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PROGRAMME FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

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Towards a social Europe

The Single Market of 1992 and the four freedoms which accompany it— free movement of goods, capital, services and people— will only be truly fulfilled if the Community takes account of the social aspect of this market.

Such is the message contained in the Community Charter of Workers' Fundamental Social Rights, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of 11 Member States of the European Community at the European Council in Strasbourg on 8 and 9 December 1989.

The Charter is a formal recognition that, alongside the economic and monetary aspects of European union, one also has to consider the social aspect of the European Community and that it is therefore important to ensure the development of workers' social rights at the appropriate levels.

Bearing this in mind, various chapters of the Charter focus on improving living and working conditions, vocational training, health and safety in the working environment and also a greater degree of information, consultation and worker participation.

The provisions of the Charter are of prime importance to disabled people. For the latter, vocational training, employment and social security mean autonomy, independence and integration into the community. The Social Charter also envisages certain extra measures designed to promote their social integration. Article 26 states:

"All disabled persons, whatever the origin and nature of their disablement, must be entitled to additional concrete measures aimed at improving their social and

professional integration. These measures must concern, in particular, according to the capacities of the beneficiaries, vocational training, ergonomics, accessibility, mobility, means of transport and housing".

The Commission of the European Communities is currently organising a plan of action aimed at implementing the provisions of the Charter. In the course of the year it intends to submit a draft directive to the Council concerning the mobility and transport of disabled people.

As part of the efforts to implement the Charter, the Commission will draw up an annual report on its application by the Member States and by the European Community. The Commission therefore expects to receive an initial report from the governments

of the Member States at the end of 1990, together with details of how they have been applying the principles of the Charter.

The HELIOS magazine will provide regular updates on the different stages of the action plan and the progress made in helping disabled people to lead more independent lives as fully-fledged members of the European Community.

Jean DEGIMBE
Director-General
Employment, Industrial Relations
and Social Affairs ■



Local model activities LMA 1 and II: assessment for the first half of 1990

Never the most predictable of seasons for the weather forecasters, this year Spring was as good as its word in at least one respect : the seminar for each HELIOS network (rehabilitation centres and the three LMAs) went ahead as planned.

The end of the year is fast approaching and with it, the annual conference season. The time has therefore come to take stock of the various conclusions to emerge from the seminars. The present issue contains a report on LMAs I and II while our next issue will cover LMA III and the Rehabilitation Centres. In the opinion of the delegates, all of the meetings proved highly rewarding, both from a human and technical point of view. The readers, however, can judge for themselves, on the basis of our summary of the first two seminars, outlined below.

LMA I - Educational integration Paris Seminar (March 1990) / "Teachers and parents"

The various seminar discussions on educational integration revolved around three main topics : teacher training, parents and the process of integration. A number of proposals were put forward ...

Teachers

Basic teacher training should take account of the changes in the education of disabled children as part of the

process of educational integration. Specific training should take place following a period of employment in mainstream education. The principle of integrated education is paramount and should have a twofold objective : to take charge of the education of a group and to provide support for the teachers involved in the integration process.

Finally, continuing education —which is of vital importance— should be improved and emphasised. The quality of teaching staff influences the whole educational chain.

School is the first stage in social integration — a stage which we cannot

afford to bypass. Consequently, training in general, and at every stage, needs to be geared not only to the present — education— but also to the future of disabled children in their professional and social lives.

Parents

The conclusions concerning parents' attitudes to the process of integration focused on the importance of medical, social and psychological support; such support is vital if parents are to fully understand their child's disability. As a result, information should be as objective and as comprehensive as possible.

The role of parents and of close relatives is seen as very important. Ultimately, there is no-one better qualified than the family when it comes to steering the disabled person towards personal, economic and social independence.

The third main conclusion to emerge was that parents should play a larger role in the education system and educational centres. They will then be in a better position to decide which type of school and education is most suitable for their child.

Morten, a boy who has brittle bones, mixing with his classmates (Photo : Lars Aarø).



Proposals

The delegates proposed the setting up of community based teacher training modules as well as the setting up and/or expansion of psycho-medico-teaching centres for children, centres whose primary task would be to prevent difficulties in school. They also stressed the need to improve the advice



given to parents and to encourage parent associations to collaborate more actively in their children's integration.

