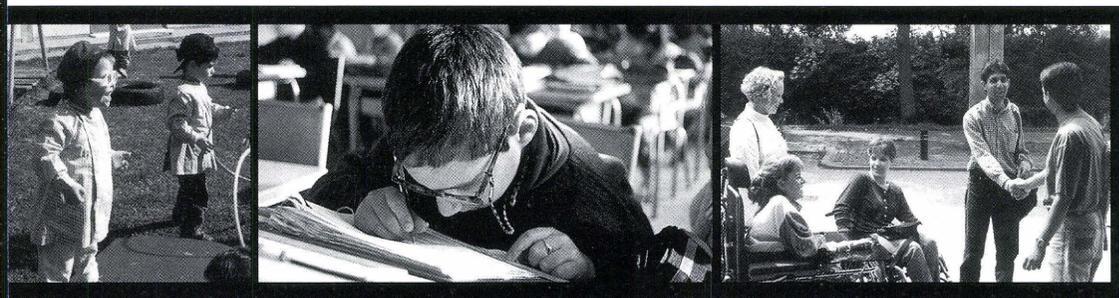
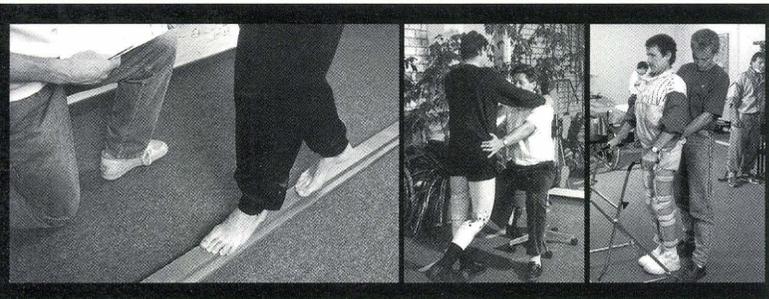


Photo: COFACE

Fulvio hosted Torben, from Denmark, Franz-Josef and Franz, from Germany, Sonia, from the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, Christine, from the United Kingdom, Maria Teresa and Maria Cruz from Portugal, and Antonio, a compatriot from Catanzaro,

These seminars will give the participants a chance to sum up and share the practical conclusions drawn from their study visits. This will be paralleled by the creation of study groups with the participation of the twelve Member States to pursue this



**FUNCTIONAL REHABILITATION**

Functional rehabilitation is a newcomer to HELIOS II, for this sector was not included under HELIOS I.<sup>1</sup> Doctors, physiotherapists, and members of associations of disabled people make up the bulk of the participants in this sector of HELIOS activities.

We need to make one thing clear: HELIOS activities do not provide a framework for scientific or technical research and exchange. Functional rehabilitation professionals have other European networks and can attend specialised scientific colloquia for this purpose. On the contrary, the aim of the HELIOS programme is to encourage

will be up to the Member States to modify their specific laws and administrative procedures if they find it appropriate.

One of the working themes that has raised a great deal of interest in the functional rehabilitation sector in 1994 is called 'programmes facilitating the return of people with head injuries to their ordinary social environments and work'. This theme demonstrates the emphasis placed on an overall approach rather than to technical and medical issues. Still with regard to this example of head injuries, the participants in the exchange activities are trying to answer the following questions about the entire rehabilitation process: Should patients be admitted to special rehabilitation centres and, if so, for how long? What must be done following discharge from a rehabilitation centre? Whilst no one denies the usefulness of family members' participation and involvement, how far

extremely beneficial for the patients and their spouses and children, as it enables all the parties to find a new equilibrium in their lives.

**EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

Raymond Kenler runs the vocational training centre AURELIE in Herstal, a suburb of Liege in Belgium. He participates in HELIOS exchange activities as a coordinator of a working group.

*HELIOS: Raymond Kenler, could you introduce AURELIE to our readers?*

Raymond Kenler: 'AURELIE is a vocational training centre specialising in automotive mechanics. We currently have 25 trainees, all of whom have some form of disability. What is more, they are all socially excluded. The Walloon Region subsidises our operating costs. Still, the automobile sector is in a slump and we have to explore new avenues of



comprehensive analysis of functional rehabilitation activities as a whole, to identify 'good practices' and invent creative solutions.

