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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
PROGRAMME FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to this latest issue of HELIOS magazine. You may be a little surprised to receive it so soon, only one month after issue no. 5! Has it become a monthly publication? No, it's still quarterly. But you will probably have noticed that in the first half of 1990, you only received issue number 4: technical problems were to blame!

However, the more frequent appearance of HELIOS magazine in the latter part of 1990 is easily explained: we want to honour our undertaking to publish four issues a year. A quick calculation will reveal that the next issue of HELIOS is due in just a few weeks time, in time for Christmas!

Presentation of the HELIOS team of experts

The first issue of this magazine, in early 1989, introduced the HELIOS team of experts (HTE). We would like to update readers on certain changes which have taken place since then, in order to speed up contacts with our different services (cf organigram).

The management remains the same with **Armand Maron** (Director) and **Cristina Louro** (Assistant Director), assisted by Philippe Debacker.

Louis van Amelsvoort still co-ordinates the network of Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centres and Experiences.

The status quo also prevails within the three Local Model Activities networks: **Claudine Van Lierde**



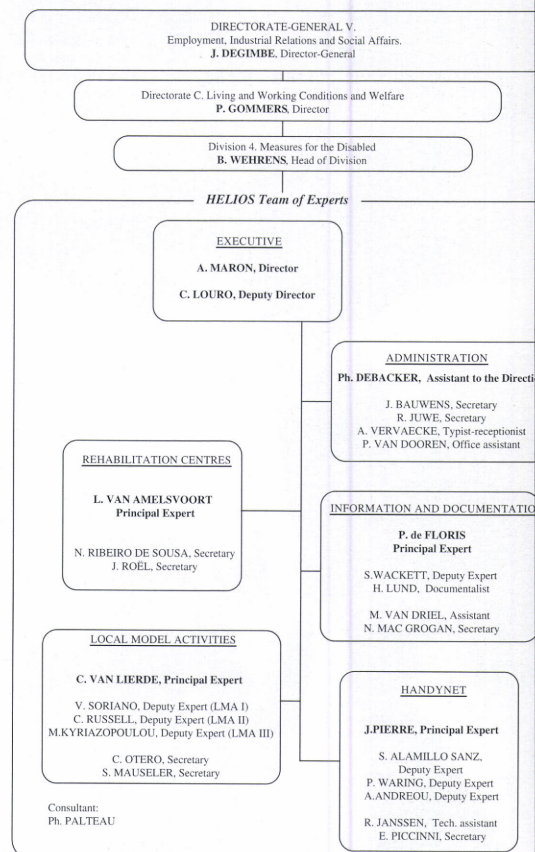
From left to right (front row): C. van Lierde, C. Louro, A. Maron, J. Pierre, P. Palteau; (middle row): P. Van Dooren, V. Soriano, J. Roël, N. Ribeiro de Sousa, J. Bauwens, R. Iuwe; (back row): M. van Driel, S. Alamillo Sanz, S. Maüseler, C. Otero, P. Debacker, S. Wackett, E. Piccinni, L. van Amelsvoort and P. de Floris.

remains at the helm with her crew of Victoria Soriano (School Integration), Clemens Russell (Economic Integration) and Mary Kyriazopoulou (Social Integration).

By contrast, Handynet has gained a new specialist: since February 1990 **Josyane Pierre** has been responsible for the co-ordination and development of this computerized, multi-lingual databank in the field of disability. She is assisted in her work by Santiago Alamillo Sanz, Paddy Waring and Andreas Andreou.

Finally, the Information-Documentation service — where Suzanne Wackett remains as journalist — welcomed a new manager in the early summer, namely **Pascal de Floris**.

But the HELIOS team of experts is more than just these few names and positions; the photograph which accompanies this article presents more Helios team members.



Social integration (LMA III): Portalegre Seminar

The working theme for the network of Social Integration local model activities for 1990 is "Mobility and Transport"; this was also the central theme at the Portalegre seminar (10 and 11 May) covering the following fields : the built external environment (roads, pavements, traffic lights etc.), means of transport (cars, trains, bus etc.), accessibility of transport infrastructures (stations, airports etc.), financial support for transport.

The seminar began with a general presentation of the current situation in the 12 member states and the work undertaken to date by the European Conference of Transport Ministers.