LMA II - Economic integration Dublin Seminar (April 1990) / Preparation for employment

The discussions centred around vocational training in general—special, integrated, in-service...— and training for mentally handicapped people.

Vocational training : special system and integrated system

The discussion began by assessing the respective merits of mainstream training and specialised training for disabled people in general. There was a difference of opinion between advocates of the ordinary training system accompanied by suitable psychological, technical and administrative support (cf. Silkeborg LMA in Denmark) and those who support the right to choose between the two systems (cf. West Yorkshire LMA in the United Kingdom).

Other experiments mentioned during the discussion were of the Portuguese local model activities in Lisbon, Caldas da Rainha and Setubal. All are good illustrations of how mainstream and special education can be successfully combined.

Next the working group turned its attention to the gulf that exists between training and the job market : the debate over special or integrated education is not the only factor involved; the issue of whether training should take place on-site or in a work setting, is an equally crucial factor in the process of finding a job. In other words, every effort must be made to promote in-service training in order to counter any difficulties which may be experienced in making this transition.

Vocational training for mentally handicapped people

The LMA co-ordinators highlighted the difficulties specific to certain Member States : firstly, social security policies often deter employers from giving jobs to mentally handicapped people; secondly, the high rate of unemployment creates additional competition and discrimination against dis-

abled job-seekers, particularly in the case of mentally handicapped people.

Mention was also made of the difficulties associated with employment in an open environment, as well as parents' reluctance to steer their children towards mainstream jobs (their main fear being the lack of psychological, social and vocational adaptation of this category of workers as well as the risk of losing state disability benefits).

On one point however there was universal agreement : the difficulties associated with working in an open environment are not always due to gaps in vocational training or the productivity levels of mentally handicapped people. According to the delegates, the main cause of these difficulties lies in unemployment and lack of information for employers.

Finally, the Dublin seminar gave the co-ordinators present an opportunity to approve certain proposals relating to policy on vocational integration. They included the following two examples :

- The introduction of a system of national subsidies (combined with a minimum wage) in order to offset the lack of profitability associated with certain mentally handicapped workers.
- Programmes and methods relating to vocational preparation and training should be applied in such a way as to meet the specific needs of the disabled person, rather than imposing a rigid system to which he or she finds it difficult to adapt.

Next meeting : the conference

These two seminars are but one stage in the Community's survey of the annual topic. The conference will provide a fitting end to the year by bringing together all the co-ordinators from each network for joint discussion on the 1990 theme.

The LMA I conference will take place in Cagliari (Italy) from 25 to 27 October while the LMA II conference will be held in Hannover (Germany) between 15 and 17 November.

N.B. : in issue n° 6 of HELIOS, the conclusions of the LMA III and Rehabilitation Centres seminars will follow this article.

ACTIVITIES OF THE LMAs IN BRIEF

The three networks of local model activities operate according to the same basic principle: a specific topic for the duration of the HELIOS programme, subdivided into annual themes; study visits; one seminar (at the beginning of the year) and one conference (to conclude the year) for each network.

Specific topic :

- **Educational integration (LMA I)** / Disabled children and education : harmonisation between mainstream and special schools with a view to integrated education. What forms of support do ordinary classes require in order to bring about integration ? What are the needs and wishes of teachers and parents ? What is the best way of ensuring that disabled children enjoy a full school life ?

Annual theme for 1990 : "Teachers and parents"

- **Economic integration (LMA II)** / Disabled people and professional integration : assessment, guidance and advice. Preparation for employment, vocational training, employment in open or sheltered environments.

Annual theme for 1990 : "Preparation for professional life"

- **Social integration (LMA III)** / Co-ordination and material assistance for social integration (housing, accessibility, mobility and transport). Removing psychological barriers.

Annual theme for 1990 : "Mobility and transport"

Study visits :

The purpose of these visits is to bring together co-ordinators from a number of LMAs with the aim of exchanging experiences and conducting a more in-depth discussion of the annual theme and their joint activities. Study visits may also serve to prepare for the annual seminar and conference.

