




COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
PROGRAMME FOR DISABLED PEOPLE



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1989

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helios : AN INTRODUCTION

**This first issue of the HELIOS magazine introduces the major areas of the HELIOS programme and presents the Team of Experts responsible for supporting the Commission of the European Communities in this work.**

The magazine replaces *Interact News* and the *Rehabilitation Centres Journal*, and will continue to provide a complete picture of the Commission's activities in the field of disability. It will contain information, ideas and experiences from the 12 member states and offer an important means for exchange at European level.

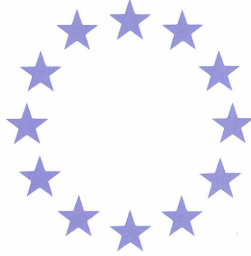
Every issue will feature activities taking place within the HELIOS programme, including sections on creativity and sport. The Commission is particularly interested in these areas because of their potential for heightening public awareness and promoting a positive image of disabled people.

Future issues will also look at a major topic or concern from a European perspective and include a round-up of any major events and developments taking place at European level.

\* The magazine is available free of charge in all nine official community languages.



## THE COMMISSION PROMOTES



**The Commission is working at a variety of levels to further its aim of full integration for some 30 million disabled Europeans. A key area of its work is to take political initiatives which will push forward the introduction of Community legislation in this field.**

During recent decades, each member state has at different times and in different circumstances taken steps to improve conditions for disabled people which, it is important to note, had been much neglected until the beginning of the 20th century.

By the 1970s, the Commission was already assigning a part of its social activities to the problems of disabled people, through either the intervention of the European Social Fund, or by studies undertaken by working groups set up specifically for this purpose. These studies generated a Council Resolution of 21 January 1974 concerning a programme of social action.

But it was in 1981 that the activities of the Community became properly structured with the creation of the division "Actions in favour of disabled people", closely following the declaration by the United Nations of 1981: International Year of Disabled People.

The absolute policy of the Commission was, and still is, the economic, social and cultural integration of disabled people in the European Community. A major task was to develop a community action plan that could give impetus to the work and help to support and promote the objectives of the Commission on a practical basis. In January 1983, the first European Community Action Programme for Disabled People was launched.

A network of 19 district projects was established as a major part of this programme, with the aim of improving the social integration of disabled people living in these areas by involving locally delivered services, relevant agencies and the general public. It was during this period that the Council also

adopted a recommendation of 24 July 1986 concerning the employment of disabled people, as well as the Community programme of 14 May 1987 concerning school integration.

The latest stage in this work, the Second European Community Action Programme for Disabled People, was adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 1988. Otherwise known as HELIOS ('H'andicapped People in the 'E'uropean Community 'L'iving 'I'ndependently in an 'O'pen 'S'ociety), it will continue, develop and expand the work of the first programme in promoting an autonomous life for all disabled people.

An important aspect of the HELIOS programme is to provide a platform from which the Commission can encourage and initiate policy developments, which will take the form of proposals in various key areas. A first priority is the employment of disabled people. In December 1988, the Commission submitted a report on the subject to the Council of Ministers, and this included measures intended to stimulate the employment opportunities and prospects of disabled people within the European Community.

The Commission is currently preparing a political document concerning transport problems for people with restricted mobility, which will be submitted to the Council later this year. Further policy proposals will follow concerning access to public buildings, school integration and the impact of new technology.

A POLICY OF FULL INTEGRATION FOR PEOPLE

DISABLED

There is an important need for legislation at European level to ensure equal opportunities for disabled people Community-wide. The introduction of a common European policy with particular regard to the areas outlined above would be a great achievement and mark the only coherent policy for disabled people in existence in any region of the world.

The Commission of the European Communities, with its commitment to a policy of full integration for all disabled people, is striving to achieve this goal. A major contribution to the task is being made by the HELIOS Team of Experts. On the following pages, we present the experts responsible for making the vital links between practice and policy.