This overview stressed that no significant changes were to be expected in the field of transport. The most effective working programme to improve transport in Europe must combine research to determine technical feasibility, information to make specialists aware of the size and nature of the market represented by the disabled population, demonstration — to show that technical modifications are just as applicable in practice as in theory — and, finally, general or specific legislation to support efforts to improve the mobility and transport of disabled people and to end the discrimination in this field as experienced by tens of millions of people in the Community.

The pedestrian environment

The conclusions reached by the four working groups can be divided into two : firstly, the pedestrian environment, which starts immediately you leave a building (accessibility to buildings must therefore be taken into account).

** Strategy :* the group recommends an "accessibility culture" to help bring about a change in attitudes. Professionals - town planners, architects, construction specialists — must be informed. Each community must draw up a flexible blueprint, on the basis of available opportunities, focusing on new construction zones.

** Resources :* in certain cases (department stores, employment zones etc.) the operation can be profitable and attract private investment.

Public thoroughfares are always financed by the public sector, except for some pedestrian streets.

* Information :

- for professionals : technical information must circulate at European level and the exchange of experiences increase. It is vital to teach accessibility (and its social context) in architectural and engineering colleges etc.

- for the public : signposting is very important : the symbols used must be readily understood by all, including people who are illiterate, foreigners etc. European standards, such as the Highway Code, must be quickly established.

** Learning mobility :* disabled people and their immediate circle must receive training in the use of technical aids and especially spatial mobility, including the facilities provided by public thoroughfares.

Transport

Secondly, the transport services : disabled people must be considered within a total view taking account of 3 particular and essential aspects : adaptation of public transport, additional transport services and personal transport.

The general feeling is that these 3 forms of complementary transport must co-exist. Participants insisted on the need for incentives and appli-

cable European legislation as the most effective way of stimulating the development of accessibility to public transport and additional transport services.

Concerning personal transport, common European regulations are necessary to govern the insurance of disabled people's private cars in order to remove present discriminations (for example excessive premiums).

These are the principal questions raised at the Portalegre seminar. They will be discussed further prior to the plenary conference of the Social Integration network (LMA III) in Brighton in February 1991. ■



Rehabilitation centres go full theme ahead !

The theme-based seminar is becoming an increasingly valued part of the network of rehabilitation centres and experiences. In this review of the 1990 seminars, we set out to discover why...

The European network has set itself a major task : to bring together centres and experiences covering all aspects of the rehabilitation process; from vocational to medical and functional rehabilitation. Add to this the wide range of disability groups represented by the centres — psychiatric hospitals, institutions working for mentally disabled people, for blind and partially sighted people, for deaf people and the full range of physical disabilities — and the importance of the theme-based seminar becomes clear!

In 1989 the seminar activities focused either on general themes, for example, job creation and vocational training, or on large disability categories, for example women with disabilities and people with learning difficulties. In 1990 the themes have been more specialised and wide-ranging. Here we take a brief look at the work so far.

Münster Seminar (March 1990) : Early Neurological Rehabilitation as a Preparation for Reintegration into working life and society

The choice of theme for Münster marked a change from the normal pattern, for the first time involving members of the

medical profession. Alongside interested network members, the seminar was attended by highly specialised medical practitioners, including neurologists, neurosurgeons and neuropsychologists.

Discussions centred on two major points: firstly, the function of the multi-disciplinary approach in the rehabilitation of brain injured people should be examined and better defined in the member states; medical doctors should be seen as members of a team where all collaborate for real integration. Secondly, HELIOS must be at the fore in developing better co-ordination among the different disciplines.

Delegates were informed of the vast improvements being made in medical intervention. In particular, technology and new therapeutic intervention strategies are being developed which give more brain injured people the chance to lead independent lives. Delegates also learned that the incidence of brain injury is rising sharply. This statistic means that new strategies for rehabilitation should be developed.

The introduction of the HELIOS programme to the medical sector was welcomed and resulted in many offers of co-operation : all participants were in favour of continuing the trend and future network activities will focus more on the medical-vocational side of rehabilitation.

Dublin seminar (May 1990) : Vocational training and vocational preparation of people with mental illness.

The Dublin seminar was a follow-up to the first HELIOS seminar on mental illness, held in Maastricht in April 1989. Participants were able to review developments —in areas such as medical treatment, client participation, social training, and

employment possibilities— and their impact on vocational rehabilitation. For example, the current switch from hospitalisation to community care means that mentally ill people are experiencing a period of great change.