Seminar :

Exclusively for co-ordinators from LMAs belonging to the same network and LMAs from other networks if the subject concerns them, i.e. the annual theme and certain issues of general interest (e.g. : analysis of study visits, the work carried out by the network...). Seminars also provide an opportunity to prepare for the annual conference and study visits.

Conference :

Conferences tend to be larger than seminars since they are attended by two representatives of each LMA, members of the NGOs, researchers, academics and other specialists, as well as various officials (national representatives of the HELIOS Advisory Committee). The aim of the Conference is to deal in greater depth with issues raised during study visits and the seminar. It also marks the culmination of the annual theme.

Facing the problems, meeting the challenge

Mental handicap is a very common disability in the European Community. Above all, it is also the least understood —and accepted— by public opinion and society in general... Yet people with a mental handicap have needs and abilities too. And although these abilities may be limited, that is hardly a reason to ignore them. With more consideration, this potential for learning, growth and enthusiasm could be developed to the full, giving people with a mental handicap the chance to lead more open, independent lives within the community.

But not all policies implemented on behalf of people with mental handicap have espoused this philosophy ; quite the opposite in fact, given the large number of people with mental handicap still housed in institutions and cut off from the rest of society.

Other more positive policies acknowledge the need to provide opportunities for educational, economic and social integration, but without losing sight of the varying degrees of support and assistance that people with mental handicap will need throughout their lives. Such is the underlying belief and aim of the work carried out by the HELIOS team and its European partners.

I. Rehabilitation centres

In the HELIOS network of rehabilitation centres and experiences, 15 of the 50 members work exclusively or mainly with people with mental handicap. Since the HELIOS programme began, these members have shared vital experiences and expertise. Networked activities range from study visits and training sessions to theme-based seminars and conferences. The general aim is to achieve a greater degree of uniformity among the member states in the field of rehabilitation.

The seminars serve as an excellent

basis for technical co-operation between the centres. A typical example was the Porto seminar (December 1989) which focused on vocational training and employment possibilities for people with mental handicap. In September, Rome hosted a seminar on the role played by Italian co-operatives in the economic integration of people with mental handicap. An outer circle of centres and institutions participate in these events, adding valuable input and helping to broaden the scope of the HELIOS network, spreading experience and expertise Europe-wide.

II. School integration

Educational integration offers early start to independence

The integrated school environment offers disabled children the chance to have open relationships with other children, learning and developing the full range of normal social skills. As children with mental handicap have learning difficulties, it is important that they receive support from the earliest possible age. The benefits of integrated schooling for children with mental handicap have gained increased recognition in the European Community.

The role of the HELIOS school integration network (LMA I) is vital.

13 of the 21 projects work with children with mental handicap (three exclusively — Tholen, Swansea and Morpeth). Different schools develop different policies towards the same goal : the best possible educational opportunities for children with mental handicap in the mainstream system.

In acknowledging the benefits of integrated schooling, we must also accept that children with mental handicap cannot be expected to compete with non-disabled children : teachers with specialist skills and specialised equipment should also be available.

Riverside School, a special school for children with severe learning difficulties based in Northumberland (UK), is an excellent example of how this works. Since 1984, primary level staff and pupils have been progressively integrated with a local mainstream school, Abbeyfields.

First envisaged as a temporary measure, the experiment has proved so successful that the partnership is now permanent. The close liaison between mainstream and specialist staff has provided a rich and diverse curriculum : the children enjoy a

range of joint activities from classes in art, music, dance and physical education to shared playtimes, festivals and educational visits, all of which have the added bonus of being highly effective means of social integration !

The success of the project has prompted the local authorities to look at similar schemes for the older children with mental handicap: moves are now underway to integrate fully with mainstream education and by the mid-90s Riverside school will close its doors completely...

Top mark to Swansea College

At the other end of the scale, Swansea Tertiary College (UK) runs further education classes for anyone over the age of 16, including people with special needs. The college has wheelchair access and specialised equipment to cater for students with a multiple handicap or sensory impairment. The college also has one of the UK's leading units for the education and training of students with severe and complex learning difficulties. The unit is centrally situated so that students can participate fully in the social life of the college. They are offered a unique three year course ; subjects range from functional literacy, numeracy and communication skills to creative arts, horticulture, science and computer-aided learning.