The first study visits undertaken since the start of the year have shown yet again the great disparities that exist between the administrative and social security systems in the Union's Member States. HELIOS has not set out to achieve their uniformisation. Its participants may discover or invent ideal solutions, but it

should such involvement go? Who must bear the financial burden of this involvement? One study visit has already revealed the potential consequences of a head injury for the family.

Not only rehabilitation problems, but also possible changes in the person's behaviour and character may deeply disrupt interpersonal relations within the entire family. Participating in support groups as part of the rehabilitation process is

training. To adapt we are currently setting up a small automobile recycling company.'

*HELIOS: Why did you want to participate in the HELIOS programme?*

R.K.: 'We are a small local centre outside the scope of the great debates. I wanted to be in touch with broader European developments, to join the flow of European ideas.'

*1. Functional rehabilitation includes physical rehabilitation, vocational retraining, rehabilitation to recover one's abilities with a view to resuming an independent way of life and training in interpersonal communication.*

**HELIOS: What is your current theme of work, as you have proposed it?**

R.K.: 'We are working on "identifying opportunities and difficulties on the open labour market". When I attended the HELIOS symposiums held in Brussels in December 1993 I was struck by the breadth of the HELIOS programme, by the participation of individuals who were obviously very used to this type of large meeting, and I said to myself that I would never be able to push through my project. Well, I did! When I proposed the theme during the second day of meetings, about ten people from five different countries jumped at the proposal and the group is now working smoothly. In the end, the themes were chosen very democratically.'

**HELIOS: Your first study visit was in Liege in April. What are your first impressions and what other activities are planned for 1994?**

Also, these personal contacts are very important, they allow a European mixture. We will be able to maintain these contacts after our experience in the HELIOS partnership.

As for the future, we are planning a study visit to Denmark in December, a trip to France in September and perhaps a trip to England as well. The budget at our disposal enables us to organise these three, even four visits without problems.'

**HELIOS: Your provisional conclusions and goals for the future?**

R.K.: 'Vocational training schemes clearly must adapt and propose new trades. Also, changing attitudes towards work in general and the work of disabled people in particular is an important notion. Finally, our political authorities must be pressured into adapting laws and regulations accordingly.'

sector's working themes for 1994, such as technical adaptation and refurbishing of housing, the role of technical aids and means of communication, etc. However, the concept of independent living has much more fundamental implications. One of the HELIOS II priorities is precisely to deepen and popularise this concept essential to the quality of life for disabled people.

Participants in HELIOS II's social integration activities have devoted a large share of their work in 1994 to the transition of the people with mental health problems or learning difficulties from sheltered living conditions to independent living in an ordinary environment.

This 'de-institutionalisation' involves the physical moving of people with mental health problems or learning difficulties from a psychiatric or medical institution to less supervised housing within an urban or rural setting.

• The disabled person must be motivated. This motivation often has to be stimulated, for the disabled person and his or her family will be used to the institution and reassured by the support it offers.

• Social integration must not be a break with the past. The disabled person must maintain links with his or her family and previous institution.

The transition to the ordinary environment also depends on the economic and political authorities. One of the conditions for success – and not the least of them – is to permit and promote the participation of disabled people in paving the way for their own integration. The obligatory conditions for true social integration are changes in attitudes, the ability of disabled people to take responsibility, and the raising of the general public's awareness of disability issues.

Other activities in the 'independent living' area, such as sport, creativity and tourism, are being developed. HELIOSCOPE will keep you informed of the latest developments in this regard. ■

*Y. Dricot, Information Service, HELIOS Team of Experts*

R.K. 'We are becoming aware of the differences in approaches and the advantages of brushing-up against other ideas. Our Danish partners in the group are insisting on a more radical approach. Without underestimating the need to create new jobs (tourism, environment, etc.), they are stressing the importance of changes in attitudes, the need to invent a new concept of work and the development of thought about the integration of disabled people.'

**SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

The fourth sector covered by the programme's exchange and information activities is social integration and independent living. The concept of independence in connection with disabled persons is very often restricted to physical mobility or the accessibility of public places and means of transport. Of course, these issues continue to be important concerns and are reflected in some of the 'social integration'

However, other conditions must be met if social integration is to be a real option.