The employment difficulties facing individuals were widely discussed; for



Both teacher and student are totally blind. The student is being tutored in music production (Queen Alexandra College, Birmingham - UK)

example, people suffering from mental illness often lack the motivation and cognitive abilities necessary to hold down a job. However, major developments in treatment, particularly with antipsychotic drugs, are helping with this problem. Rehabilitation and training are still vital : seminar participants agreed on the importance of developing a common European strategy, based on the variety of approaches in the different member states. Other points of discussion: the place of industrial therapy within psychiatric hospitals ; the economic and social changes taking place as hospitals make way for community-based centres and family care ; the need for co-



Rachel, a partially sighted student, receiving instruction on the cycle mechanics course (Queen Alexandra College, Birmingham - UK)

operation with other areas of social rehabilitation, such as housing and recreation.

The working groups agreed several important conclusions : the need for training flexibility and better co-ordination of services; more emphasis on social skills training ; more local projects based near to home and family; greater involvement of the family in the rehabilitation process (a move away from the exclusive medical model in psychiatry); and above all, a personalised approach taking account of an individual's abilities and needs.

**Birmingham Seminar (June 1990) :
Vocational training for blind and partially
sighted people**

Queen Alexandra College in Birmingham (UK) was an ideal choice of venue for the seminar, offering a range of facilities for practical demonstrations of new technology. For visually impaired and blind people, new technology enables them to be trained alongside their sighted counterparts in preparation for a wider variety of occupations. For example, specially designed software (operating through braille, synthetic speech or large characters) provides access to information technology, while specialist devices, such as Versabaille, enable visually disabled people to perform similar tasks to those performed by sighted people on standard equipment.

Economics and legislation were high on the agenda. Although new technology opens up real opportunities in employment for blind and partially sighted people, there is a major drawback — expense! Tax concessions and other legal devices can help the disabled individual (certain governments provide aids to employment free of charge on long-term loan). However, not all member states have equal provision in these areas and the European Commission was urged to look into the problem (*cf. article by Tom Parker on page 10*).

The recommendations of the working groups were wide-ranging. Delegates called for threefold action: employers should be made aware of new technology; rehabilitation programmes should provide the necessary training while keeping up to date with market needs ; ordinary training centres should be pushed to accept integration where

possible, with the support of a reinsertion team.

Improvements in access to the labour market were suggested through a multimedia campaign to promote better understanding of the abilities of visually impaired people among employers and the community at large. Delegates also called for greater emphasis to be placed on low vision rehabilitation : the best way forward is the development of multi-disciplinary teams (e.g. ophthalmologist, optometrist, low vision therapist). Other recommendations: the European Commission should introduce a quota system to prevent discrimination at work, as well as regulations to safeguard existing jobs.

**Rome Seminar (September 1990) :
The Significance of the Italian integrated
co-operatives for the employment of
mentally disabled people**

The network's most recent seminar gave participants the chance to see how the Italian integrated co-operative system works in practice. Working groups visited a variety of projects organised by the Comunità di Capodarco in Rome; content (such as the wage system, management structure and possibilities for transition to open employment) was discussed directly, both with the project leaders and the disabled people themselves.

One of the main characteristics of the integrated co-operative is that disabled people work alongside non-disabled people as equal partners in a real production team. Although there is financial support for the co-operative, backed up by special legislation, it is more than simply a sheltered workshop: it is an expression of the whole social-cultural context of Italian society where solidarity and equal rights are very important. As such, the Italian co-operative is unique. ■

THE C.R.E. NETWORK IN BRIEF ...

Fifty rehabilitation centres and experiences throughout the European Community form the membership of the Network. Alongside a study visit and training session programme, the centres come together for a number of theme-based seminars and a plenary conference. The main aim: to promote the exchange of information, technical expertise and experience across the European Community.

Each centre also forms an Outer Network by spreading information about European developments and events to other centres and activities of similar types within its own country. Representatives from the Outer Network are also invited to participate in the study/training visits and theme-based seminars : in 1989 some 60 outer network centres took part in these activities. ■

*Preparing for work at
the Rehabilitation
Institute's training centre,
Limerick - Irl.*



LMA II Network Survey : Insertion of disabled people into employment

Since the HELIOS programme began, co-operation between the Local Model Activities for economic integration has raised a series of questions concerning the employment of disabled people. The many technical questions can be summarised in a single, general question : "How to define the principal factors favouring the insertion of disabled people into employment ?"