B. Wehrens  
Head of Division  
Actions in favour of  
disabled people

PRESENTATION OF THE HELIOS TEAM OF EXPERTS \*



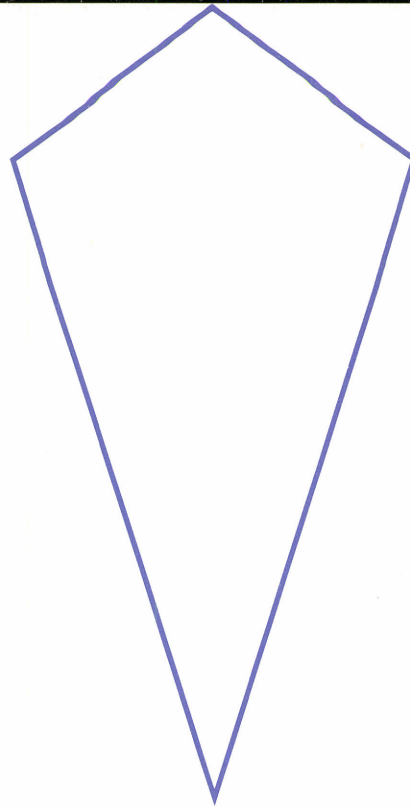
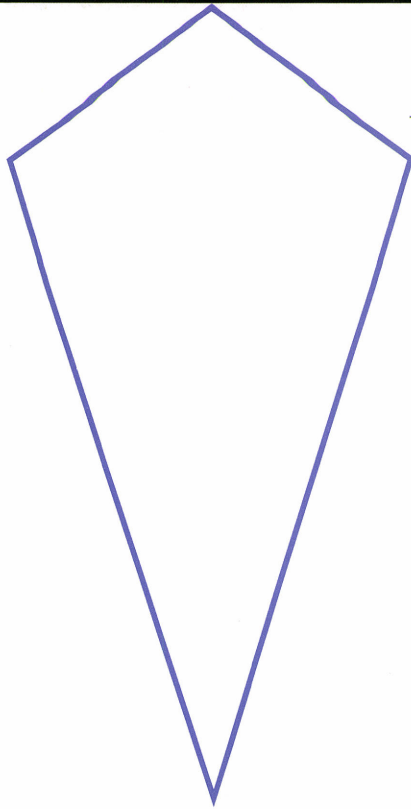
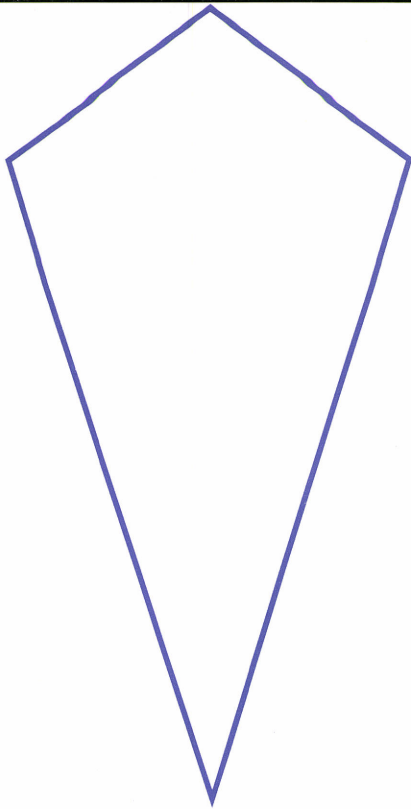
Armand Maron is the Director of the HELIOS Team of Experts. He oversees the running of the team's programme and is responsible for all financial, administrative and technical aspects of it.



Cristina Louro is the Assistant Director of the HELIOS Team. She supports the work of the Director and is responsible in particular for the publicity and management of the HANDYNET system.



Lieven Joniaux is responsible for Information and Documentation (including responsibility for this magazine). He also advises the Commission of the European Communities in the area of creativity and disabled people.



Danielle Rimbert is responsible for the coordination and the development of HANDY-NET, an integrated system of multilingual data banks in the field of disability. Work is currently focusing on a module concerning technical aids for use by disabled people.

Louis Van Amelsvoort coordinates the Community Network of Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centres and Experiences. He also advises the Commission of the European Communities in the area of sports activities for disabled people.

Claudine Van Lierde is responsible for the overall coordination and evaluation of the three Local Model Activities Networks, which are developing appropriate responses to the needs of disabled people at local community level (I — School Integration, II — Economic Integration, III — Social Integration).

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**The HELIOS programme combines many different areas of work and activities in the overall aim of social and economic integration for disabled people in the European Community. Activities focus on the needs of disabled people at local level in order to promote them at national and European level.**

Four major networks have been developed by the HELIOS experts to stimulate the exchange of ideas and the transfer of knowledge and technical expertise between member states.

One of these four networks is the Community Network of Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centres and Experiences. First established in 1974, it has been restructured for the second programme to include a wider geographical spread and greater representation of disability groups. A total of 50 centres now make up this network.

The three other networks are termed the Local Model Activities Networks. As the title implies, these are innovatory activities designed to become models of excellence for

application in other situations within the Community. Some 80 Local Model Activities are divided into three specific areas; school integration, economic integration and social integration.

The HELIOS Experts are responsible for organising conferences, seminars and group study visits for people participating in these networks. They are also monitoring and documenting the progress of the work, and findings will be held centrally by the HELIOS Information and Documentation Service. This service produces the HELIOS magazine which will provide an important means to exchange and disseminate information at European level.

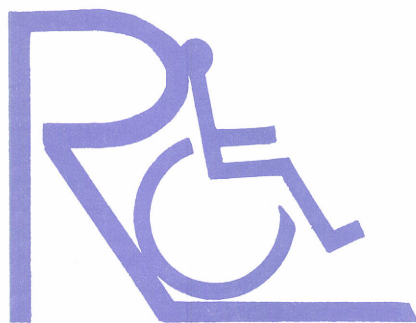
A further area of the HELIOS programme is a computerized information system known as HANDYNET, which will collect, update and exchange information in every community language concerning the field of disability. This will be a vital tool for use by disabled people and their helpers throughout the member states. At present, work is

concentrating on one module dealing with technical aids for use by disabled people; this is being prepared by working groups in different countries for a demonstration in 1989.

The work of the Commission is always undertaken in full collaboration with the people it is representing. A strong element of the new programme is the emphasis placed on the need to involve disabled people in the decision-making process. In particular, two advisory groups have been set up to support the work of the HELIOS programme and these include members who are themselves disabled.