We can cite three such conditions that are internal to the social integration process, namely:

• Integration is not possible if the need for security is not addressed. A disabled person cannot be expected to take risks that an able-bodied person would not take. This security must be material and practical, psychological and financial.

*(Continued from page 7)*

**The value of a collective voice at national level - the disability councils**

already exists for the HANDYNET information system. ■

*By Angelo Angelidis, Greek member of the HELIOS Advisory Committee and the Liaison Group, and Eftihia Nikopoulou, member of the HELIOS Advisory Committee.*

# Disability Organisations and Social Partners

## *Collective response of NGO members of the European Disability Forum to the EU Green Paper "European Social Policy – Options for the Union"*

In their comment on the Green paper on European Social Policy, the NGO Forum members have reiterated the necessity for disability issues to be mainstreamed in all European Union policies. Further issues addressed included:

- New perspectives within Community programmes and

initiatives relating to training and employment, which should be accessible to disabled people.

- The currently accepted definition of Social Partners, which should be enlarged to include participation of non-governmental organisations representing different minority groups, including organisations

representing disabled people.

- The information needs of disabled people, which should be recognized as a prerequisite for social and economic integration. Existing systems should, therefore, be coordinated, developed European-wide and made more accessible to disabled people.

- The call for a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to cover institutional, social and personal discrimination against disabled people.

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL POLICY – MEETING OF NGOS WORKING IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR

The Green Paper on European social policy in the social sector and employment was also discussed at length at a meeting attended in April by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing a broad spectrum of interests (those of young people, the elderly, families, women, immigrants, disabled people, and citizens of the Union living below the poverty line). A joint declaration and memorandum were approved following the discussions, in which representatives of the European Disability Forum participated. The demands set forth in the declaration concerned the EU's powers

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY – APPROVAL OF MEDICAL CARE INSURANCE LAW

*After years of hemming and hawing the parties of the ruling coalition and the political opposition finally approved the highly controversial law on medical care insurance (under cover of statutory sickness insurance) in March. Accordingly, home care will be covered as of 1995 and intensive care in specialised establishments as of 1996. It proved necessary to create this medical care insurance because of the steadily rising proportion of elderly people and people requiring medical care and the sharp rise in the cost of the care provided by specialised establishments. Until now, the modest pensioner whose*

*sole source of income is his pension has had to count on the financial support of his family or a welfare agency. Under the new medical care insurance scheme, all persons requiring care will be eligible for coverage of the cost of such care. All persons who, because of a physical, mental or psychological illness or disability, require constant, substantial aid to perform the tasks of daily life will be eligible for such coverage.*

### DENMARK – NEW SCHOOL REFORM ON TEACHING DIFFERENTIATION

*A new school reform on teaching differentiation as a fundamental principle in mainstream education has come into force in Denmark as of 1 August 1994. The reform provides individual teaching programmes as well as adapted methods and materials for disabled children in integrated comprehensive school classes, with evaluation taking place on a regular basis. With the reform, the Danish "Folkeskole" (mainstream school, 6 – 16 years) adopts an educational principle which has been practiced successfully in special needs education (special schools and special classes within mainstream schools).*

*Cand. paed. psych. Jørgen Greve, Director Department for Special Needs Education County Council of Funen, Denmark*

and the rights of its citizens, the extension of the structural funds, the social consequences of the Single Market, the need to create new jobs, and the vital issues of social protection, social security and social exclusion.