Before proposing a synthesis of concrete responses applicable in the member states, the HELIOS network for economic integration undertook a European survey in the form of a questionnaire addressed to the project leaders of its 27 Local Model Activities. Entitled 'Insertion of disabled people', the main purpose of this questionnaire is to take stock of the vocational needs of disabled people and of conceivable solutions.

For example, in order to provide a better response to the abilities of disabled workers, those interviewed are asked to provide details of job opportunities at regional and — if possible — national level, the best vocational training and services in the field of guidance and follow-up in general. In this way, the survey aims to provide the best information possible on all aspects of the process of insertion for disabled people, especially employment in an open environment.

The conclusions drawn from the questionnaire replies will be discussed at the LMA II annual conference when the main theme will be: "Preparing for work" ...

Training for the data collection and co-ordination centres

From 20 to 22 September 1990, 42 specialists from the EC-Member States met in Gjern (Denmark) to attend the first training session on data collection for Handynet, the European information system in the field of disability. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the co-ordination centres in the different Member States with the skills needed to operate the Handynet system; it was also the starting point for putting into practice this computerized European network.

The intensive programme — jointly prepared by the managers of the Danish national centre for the co-ordination of data collection and the Helios team of experts — gave participants the chance to become acquainted with the system components: the data bank, the electronic journal and the electronic mail.

The first steps ... with Handynet !

Much of the training session was devoted to presenting data collection and search software. Practical exercises organised in groups allowed the participants to gain concrete experience in data input and retrieval using the system.

The trainers — from the various Member States, the Helios team of experts and the European Space Agency — demonstrated fields as varied as the identification of technical aids, the classifications or even the data bases which lie at the root of the system.

Group work

Rules and methods for high quality inter-centre data collection were drawn up by the participants themselves, organised into working groups. The conclusions reached by these groups, approved in the plenary session, will serve as a guide both for data collection and in evaluating the system. The implementation of a common method and intensive communication on a day-to-day basis — by using the electronic mail and by sharing experiences at meetings

of the technical co-ordination group — will permit each member state to play its part in improving and developing Handynet.

The future ...

Three other training sessions are planned for 1991. In addition to allowing the data collection centres involved in technical aids for motor disabled people to improve their knowledge and practical abilities, the sessions will progressively integrate the contents of the three other sub-modules which comprise the technical aids module : the education software, technical aids for visually impaired people, and technical aids helping communication. The participants will therefore have the opportunity to assimilate the content of these structures. Also, four meetings of the technical co-ordination group will be held before the end of 1991.

All these meetings will allow the Helios team of experts, on the basis of comments and proposals submitted by the specialists from the different Member States, to improve and develop the Handynet system.

In conclusion, we have every reason to believe that thanks to the intensification of exchanges based on the dynamism and involvement of the centres, Handynet has become a very handy net indeed !

HELIOS exhibition stand : the ILSMH congress

The tenth ILSMH (International League of Societies for persons with mental handicap) world congress on mental handicap was held in Paris from 5 to 10 August; its theme : "Citizens with equal rights : make rights a reality".

The date chosen — at the height of the holiday season — did not seem to effect the success of the event: many participants and visitors took advantage of their summer break to attend, coming from the four corners of the world —the Ardèche, Rumania, Nigeria, Argentina and Australia.

All of which means that the presence of the HELIOS stand at the Palais des Congrès in Paris was fully justified. Despite the quantity and high quality of seminars, participants found time to visit the different stands; whether from the EEC or otherwise, visitors to the Helios stand showed a lively interest in the European Commission's programme for disabled people.

In the interests of topicality, visitors from the EC Member States were particularly keen — and rightly so — to obtain information on the Horizon initiative. In his opening speech Mr Bernhard Wehrens (Head of the DG V/C4 : Division : 'Actions in favour of disabled people') had already presented the principal elements of the Commission's programme of financial support (see page 12).

At the time of going to press, the HELIOS stand is preparing for its tour at the end of 1990; an itinerary which will take it, at the end of Octo-



A section of the HELIOS stand at the ILSMH Congress.(U.N.A.P.E.I.- Marcel Lorre)

ber, from London (NAIDEX) to Cagliari (European Commission Conference/School Integration Network), to Hannover in December (HELIOS Conference / Economic Integration Network). Don't miss the next two

issues of the magazine when we will provide you with further information on these events.

REHA'90 : Karlsruhe, major meeting for technical aids

Every year, Germany organizes one of the world's major events on technical aids for the rehabilitation and day-to-day living of disabled people.