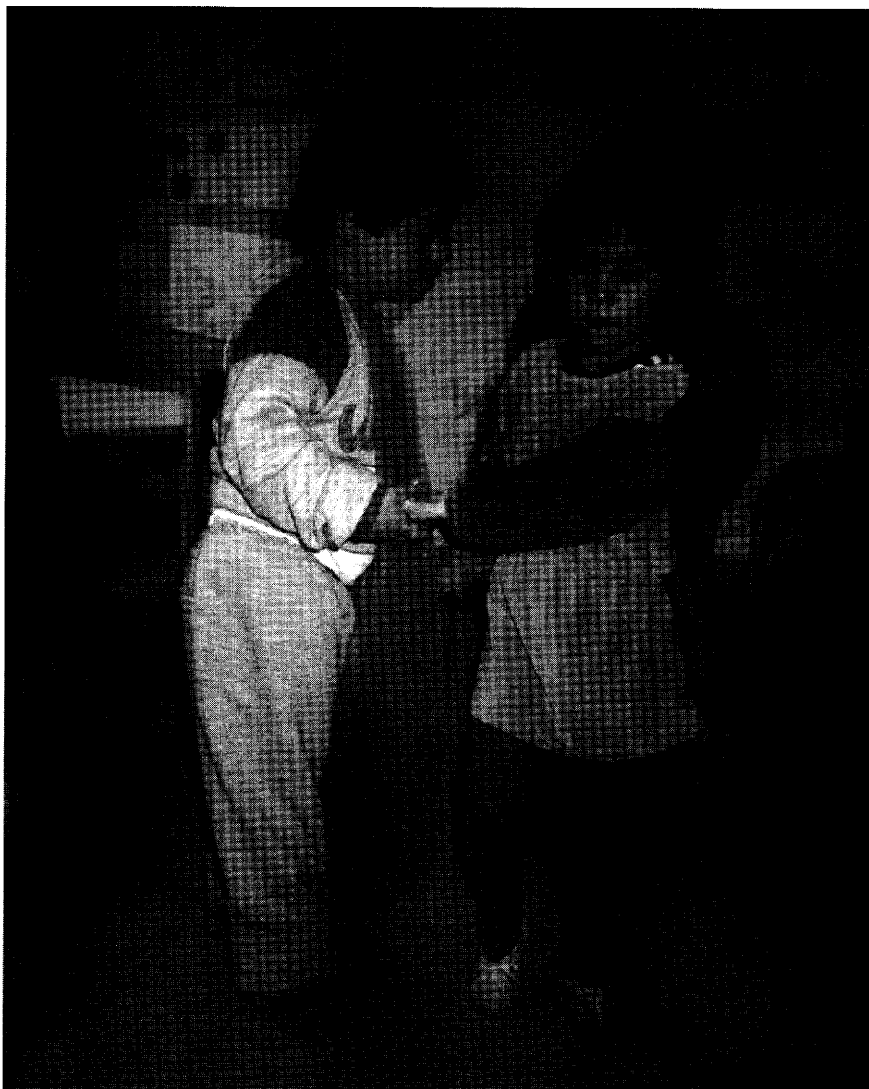
Students with less severe learning difficulties may take the certificate of pre-vocational education. Once again, this course represents something of an educational breakthrough, since it includes job-related experience and prepares students for the world of work while at the same time reinforcing their independence and ability to integrate.

III. Economic integration

Employment prospects offer real opportunities for independent living

The school leaver and adult population are targeted by the HELIOS economic integration network (LMA II). 11 of the 27 projects work in the area of mental handicap, a further four exclusively with people with learning difficulties. Their common concern is to develop training and employment opportunities with the aim of promoting the independence and social integration of each individual. They have therefore formed links with the employment sector.

For example, the Abensberg project in West Germany (for people with learning difficulties and people with mental illness) provides an information service for training leavers with details of job openings, housing, mobility and access. Close contacts are maintained with a range of social and employment agencies. And for those who find work and housing in the community, there is a follow-up service providing continuous support and back-up. Another important factor : the success of integration depends on the evaluation of different elements, such as the impact of work experience on the individual,



Celebrating our differences ... towards a common future.

and the relationships with colleagues and employers.