## EUROPEAN DAY OF DISABLED PERSONS 1994

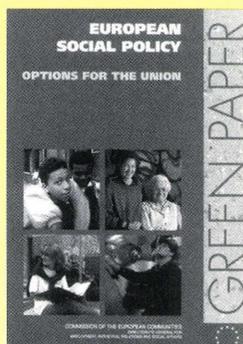
During its April meeting, the European Disability Forum appointed a working group to plan the European Day of Disabled People in 1994, which is supported by the HELIOS programme. Vice Chair Paul Boulonier, Rachel Hurst and Arthur Verney of Disabled Peoples' International, responsible for organising the Day last year, and Josée Van Remoortel, Chair of 'NGOs in

Consultation', met in Brussels on 9 May to discuss aims and objectives of the Day in 1994. It was agreed that three issues should be addressed: ethics – independent living – and sexuality. Underlying themes will be human rights issues, changing attitudes and perceptions concerning disability – and the need for common definition of disability which is acceptable throughout

the European Union. European workshops taking place on 2 and 3 October will develop a report to be presented within the European Parliament in Brussels to European officials and politicians on the Day itself. The report will also be presented to national parliaments. DPI will be responsible for the practical organisation of the "European Day of Disabled People" – and will also play a

co-ordinating role regarding its celebration at national, regional and local level by interested groups.

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*The Green Paper on Social Policy was launched by Commissioner Pádraig Flynn on 17 November 1993. Its aim was to stimulate an extensive debate on the full range of issues in the social policy sphere for the White Paper, due to be published in the second half of this year, which will set out guidelines for practical programmes and legislative texts at both national and Union level. On the subject of specific disability references addressed in the Paper, the Commission has received about 50 responses (10% of the comments received in total) – from organisations, institutions and individuals.*

## FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**The European Parliament has a group of MEPs working on disability issues, the All Party Disablement Group. It is cross-party, cross-national and covers all disabilities. It meets in Strasbourg, discusses disability issues and takes follow-up action. It works to ensure the continuation of disability programmes in close liaison with disability organisations and secured the Parliament's support for HELIOS II. Please write to new and returned MEPs asking them to join the Group and to give disability issues a higher profile in the new Parliament.**

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## THE NETHERLANDS – 'CUSTOMER-LINKED CARE AND PREVENTION BUDGET' EXPERIMENT COMES TO SUCCESSFUL CLOSE

The 'customer-linked care and prevention budget' experiment conducted by the Health Insurance Fund Board (Ziekenfondsraad) has come to a close. During its two years of existence some 300 people requiring long-term monitoring and care tested this new idea, which enables the 'clients' to get the aid they need themselves and to determine the type of aid as well as to choose the institution where they wish to be treated. The overwhelming majority of the participants were happy with the arrangement because it gave them a great deal of freedom to organize their daily lives. The Board of Disabled Persons (Gehandicaptenraad) hopes that the Health Insurance Fund Board will issue a favourable opinion so as to allow the rapid institution of this system.

*Maarten van Ditmarsch · Federatie Nederlandse Gehandicaptenraad · Postbus 169 · NL-3500 AD Utrecht*

*N.B.: The report of the European Colloquium on this subject that was held in Blankenberge (B) on 19 November 1993 may be ordered from the Vlaamse Federatie van Gehandicapten, Sint-Jansstraat 32, B-1000 Brussels Tel.: (+32 2) 515.02.16*

## PARTICIPATION BY EFTA STATES IN HELIOS II

*A formal request has been received from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Austria to participate in HELIOS II. This request follows the coming into force on 1 January 1994 of the agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA). The provisions of the agreement in relation to social policy allow for participation in EU framework programmes, specific programmes, projects or other actions on the basis of a financial contribution to cover the full costs of participation. The Commission*

*is currently negotiating with the five states concerned with a view to their participation in HELIOS on a progressive basis. In the meantime Norway, Sweden, Finland and Austria are holding referenda on joining the EU from the beginning of 1995. The negotiations in relation to the EEA agreement are expected to provide a useful basis for their introduction into HELIOS as full members of the EU.*

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## **IN THE NEXT ISSUE: FIGHTING UNEMPLOYMENT**

High and rising unemployment, and the resulting waste of human resources, present one of the major challenges facing the EU Member States. Disabled people are particularly affected in their participation in the labour market, facing obstacles in seeking jobs and difficulties in retaining them. Commissioner Flynn has said the Commission is determined to see the structural funds for training and job initiatives harnessed so as to translate the *White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment* into action. The particular needs of disabled people and the intention that they should, wherever possible, have access to mainstream activities and integrated employment were highlighted in the Green Paper: European Social Policy – Options for the Union. Decisions to be taken in the follow-up to these documents will be crucial in the fight against unemployment between now and the year 2000.

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