After Düsseldorf in 1989, it was the turn of Karlsruhe — from 12 to 15 September 1990 — to welcome the REHA; the exhibition covered an area of 15,000 m² and attracted 250 stands (including 10% from abroad).

Although these products aroused the all too rare admiration of the general public, specialists do not

view their progress as particularly spectacular. It should, however, be stressed that there is a wider choice of equipment and that new technologies are increasingly present.

Demand is growing, although visual impairment continues to dominate other forms of disability as the principal source of interest.

The next REHA will be held in Düsseldorf from 23 to 27 October 1991.

Mons : opening the university doors

On 13 and 14 September 1990 the University of Mons (Belgium) held a conference entitled "A European university for students with special needs". The main purpose of this event was to stimulate debate on the accessibility of higher education to disabled students, and their entitlement to special aid and high quality training.

Various interested parties were present: universities, companies, employment assistance services, disabled people etc. They all presented their work to date, views, difficulties and achievements.

The contributions stressed the following points :

- The number of disabled students in universities is small and reflects the progressive fall in the number of disabled students remaining in education beyond secondary level.
- The lack of information concerning the situation and specific needs of these students.
- The desire to create a European inter-university support and information network with a view to promoting access and exchanges, and deepening the technical support necessary to reach a level of training comparable to that of other students.
- Finally, the majority of the participants stressed the unequal opportunities for skilled employment experienced by disabled people : The level of training demanded by the employer is higher than that required of non-disabled people. This must surely be all the more reason to facilitate their access to university courses !

The content of the contributions and discussions at the Mons Conference was particularly interesting, which makes it all the more regrettable that only five Member States were represented (Belgium, France, Italy, Ireland and the United Kingdom). ■

French regional press : how is disability portrayed ?

Director of research at the C.N.R.S. (France) and himself severely paralysed, René-Claude Lachal spent over ten years studying trends in the French regional press regarding information provided on disabled people and the way in which they are portrayed in society.

The French regional press was chosen for two reasons : firstly, due to its wide readership; but above all, because the regional press gives pride of place to coverage of local life and permits a better insight into the situation of disabled people.

An initial study dealt with the content of articles published from 1977 to 1978. The second analysed a series of articles ten years later. During this period, did the regional papers change—in terms of volume, content or form—the information which they provide on disabled people ?

Frequency and length of articles

In ten years, the monthly average of articles concerning disabled people almost doubled, from 29 to 56. The articles also became significantly longer.

Types of disability presented

Physically and motor disabled people are tending to attract more coverage (for these two categories together, the share increased from 18.20% to 28.20% in the headlines and from 18.80% to 50.80% in the texts). The space given to mental handicap fell significantly, in the headlines and the texts, whereas people with a sensory or multiple handicap are being increasingly ignored.

How are we to explain these differences ? Firstly, by a social reality : there are fewer sensory impaired people than physically disabled people. But also by a psychological reality : the immediate visibility of an

impairment is of much greater effect than the limitations caused to those who suffer from it. Communication difficulties associated with a mental impairment also have an effect on the lack of information provided on the subject.

Information sources

Between 1978 and 1988 the national authorities became virtually marginalised as sources of information; the same applies to employers and trade unionists. This lack of involvement is all the more regrettable as it is they who largely hold the keys to vocational integration. By contrast, associations continue to be the prime source of information for journalists (quoted as the source in 51.20% of cases compared with 37.20% ten years ago). Of course, in the area of mental disability the newspapers' principal contacts are specialists in the field, thus compensating communication difficulties with this category of disabled people.

Denomination of disabled people

The terminology used with respect to a human group is never arbitrary. In the terms it chooses, society reflects and crystallizes the judgment it passes on the group and the place which it awards to it in the community.

Over the last ten years, we see a decreasing tendency to reduce the disabled person to his or her disability : the generic term " the disabled " is becoming increasingly uncommon in headlines and texts. At the same time, we are seeing a marked increase in the use of terms highlighting the person suffering from the disability (most notably, 'disabled people') and the recent appearance of everyday denominations free of any reference to a particular condition, such as 'people', 'workers', 'sportsmen/sportswomen' etc.