An ambitious Portuguese project, co-ordinated from Lisbon and spread over three regions, focuses on the school leaver. The aim of the project is to find real openings on the job market for people with mental handicap. The project has forged vital links between vocational training and local employment provision, building up good contacts with industry for the placement of trainees. In the region of Caldas da Rainha, for example, ceramics and textiles are important local industries. It follows that the project offers courses in clay preparation, filling and finishing, dressmaking and industrial knitting. Courses in hotel and catering skills meet demands from the booming tourism industry. By matching training programmes to the local job market, the project ensures that trainees have real chances to find real jobs.

IV. Social integration

Training for an independent life

Autonomy and social participation are the twin concerns of the HELIOS social integration network (LMA III). 22 projects (from a total of 31) work with people with mental handicap, 10 exclusively. Activities range from training in social skills to a practical study of mobility and housing needs. Access to buildings and special facilities needed by mentally and multiply handicapped people is also a priority.

Independence, self-advocacy and the chance to make choices and decisions are equally important to the person with mental handicap. Helping them to be more self-reliant is therefore a major goal, made difficult if they have lived for long periods in institutions. The help-through-work centre based in Champigny-sur-Marne (F) concen-

trates on this transition period, providing vocational integration programmes—leading to jobs in ordinary work settings—for people with mental handicap : 50% of the trainees will have spent between 10 and 20 years in institutions.

The programme has three stages. The first offers educational training sessions within residential homes to provide the skills necessary for autonomous living. Clients can then live together in smaller units with helpers where further training sessions lead to a greater level of independence in daily living. In the final stage, trainees move into their own flats—although an attendant can be called if needed. Two research projects in collaboration with Paris University are monitoring this important experiment.

People with mental handicap should also have the chance to take part in activities and services provided by their local community. Leisure and education are as important as work and independence. The "Community Support Service" based in Banff (Scotland) works on three main principles; people with mental handicap should be able to participate in leisure activities alongside non-disabled people ; they should have access to education opportunities within the community to widen their horizons and develop their self-confidence and interests ; they desire to have real jobs with real pay. The project works to achieve these goals by building up networks with community-based leisure, education and employment agencies. Self-advocacy plays an important role: participants are given a real say in what they want to do.

Mental handicap : a European challenge for all of us...

The educational, economic and social integration of people with

mental handicap remains a major task. The HELIOS programme is meeting the challenge by focusing on activities in every area of life, activities which lead to independence, self-reliance and self-esteem. Only then can people with mental handicap reach their full potential and make their contribution to society.

But initially, teachers and schools play a vital role in helping to change attitudes. If more disabled and non-disabled children have the chance to learn and grow up together, working and playing, sharing attitudes, hopes and ideas, perhaps we will then see a more open, caring and integrated Europe ... ■

CREATIVITY : CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES IN VEJLE

Eucrea sets the stage for disabled performers

From 24 to 27 May 1990, the Danish town of Vejle was the setting for a major European festival on creativity and disability.

Organised by the European Association for Creativity by and with disabled people (EUCREA), the festival was a chance for disabled artists to take the stage and celebrate their creativity.

The theme : music, dance and theatre. 183 performers from all over Europe gave a wide range of interpretations, from dance music and ballet to improvised mime.

Jean Monnet, one of the founders of the European Commission, once said : "If Europe were to be rebuilt, perhaps we should begin with culture".

By hosting this exciting event, EUCREA Denmark has undoubtedly contributed to the dynamism of this cultural Europe.

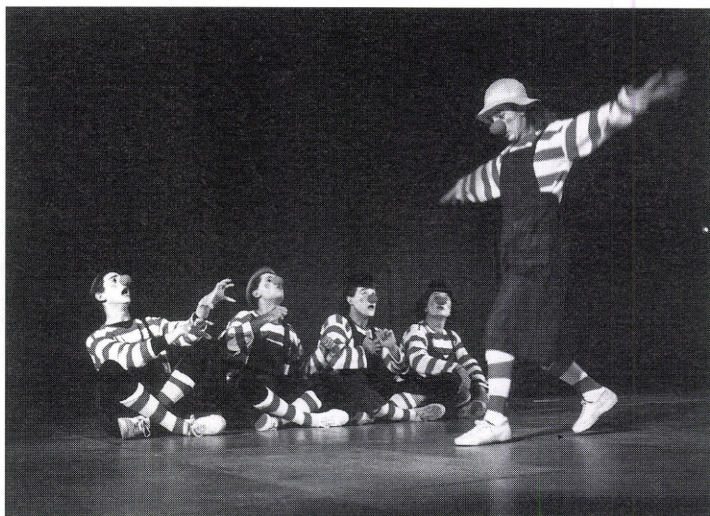
We look forward to the fifth EUCREA festival, to be held in Dublin in July 1991.