**THE HELIOS PROGRAMME IN PRACTICE**



The Network of Rehabilitation Centres was established following a Council Resolution of 27 June 1974. For the period up until 1988, good cooperation between network members resulted in a very important and intensive exchange of knowledge and expertise in the area of vocational training and rehabilitation.

### THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE NETWORK

The main changes to the present community network concern the criteria for membership. As a major aim of this network is to facilitate the exchange of experiences, only those centres which were willing and able to supply information to bodies with the same aims in other member states, or to establish contact with these bodies, should remain or become members of the network. Further, the representation of the centres at network meetings should be made by full-time professionals.

Other criteria for the composition of the network included the representation of all stages in the process of social and economic integration, and of all aspects in the process of rehabilitation and vocational training. The different categories of disability should be equally represented and a wider geographical spread should be achieved.

On the basis of these criteria, the Commission asked the member states to propose centres in their countries for membership to the Community Network. By October 1988, the network had been enlarged from 38 to 50 centres, with 25 new members. All categories of disability are now well represented.

When the HELIOS Team of Experts started its work in the latter half of 1988, its first concern was to collect and collate adequate information on all aspects of the work taking place in the centres. The task of identifying and learning about the centres and experiences took place alongside preparations for the First Plenary Conference of the Community Network. These conferences, together with theme-based seminars and group study visits, are designed to promote the exchange of information, knowledge and experience vital to the running of the network.

### THE OBJECTIVES DEFINED

The aims of the restructured network were drafted at the plenary conference which took place on 19-20 December 1988 in Verona, Italy at the "Don Calabria" centre for vocational training. Firstly, all 50 centres within the network must collaborate with each other to facilitate the exchange of experiences. At the same time, each member of the network is obliged to form a second 'external' network by contacting and cooperating with other centres and activities of a similar type within its own member state. Details about European developments and events can then be effectively communicated to all centres including those in the extended outer network. At certain times, representatives from the centres within the external network can be invited to participate in the activities of the community network.

It is clear that the network of centres is not an isolated institution but functions within the framework of the HELIOS programme. Therefore interaction between the various parts of the programme is essential. Concrete cooperation between the Community Network of Centres and the Local Model Activities Network is demonstrated, for example, by the participation of representatives of the latter in theme-based seminars. Centres should also cooperate with the computerized information system, HANDYNET, in particular by supplying relevant information. Furthermore, it is expected that network centres will regularly submit contributions to the HELIOS magazine.

It is also important for the centres to be involved in dialogue with non-government organisations (NGOs) at European level, as well as at local and national level. The Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centres and Experiences and the NGOs can offer each other a great deal by sharing in experiences.

One of the principal benefits of being a network member is the opportunity to participate in the training session programme where members of staff in the centres can be sent abroad to learn new methods of training or treatment. In future issues of the HELIOS magazine, we will pay more detailed attention to such areas of the network.

## THE NETWORKS OF LOCAL MODEL ACTIVITIES

**The full integration of disabled people into society must be a practical as well as a political concern. The Local Model Activities represent a positive step towards achieving this aim at grass roots level.**

The Local Model Activities (LMAs) form an important part of the HELIOS programme. The activities are organised into three separate networks—school integration, economic integration and social integration. The HELIOS programme provides the focus which brings the work of all three networks together, combining to give a Community approach based on the best innovatory experiences in each member state. In particular, the activities make an important link between developments within each country and the need to form policy based on this practice at Community level.

The LMA scheme is made up of some 80 activities. These were chosen by the Commission from proposals submitted at the beginning of October 1988 by relevant ministries in each member state.

## WHAT IS AN LMA?

An LMA activity concentrates on specific conditions for disabled people at a local level. All LMAs are managed by multi-disciplinary teams that work to mobilise and coordinate existing resources within local communities in a model, innovative way. The major aim for each activity is to develop ways of improving the potential for integration of disabled people in either the educational, economic or social sphere.

All projects involve direct work by and with disabled people and a strong representation of disabled people is stressed at all levels of the decision-making process. For example, each LMA has an advisory committee comprising representatives from local associations of disabled people, as well as from social partners, local public authorities and other organisations. Each advisory committee has the task of helping to define priority action, supporting the management of each activity, promoting public awareness and disseminating information based on relevant experience.

Each network has a study visit programme, seminars for LMA coordinators and an annual theme-based conference. There are also possibilities for exchange between networks to harmonise the work and provide a common approach. For example, on 9 and 10 November 1988, all 80 LMA Project Leaders met in Brussels for two days of discussion concerning the elaboration of common working procedures and evaluation criteria. A checklist was devised as a further aid to this work.

Through these meetings, possibilities for the exchange of ideas, experiences and professional expertise between member states are promoted and enhanced. It also allows for the identification of ways in which the innovative aspect of the LMA can be disseminated and transferred at local, national and European level.

In future issues of the HELIOS magazine, each LMA network will be allocated one page. This can feature projects and experiences within the network, as well as any major developments and events of European scope or impact.

## LMA I: SCHOOL INTEGRATION



This network comprises 21 activities sharing the same overall aim; the largest possible integration of disabled children into ordinary schools. Such an integration would promote possibilities for equal opportunities, educate future generations of non-disabled people and allow for a genuine coming together within the educational setting. These aims are based on the assertion that every person has the right to equal opportunities to develop their maximum potential in terms of learning and education, and for the full expression of their individual personalities.