Vocabulary

An examination of the vocabulary used to portray disabled people and their relations with society allows us to distinguish four contrasting images. Firstly, that of the disabled person who cannot cope : ten years ago 24% of articles and today 10.5% of articles present the individual circumstances and social status of the disabled person in a grim light, with the use of words which emphasize either the difficulties (distress, frustrations etc.) or a marginalised situation (exclusion, isolation, housebound, ghetto etc.). The second image, that of the disabled person as "different" and "assisted" is the more common (56% of cases in 1978 compared with 54% today). It can be broken down into two principal components : one suggests or shows the otherness of the disabled person (difference, physical inequalities etc.); the second, much more important, stresses the need to protect the disabled person, and to provide moral and particularly material assistance; it includes many references to everything which society does to improve the situation of these people (laws, social assistance, carers etc.).

A third portrayal, which is clearly in contrast to the above, is that of the disabled person with a sense of well-being and integrated into society: rarely encountered in the 1970s (15%), it is tending to become common place today (30%). It stresses the diverse abilities of disabled people, the possibility or the need for socio-vocational integration, and independent living. The final image is that of the disabled person lauded with praise. This presents an individual endowed with amazing qualities, sometimes achieving such feats as to qualify for superman status (2 to 3.2% of cases). It is usually found in articles on sport. But it is also — and too often — found in the 'news in brief' columns (Editor's note).

The subjects and the way they are treated

The number of subjects covered has significantly increased, from 28 to 37. This reflects the journalists' desire

to be more attentive to different aspects of disabled people's lives, together with the emergence or development of new subjects (scientific research and progress etc.).

Some facts are quite surprising. Such as the lack of interest in certain subjects, for example vocational training and economic integration. This observation must be set against the problem of unemployment ... The volume of information concerning access and transport has also fallen, but their quality has improved; architectural barriers are no longer evoked in an abstract manner.

By contrast, the regional papers are devoting more space to sport and leisure activities. There are two reasons for this : the number of sports open to disabled people has increased; sport, in addition to its contribution to the development and equilibrium of those who participate, is an excellent instrument for social integration.

Among the subjects featured more frequently than ten years ago, we can mention fund-raising and sponsorship (the crisis in the welfare state, following the severe depression which we entered in 1973, is having its effects), together with technical equipment and aids (the possibilities provided by advances in electronics, data processing and telecommunications partly explain this more sustained interest).

Illustrations

The percentage of illustrated articles has doubled in ten years : up from

26.3 to 57%. Yet despite this increasing visual presentation of disabled people, there remains a marked disparity in the coverage of the different disabilities : two thirds of the people portrayed suffer from a motor impairment. The result is that the general public is given the impression that the majority of disabled people are in a wheelchair, an impression reinforced by the most common pictogram which features the silhouette of a person in a wheelchair.

Integration and the press : promising lessons ...

Overall, the general trend of the figures highlighted by this study points in the right direction : that of increasing efforts to emancipate and integrate the world of disability. In ten years, the French regional press has undeniably become more attentive to disabled persons: the range of subjects is widening, direct comment from disabled people themselves is becoming less of an exception, journalists are using a vocabulary which is less burdened by references to the sordid aspects of life and negative observations.

We can but hope that the media — and thanks to them society in general — will ultimately assimilate disability with human and social difficulties as a whole. As such it will be recognised for what it really is : a considerable injury, neither more nor less cruel than some others, and neither more nor less blessed with hope ... ■



European Blind Union* campaigns for tax concessions

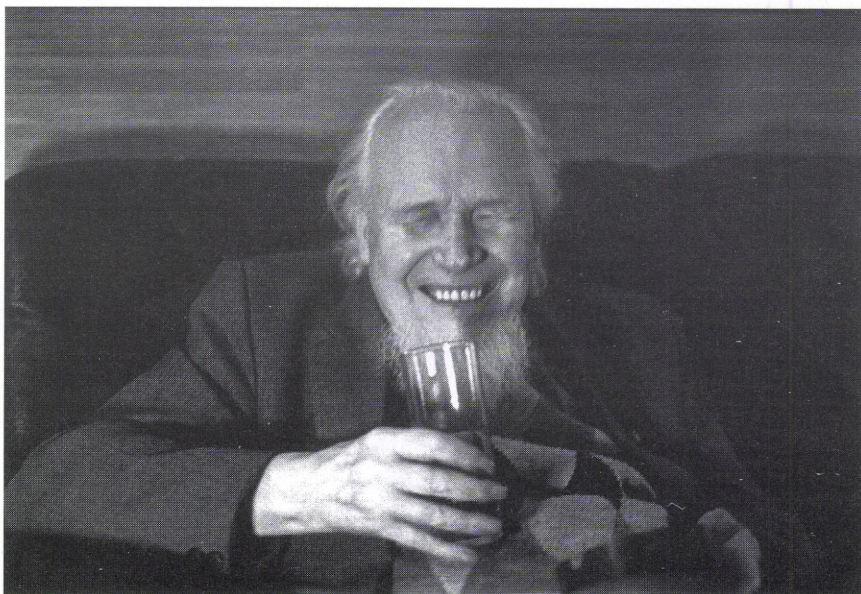
Blind people are constantly fighting for equal treatment. The subject of their latest campaign is the current European reform designed to harmonise VAT legislation.