In the meantime, here are some photographic highlights of the Vejle festival ...

Exploring and redefining space, sound, time, objects ... innovative performers Compagnie Bleue (B) take us with them on a journey of self-discovery, individuality and freedom.

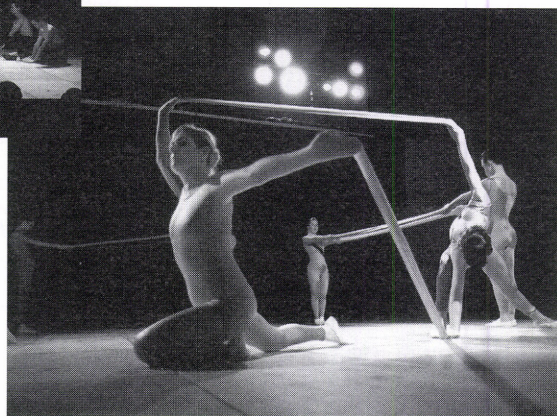


Senza Parole (no words), a group of deaf artists from Italy, use mime, comedy and cabaret in their visually stunning and moving performances.



*"My hands speak for the soul
My feet put my feelings into writing
My body dances for freedom"*

Maité León (Psico-Ballet Fundacion - Spain)



Europe responds to some Heart 'n Soul

Popular London-based band Heart 'n Soul took Europe by storm at the EUCREA festival in Denmark. From slow bluesy love songs and funky reggae beats to the rousing "Heart 'n Soul" anthem, this was one hour of exhilarating entertainment. "We blew 'em over" is how Geoffrey Goodall, the band's lead singer, described their first appearance on the European stage.

The Heart 'n Soul show "Dungeon of Love" is an energetic, hard-hitting mix of music and theatre exploring the concept of love. It is set in a dungeon inhabited by prisoners condemned for receiving too much love. The dungeon is lorded over by the love devil who tortures his victims with a huge 'hug machine'.

By turns funny and sad, the story has a serious message : "It is about people with disabilities, but in particular learning difficulties, being smothered with affection and always being hidden away from society, rather than being allowed out to do what they want to do," explained Mark Williams, founder and musical director of Heart 'n Soul.

The prisoners finally trick the devil and break free. "We are trying to tell the people about freedom, marriage, friendship, everything —the show is about life and it's aimed at everybody" said Geoffrey, who lists his musical influences as Elvis, Bill Haley and Gary Glitter. The electric atmosphere, the imaginative sets and —of course— the music mean that



Prisoner Geoffrey Goodall sings us one from the heart.

the message comes across to the audience, no matter what nationality.

Heart 'n Soul was formed in 1986 and today has ten members, who all have some degree of learning difficulty. Everyone helps write and devise the productions. Musical backing is provided by Jan and Rickie Jodelko, joined by Mark Williams on bass guitar.

Being in the band is obviously very important to each performer. Pino Frumiento, the other lead vocalist, told us : "I always wanted to be a singer, right from when I was a kid. I was singing songs before I could read and write ... But it's important that we get a message across in our music because I don't feel disabled, we don't want that label."

Heart 'n Soul are currently enjoying great success. They are involved in

photography and video projects, and are recording a new single. They recently finished the theme tune for BBC's "One in Four" programme, a series on disability to be screened later this year. And if that wasn't enough there is talk of a documentary and a new show will be ready to tour in the autumn.

The band is also busy performing ; they have taken "Dungeon of Love" to over 30 theatres, art centres, day centres, music festivals and conferences in the UK. They have a dedicated group of fans who according to Mark range from young children to old age pensioners : "Our popularity seems to go right across the board in terms of ability and disability, race and age". There has also been great demand from people wanting to join the band and Heart 'n Soul II has been formed, helped by two members of the original group.