However, the network needs to maintain a sensitive balance between the objective of full integration in ordinary schools and the educational needs of the individual child. The LMA school activities were chosen to show that there is no reason why both of these objectives can not be achieved within the same physical environment, that of the school.



### Research Activities

There are four research themes relevant to all these schools and to all disabilities: i) special systems and integrated situations ii) teachers and parents iii) learning environments iv) full-time school life. Activities were chosen with aspects of particular relevance to one or more of these themes. Their work will be analysed and the findings used to identify solutions of wider application within the member states.

The sharing of experiences between parents, professionals specialising in work with disabled children, teachers and school friends in order to heighten awareness about important issues concerning integration is seen as another important task for the network.

### Technical Support

It is expected that the work of the network will lead to the organisation of structured educational procedures and methods which have been found to help in the process of integration. This work will look at all available technical support, including the continuous training of teaching staff, the implementation of teaching aids, particularly in the area of new technology, and the use of computer-aided educational devices which are being developed to help disabled children. The network also places emphasis on the importance of cooperation between educational and other local services and this will be reflected in the membership of the advisory committees. Within this area, the specific problems of transport and accessibility will have to be included.

All the work of this network is placed under the scrutiny of an inter-governmental working group on school integration. This working group is comprised of officials representing all 12 member states who meet together several times a year to follow and support the work of the network.



This network comprises 27 activities which are working to promote developments in vocational training opportunities, rehabilitation and the future economic integration of disabled people. A priority for the work is to stimulate legislation in the area of employment, with the overall aim of establishing a policy of equal employment opportunities for disabled people Community-wide.

Many activities are involved in the process of vocational training, mediation and employment. Vocational training incorporates areas of assessment and orientation designed to match individuals to suitable jobs, with consideration to disability and special interests. Many of the training schemes are focusing on the area of new technology, in particular information technology, which has massive employment potential for disabled people. Activities can therefore be seen to mediate between opportunities for disabled people and employment possibilities.

### A Positive Approach

Certain initiatives concentrate on accessing disabled people to the open employment market at local level. Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects to overcome at this stage is the social and psychological prejudices of employers. The programme will tackle this by promoting a positive view of disabled people. There is a particular focus on disabled women and their vocational training and employment needs.

Many employers are concerned about aspects such as safety at work, attendance, health, and modifications to the work place, before they recruit a disabled person. Activities are designed to help employers understand the best ways to deal with these areas through cooperation with other agencies.

### A Policy of Equal Opportunities

The LMAs are mainly involved in identifying the capabilities of disabled people and finding the most suitable vocational training programmes and employment opportunities. For those disabled people who find it difficult to compete in the open labour market, new working possibilities are being developed. LMA activities are involved in setting up sheltered employment opportunities, day centres, special work centres and local employment initiatives. These include employment agencies which will try to place disabled workers in suitable positions, and cooperatives which will provide labour directly, for example gardening and laundry services.

All agencies providing these opportunities must be integrated into a European Community-wide employment policy, which should include legislation to ensure that disabled people do not suffer from exploitation. Further, the LMAs work to encourage employers from both the public and private sector to adopt a positive approach which ensures that disabled people get their full share of the jobs available.

The network activities take place alongside other initiatives in housing, education, transport and leisure. All of these areas are vital in the process of full economic integration for disabled individuals throughout the European Community.

### Independent Living

Accommodation is another important area within the network. AML activities work alongside other organisations to provide sheltered community accommodation and are also establishing attendance services for disabled people living in independent housing. Technical support for the adaptation of housing for independent living is also offered. By stressing the importance of these areas, it is hoped that all new ventures in both the public and private sector, including housing, leisure facilities, swimming pools and cinemas, will be built with the particular needs of disabled people in mind.



The overall goal of all 32 activities linked to this network is to enable disabled people to live autonomously within their local communities. Priority actions are housing, access to public buildings, mobility and transport.

Many activities are being developed to ensure that disabled people have access to social, cultural and occupational activities in the community. This work includes the setting up of community-based centres for the specific needs of disabled people, and the modification of existing provisions to make them fully accessible; for example, disabled toilets in all public buildings, ramps, lifts and accessible paths for wheelchairs in public spaces. Activities are also taking place to ensure that disabled people have increased access to existing public transport systems. The provision of "door-to-door" transport is being developed.