The European Blind Union (EBU) is at present working to avoid the risk of the new system of taxation imposing a greater burden on its members than on people without visual impairment. Unfortunately, this is exactly what is happening under the taxation system in Europe, which relies heavily on the taxation of goods and services.

Blind people currently have to pay VAT on goods such as cassette recorders which enable them to lead more independent lives. It is not only blind people who suffer: all disabled people who need special equipment can be affected by the European system.

Some EC countries do make special provision for such equipment — whether it is purchased by the individual blind person or by their service organisation. The UK and Ireland have a particularly favourable tax regime: many aids and services are taxed at the zero-rates. But not for long however, if present proposals for European tax reform are accepted; it could mean the loss of some of these 'zero-rates'. Also, many of the products useful to blind people are classed as luxury items and would therefore be taxed at the proposed standard rate (14-20%). UK charities representing blind people are seriously concerned about the impact that this could have on the services and facilities available.

For example, the Royal National Institute for the Blind would find itself paying over three million pounds sterling each year if the current tax concessions are lost!



Tom Parker, Chairman of the European Blind Union. (Christophe Vander Eecken)

It is not just the UK which stands to lose from a Community tax reform: organisations for the blind in other EC countries are becoming increasingly worried about the reduction in direct State funding of services. The hardest hit are those organisations which rely heavily on the State for their funds.

The EBU, which represents organisations in each EC member state, has been working on the problem of VAT harmonisation for some time. A highly successful meeting was held in February in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Representatives from every main political group in the Parliament were present, as well as blind representatives from each of the EBU member organisations. In addition, a useful meeting was held with the President of the Parliament, Enrique Baron Crespo. After the meeting, the political work began... Roberto Formigoni, a Vice-President of the Parliament, tabled a resolution calling for the extension of zero-rating to goods and services for blind and disabled people throughout Europe. This is an important first step. The European Parliament has begun to understand the problem. This is not the case for many National Governments who block every move for tax concessions. This must not be allowed to continue — all organisations for disabled people must talk to the Finance

Ministers in their own National Governments and urge them to take action to improve living conditions for their citizens.

European Harmonisation should be enjoyed by a harmonised Europe — one in which all Europeans, including those with disabilities, can play their part.

Tom PARKER

(*) European Blind Union

If you would like more information on the European Blind Union's work on Tax Harmonisation, please contact Tom Parker or Barry Gifford:

**The Royal National Institute for the Blind, 224 Great Portland Street, London, NW1 6AA.
Tel. : (44) 71 388 1366**

CORRECTION HELIOS n° 5

Our apologies to the ECRS: in issue n° 5 (page 11) the last line of their address inadvertently dropped off the page! It should have read:

**ECRS
South Bank House
Black Prince Road
UK - London SE1 7JS**

Special Olympics :

Life from the sporting perspective of some of the medalists.

Last July over 3,000 athletes converged on Strathclyde (Scotland) to participate in the third European Special Olympics for people with learning difficulties.

They came from all corners of Europe—including the Eastern block—to compete in a week of swimming, athletics, equestrian events, cycling, football, basketball and volleyball...

Some 35,000 people attended the events at Glasgow's famous Celtic stadium.

One of the mottos of the games was : "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt." Every competitor received a reward to mark their achievement.

But for the 3,000 competitors, no doubt the greatest satisfaction was the expression of admiration from the public. Thanks to these games, they were able to appreciate the potential and the will of people with learning difficulties.

If you ask one of these athletes what marks the most intense moment of their lives, they will probably reply : "representing my country at the Special Olympics".

We met 8 Belgian medalists from the Games. Were they nervous during the events ? "Less than in the plane" one of them replied with a laugh. Their comments, which accompany the photos, give you some idea of their enthusiasm...