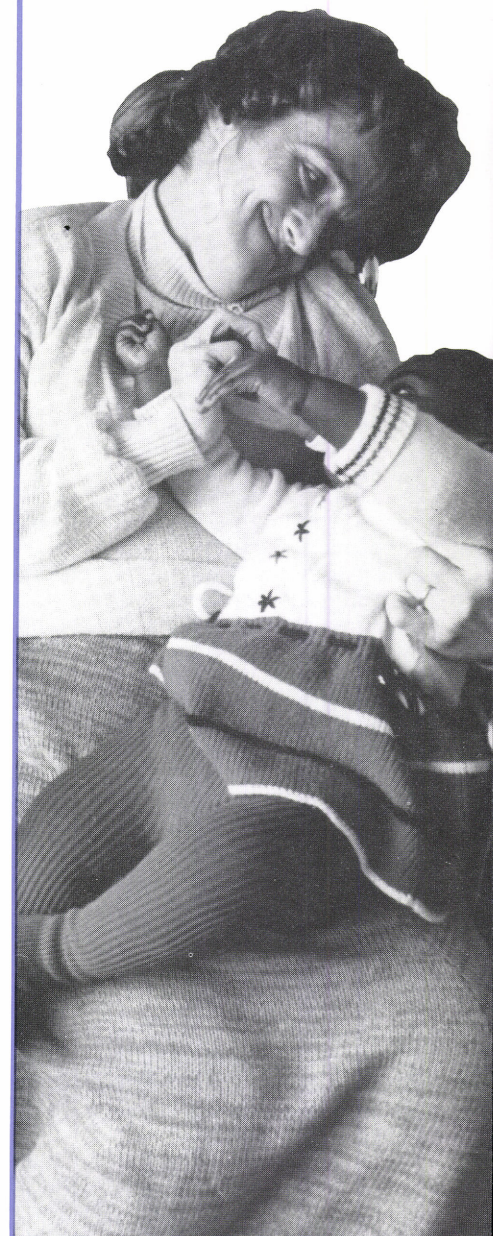
### Education Programmes

Many activities within this network are providing appropriate counselling programmes to help individuals develop social skills and self-reliance. This training policy is particularly important for those people who are making the transition from institutional to community life.

The active participation of the whole community is a very important aspect of all activities within the network, in particular the cooperation of local service providers in the areas of housing, mobility, accessibility, employment and vocational training. Involvement is sought from architects working on public buildings, manufacturers of aids for disabled people, transport executives and housing authorities. By bringing these issues to the attention of the general public and to professionals working with disabled people, all forms of barrier—technical, social, psychological, medical and legislative—can be addressed.

### Long-term goals

It is expected that the work of these LMA activities will provide the means to achieve long-term social integration by effecting improvements to the level of privacy and security in housing, and to opportunities for making full use of the leisure, educational and social facilities which exist locally.



**The concept behind the HANDYNET Project is of a Europe-wide information system devoted to the field of disability.**

HANDYNET is intended to be the tool which will allow some 30 million disabled Europeans and their helpers to have access to a single system for all their information needs in the field of disability.

The project aims to assist the process of social and economic integration by hosting an electronic means of interrogating and retrieving data from local databases, using the existing telephone network. To ensure easy transfer of information, HANDYNET will also provide automatic language translation facilities, as well as an electronic mail service and newsletter—the latter including a calendar of events, the latest products and regulations, and a “notice-board” for offers and requests. The provision of information is seen as an addition to, not a replacement of, existing professional services. Cost effectiveness is a major aim and will be achieved at the general level, by avoiding the repetition of investment costs, and at the local data collection and distribution points, by the reduction in running costs possible with a decentralised system.

Purchase of a micro computer and modem represents the single investment for each user and the running costs will usually be at local telephone rates, using the Packet Switch System (PSS) to the host computer at Frascati in Italy. The software and initial training will be provided free of charge.

So far, HANDYNET has evolved the necessary documentation and computer standards to achieve harmonisation of data entry and retrieval. The Project will not only provide software to ensure quality control of data entry but also the automatic gathering of statistics necessary for evaluation.

### **Why is HANDYNET needed?**

The justification for founding HANDYNET lies in the Council of Ministers' Resolution taken on the 21 December 1981, inviting member states to:

“... promote the development and availability of technical aids, the pooling of information and experience in the field and application of new technologies, so as to facilitate the communication, mobility and employment of handicapped people...”

The Council, when passing the resolution for the First Action Programme, stated that:

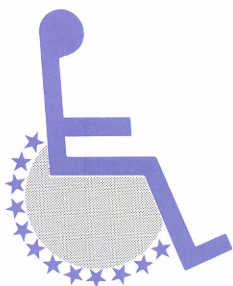
“The Commission is invited to pursue its efforts, in particular by ... pooling information and taking into account the existing national information systems, and assuring an exchange of information between the services involved in framing and implementing the above mentioned measures...”

The Council was giving recognition to the fact that disabled people have additional information needs to those of their able peers.

### **Who will use HANDYNET?**

Perhaps the best indicators of this are the examples of “Help Lines” that exist in most countries, where citizens can telephone with a variety of requests and then be pointed in the right direction, to obtain an appropriate product or service. An example in the UK is the operation of the Disabled Information Advice Line (DIAL), the analysis of which shows that demand has increased by 30% in the last year. This supports the conclusions of a German feasibility study made for HANDYNET in 1985, which estimated that 7-10% of the men and women living in the European Community are disabled people and that they and their enablers—families, educators, trainers, medical experts—are at present poorly served for their information needs. These are the potential users.

THE HANDYNET PROJECT



HANDYNET



## DISABILITY ASSOCIATIONS INVOLVED IN IMPORTANT DIALOGUE AT COMMUNITY LEVEL

The first European Community Action Programme provided the opportunity for exchange between non-government organisations (NGOs) at a Community level. The HELIOS programme is now maintaining and where necessary extending this community dialogue.

### Exchange

An important level of exchange is taking place between non-government disability organisations and the Commission of the European Communities. These organisations all have a European perspective to their work and are directly involved in activities by and with disabled people. By bringing them together for dialogue and discussions, the Commission helps to ensure that they are all moving in similar directions, exchanging up-to-date information concerning developments in their fields, and sharing technical expertise and experience.

The organisations can also learn of the Commission's work in this area and in what ways the Commission can help them. In turn, the Commission can benefit from their experience with specific categories of disability, and be informed of developments taking place in member states and how best to react to them.

### The role of an NGO member

Membership criteria and the rights and responsibilities of the NGO members were defined at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the group, held on 11 January 1989 in Brussels. It was decided that in principle, a European NGO should represent organisations in all 12 member states. Those NGOs which have this Community-wide membership will be given priority when the Commission awards grants to fund seminars, meetings and study visits.

An NGO member must assume a role of European coordination which also carries with it responsibilities in the technical preparation of actions at community level. At the meeting it was agreed that efforts must be undertaken to improve information and cooperation between group members, as well as with the four Community Networks. The wider the field of exchange and communication, the better the chances for real improvements at grass roots level in services, training and the rehabilitation of disabled people.

A further objective identified at the meeting was to stimulate the creation of NGOs which are truly European in nature with democratic and representative structures. It is important for all disabled people that their particular disability is represented within an association working at European level. The Commission is therefore encouraging the establishment of one European Association per main category of disability (eg European Secretariat for the Deaf) or activity (eg European Association for Creativity by and with disabled people).



**Creativity is an area where disabled people can communicate their hopes and aspirations to the able-bodied world. And increasingly, disabled people are making statements in their art work, through performances and exhibitions; they are showing that disability is no handicap to creativity.**

**During 1988, the European Association for Creativity by and with disabled people—EUCREA—became the spearhead for this work at European level.**

## PROMOTES CREATIVITY

**EUCREA, a non-government organisation funded directly by the Commission, was established in December 1987 during the Second European Colloquium for Creativity and Disabled People in Seville. Some forty organisations working in the area of arts and disability met together and voted for a Board of Directors.**

**EUCREA's Board is composed of one representative per member state. Five additional members were also elected. These 17 members then elected an Executive Board to deal with the day-to-day running of the association. The democratic procedure by which EUCREA was established sets an example that other international organisations could follow.**

### NATIONAL COMMITTEES

**Following its election, the Executive Board's first priority was to draw up guidelines for the setting up of National Committees. These will work in close collaboration with the Board which will give them financial and other forms of advice and support. Many National Committees have recently started their work, and it is hoped that these will be the link between the real grass roots and the European level.**

### FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

**A second important task was to draft guidelines for projects. In consultation with the Commission, EUCREA subsidised a number of projects in 1988. Project proposals must originate from within the Community and involve activities with at least four member states.**

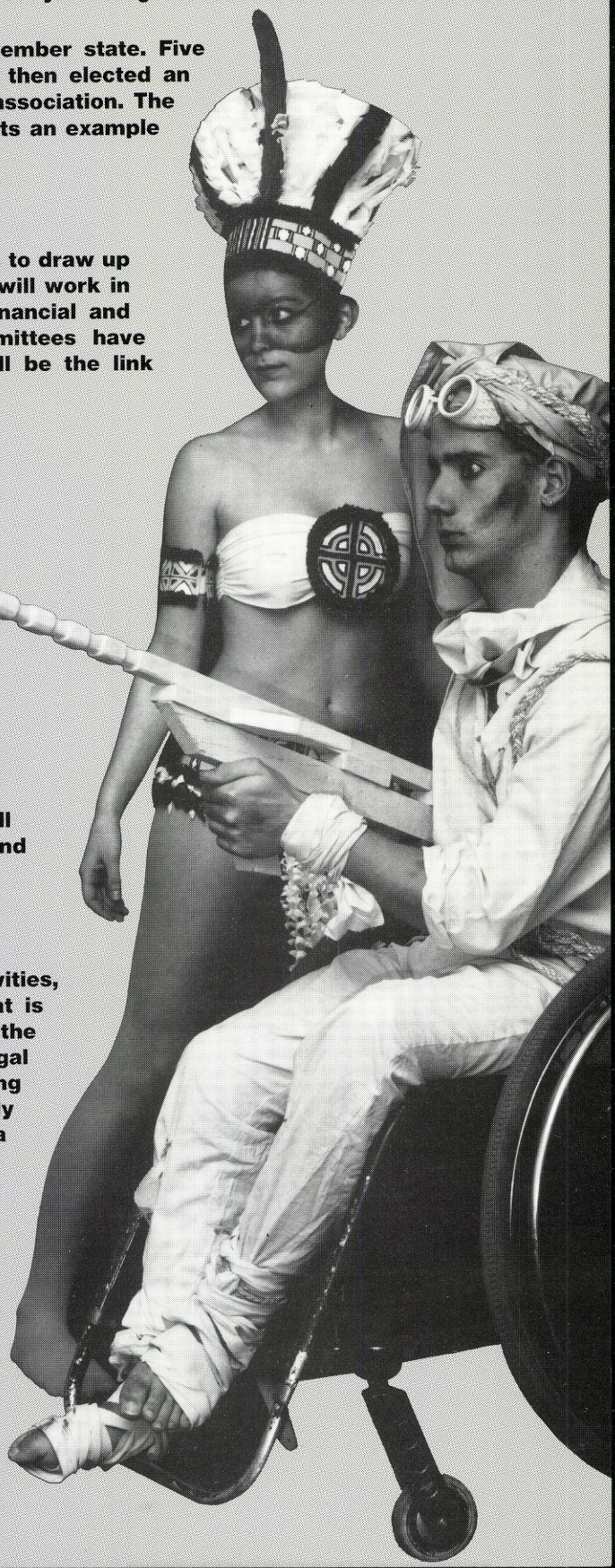
**The work of EUCREA covers all forms of artistic expression and categories of disability. Activities include the promotion of conferences, seminars, exhibitions of creative works and the improvement of possibilities for disabled people in all forms of art and cultural activities. These range from music and theatre to audiovisual production and from painting to storywriting. Bursaries will soon be available to support the work of disabled artists and others involved in the area of creativity.**