André (Le Foyer - Strépy-Bracquegnies) : "In Glasgow, my horse Ginger was 18 years old, but he wasn't tired at all ! He was just nervous ... I had to keep feeding him apples and sugar. I think I've made a friend for life ! I have a diploma in grooming which meant that I could take a course with the Brussels gendarmery. Now I'm working at the Sugny CFP in the Ardennes, a beautiful place for horseriding !"



These four residents from Ter Heide have plenty to smile about : "To be treated as V.I.P.'s, to stay in a beautiful hotel with our own rooms, to be called 'Miss' for the very first time ... It's all been so fantastic ! I'm sure we'll remember these "Special Olympics" for ages.

And so will their trainer : Anna Nootens (second on the left) won a gold medal in the 100m sprint and a silver in the 400m, setting a new personal best. Three other members of the Ter Heide team - Monique Van Dijck, Chris Praet and Gerda Van Aelst - all had successes in the swimming pool.



Philippe (Le Foyer - Strépy-Bracquegnies) : "It was the first time I had entered a competition. But I'd always liked cycling ...

When I was a kid I was always on my tricycle ! I'm too lazy to be a great sportsman.

My next project ? I'm going to join a hiking club".

Annie (Le Foyer - Strépy-Bracquegnies) : "Thanks to the public I went faster than ever. My trainer lost his voice he cheered me on so much ! I had stopped training when my father died, but I want to start swimming again to forget".



"HORIZON" initiative

The long-term work of the Division "Actions in favour of disabled people" and, since 1988, of the HELIOS team of experts, should shortly be encouraged by considerable financial support from the Commission of the European Communities ...

The "Horizon" initiative seeks — among other things — to support the HELIOS programme, notably by cofinancing model rehabilitation and vocational training activities.

On 18 July 1990, the Commission decided to establish the "Horizon" initiative laying down guidelines for operational programmes/global grants for pilot projects, which Member States are invited to propose. Horizon concerns disabled people and certain other disadvantaged groups (long-term unemployed, migrants etc.)

The Commission has decided to undertake this substantial financial initiative for these categories of the population in order to avoid the risk of aggravating their marginalisation, a risk linked to the great "forward march" of progress to complete the Single Market in 1992.

At the time of going to press, Horizon is not yet official : its present provisional version (as at mid-October 1990) is in the hands of the members of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Social Fund Advisory Committee. After consulting these Community bodies, the final text should be approved by the Commission prior to its publication in the Official Journal, probably in November 1990.

As regards one of the target groups — disabled people — the "Horizon" initiative will strengthen the HELIOS programme by permitting — thanks to joint financing by the ESF and member states — the implementation of transnational operations pro-

moting the development of common concepts and practices between different actors in the vocational training and employment of physically and mentally disabled people. A necessary condition for meeting the selection criteria is that the project must include at least one of the Priority 1* European regions. This co-operation with one or more of the least developed geographical areas will allow the latter to benefit from the experience acquired in certain member states and to become more involved in the common effort in the field of Human Resources — and, by extension, in the field of disability.

By including disabled people in its field of action, the "Horizon" initiative has an ambitious and vital objective : to respond to the need for economic and social cohesion within the European Community (advocated by the Single Act) and to give an additional boost to the HELIOS programme by promoting the general integration of disabled people into society.

N.B. :

- The member states must submit dossiers within 6 months at the latest following the date of publication of the "Horizon" initiative in the Official Journal of the European Communities.
- The cofinancing granted in the framework of "Horizon", by the ERDF or the ESF (cf box) is valid until 31 December 1993.

(*) **Priority 1** : to promote the development of the least prosperous regions. These regions are the following :

- Spain : the South and West
- France : Overseas Territories and Corsica
- Greece : the whole country
- Italy : the South
- Portugal : the whole country
- United Kingdom : Northern Ireland

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HELIOS MAGAZINE

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HELIOS is a four-year programme of European co-operation to promote the educational, economic and social integration of disabled people. Its main aim to spread good practice and professional expertise Europe-wide ; for example, by co-ordinating 'model' local activities and arranging study visits, seminars and conferences.

The HELIOS magazine is published quarterly free of charge in the nine Community languages - Danish, German, Greek, French, Italian, Dutch, English, Spanish and Portuguese.

We welcome short articles (maximum 800 words), photographs, illustrations and details of European events for publication in the magazine : texts may be submitted in any of the nine Community languages.

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European Special Olympics — Glasgow, July 1990. Welsh gymnast, Paul Player (16 yrs), who won 3 gold medals; (Photograph by courtesy of Scotsman Publication Ltd, Scotland — UK).