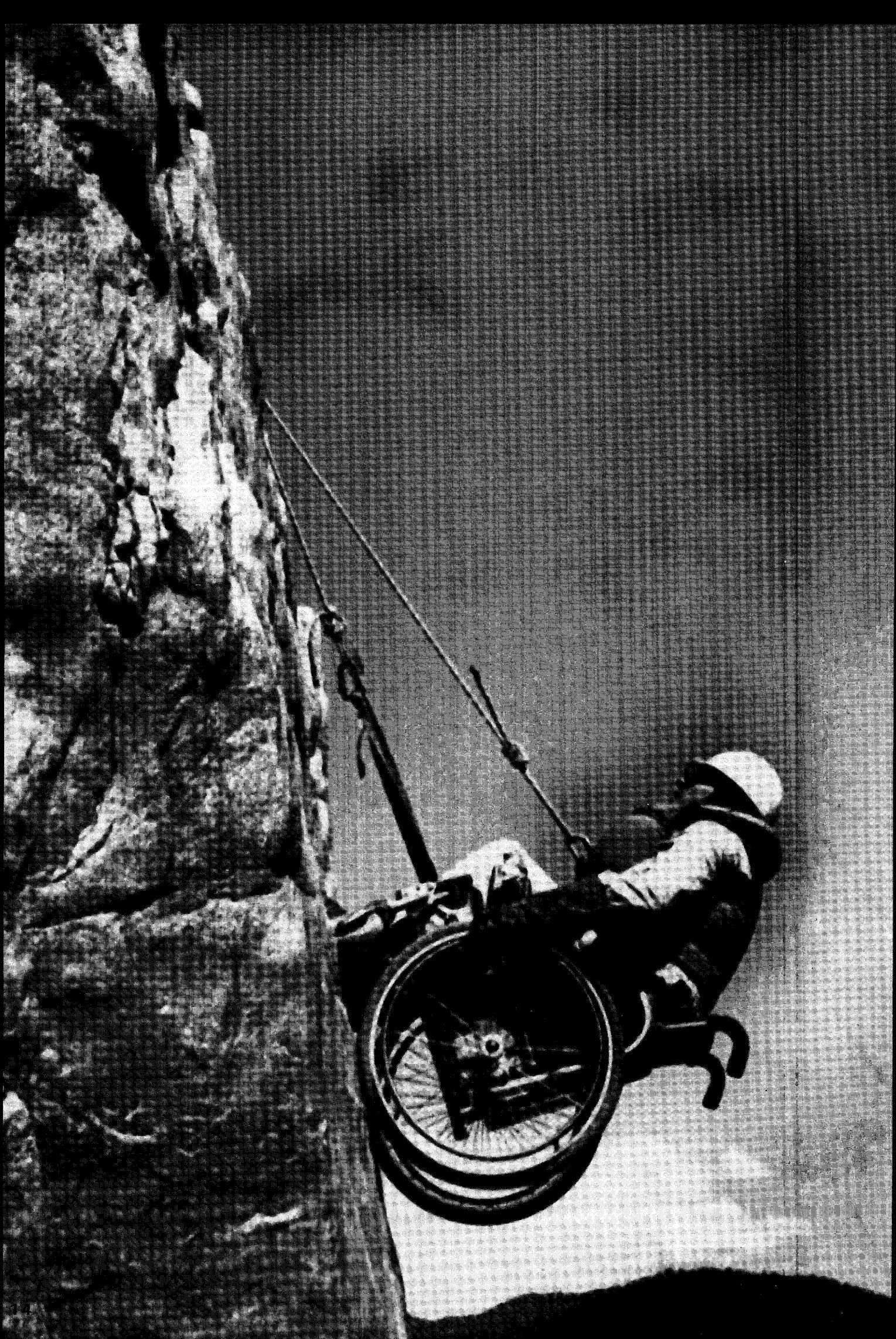
### PROMOTING PUBLIC AWARENESS

**Another major aspect of the work will be to publicise activities, promote projects and make the public more aware of what is happening in this area. An important boost to this work was the Third European Colloquium which was held in Lisbon, Portugal from 8-10 December 1988. The conference included exciting and varied exhibitions of work by physically and mentally handicapped people. A Dutch group, Atomic Voodoo, gave a very impressive performance combining music and theatre in a beautiful example of integration between disabled and non-disabled young people.**

**All the conference activities received good press and media coverage, both in Portugal and abroad. It is a powerful example of one of EUCREA's subsidised projects and a concrete approach in realising the policy which EUCREA will continue in all member states.**

**If you would like to learn more, please contact EUCREA at the following address: EUCREA, 32 Ambiorix Square, PB 47, B-1040 Brussels.**





**Possibilities for disabled people to participate in sports activities are increasing all the time, supported by major events like the 1988 Paralympics, and work by organisations such as the International Fund Sports Disabled. The Commission of the European Communities and the HELIOS Team of Experts are now paying particular attention to this phenomenon.**

The Commission of the European Communities has been involved for a number of years in stimulating and supporting activities in the field of sports for disabled people. More recently, it has been in a position to give a limited amount of financial support to these events. The increasing importance that the Commission is placing on this area is further underlined in the following message, sent by Mr Jacques Delors, President of the Commission, to the International Fund Sports Disabled (IFSD) on its fifth anniversary in 1988:

“Sports have always been a privileged means of communication among individuals of different countries.

“In building a united Europe, the EC Commission gives a great importance to sports as a way to creating a greater sense of solidarity among the people of the European Community. In so doing, the Commission considers it essential that all citizens be given an equal chance, regardless of their origins or personal capacities.

“The development of sports for the disabled is a key element of this policy of equal opportunities.

“As President of the Commission, I wish to thank the IFSD for their tireless efforts in trying to bring about a better awareness of the responsibility that we all share towards our less favoured fellow-citizens.

“But the task which remains to be done is considerable, let us all work together to make this world a better place to live for everyone.”

#### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

In the past, the Division “Actions in favour of Disabled People” has worked in close collaboration with other Commission departments to set up a small programme for supporting sports activities, and has collaborated with the International Fund Sports Disabled which now runs a Community Secretariat. It is through this collaboration that the Commission has been able to have access to the kind of information necessary for decisions on the allocation of funding. This has proved very important given the growing number of organisations which are involved in the area. A uniform system of application for funding has been developed and in this way support has been given to organisations all over the Community.

#### **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

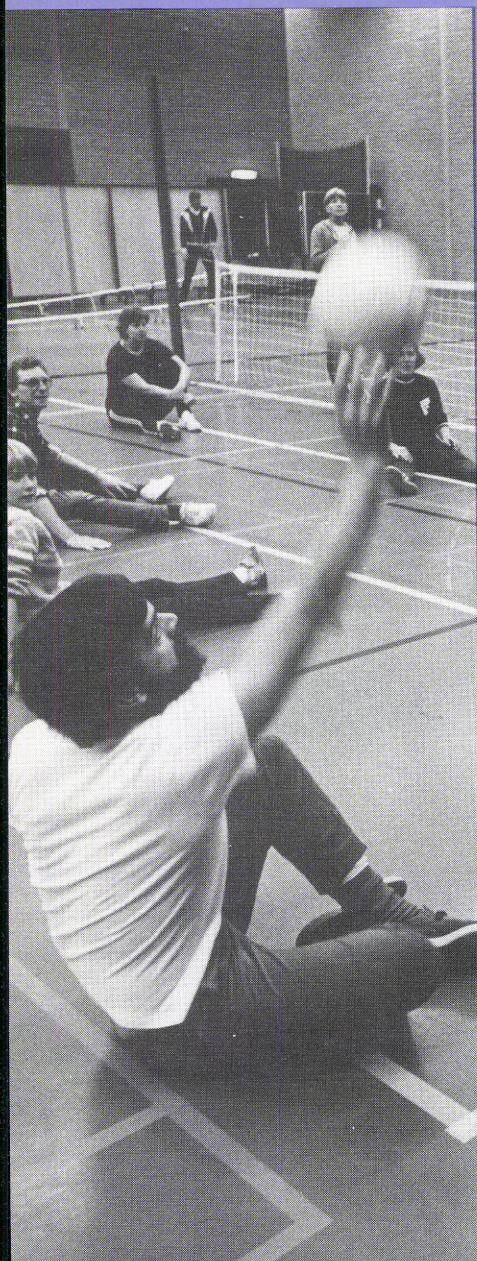
Participation in sports events undoubtedly contributes to the rehabilitation process as a whole and it is in this area that we must continue to attach importance, especially to aspects such as the exchange of knowledge, training methods, facilities and equipment. It is also important to acknowledge that many sports events are public and that the participation of disabled athletes in such public events can do much to promote and demonstrate a positive picture of the disabled person.

Another important aspect of the Commission's support to sports has been in the area of information. The many different organisations and types of sporting activities make it difficult to develop a comprehensive picture of the field. For this reason the European Commission has supported the idea of setting up a Databank of Sports for Disabled People. Much information is already stored, including, for example, a recent survey—the first of its kind—concerning the participation of disabled people in sports activities. The Databank therefore offers useful information to organisations, institutions and others working at local, national and international levels within the European Community. It is located in the offices of the International Fund Sports Disabled, Heijenoordseweg 5, 6813 GG Arnhem, The Netherlands.



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