Heart 'n Soul are determined to go abroad again. "We want to go everywhere, for a start" joked Pino;.. Watch out Europe !

N.B. : Heart 'n Soul are available for workshops and performances. Contact them at :

**The Albany Empire
Douglas Way
UK- Deptford SE8
Tel : 081-691 8016**



Is no-one safe from the clutches of the hug machine? Love devil (Andy Bridle - far left) claims more victims, this time two unsuspecting members of the audience.

European awards for disabled artists

In an exciting EEC / USA partnership, special awards have been created to recognise outstanding contributions to disability arts in Europe.

The awards are the first joint venture between EUCREA and the VSA (Very Special Arts organisation). But not the last according to Jean Kennedy Smith, President of VSA: "It is the beginning of a long and rewarding relationship which will bring innovative programmes to people with special needs not only in the European Community but in my own country as well."

The 11 winners, chosen from over 40 nominations, were presented with their prizes at the EUCREA conference in May. "It is an important recognition of our professionalism", declared one French artist, clearly appreciating the value of his award.



"A small but important sign of our solidarity to encourage you for the future": Mr. Wehrens (middle - Head of Division "Measures for the disabled"), Mrs. Jean Kennedy Smith (President of VSA) and Mr. Cattani (far right - President of EUCREA) presenting an award to Sotirios Poilucci, an Italian cartoonist and graphic designer.

The winners: Therese Loncol (B), Lone Barsoe (DK), Anne Dore Spellenberg (D), Francois Guibert (F), Dimitri Driss and Niki Papadatos (G), Sotirios Poilucci (I), Maureen Charles (IRL), Michel Kempers (NL), Mrs. Sa'Fores and Joaquin Pereira Eires (P).

Nominations for the 1991 awards should be made through the EUCREA national committees before April 1991.

**EUCREA : 32 Square Ambiorix
B-1040 Brussels - Belgium**

1990 European Special Olympics: Olympic flame blazes trail across Europe

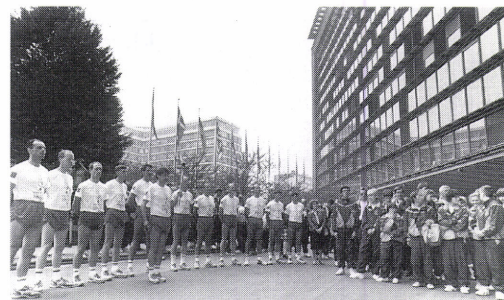
A torch run from Athens to Glasgow was the most spectacular event leading up to the 1990 European Games for athletes with learning difficulties.

The runners passed through Brussels on 18 June when they were officially greeted by EC Commissioner Bruce Millan and Mr Bill Hughes, Chairman of the European Special Olympics. The Belgian delegation of athletes and their coaches were also present.

The Olympic flame reached Glasgow stadium on 21 July, marking the start of the week-long event. The 1990 Games are the second and largest European Games—the first were held in Dublin in 1985. Over 2500 athletes from 30 European countries participated in the

12 official Special Olympic disciplines.

Details will follow in the next issue.



Alighting on Brussels ... the Olympic Torch runners (members of the Strathclyde police from Scotland) receive a warm welcome from the Belgian delegation of athletes.
(Photo : Bert Van den Broucke / ISOPRESS)

Helios exhibition stand : from Metz to Dublin

EUREHA

After Saarbrücken in 1989, the town of Metz played host to the European Rehabilitation Forum, from 3 - 6 May 1990. The exhibition covered an area of 7,000 m² and attracted 110 exhibitors from a wide range of associations and firms. 60% of the exhibitors were French and the remaining 40% German.

The aim of EUREHA was to present all the latest technical equipment designed to enhance the everyday life and professional environment of disabled people and dependent elderly people.

The exhibition drew huge crowds on the first day when it was officially opened by Michel Gillibert, the French Secretary of State responsible for disabled people.

A large number of subscription forms for the HELIOS magazine and

applications for brochures on the programme were distributed or completed on the spot.

Care Ireland 90

This new exhibition of equipment and services for disabled and/or elderly people was held in Dublin, from 22 - 24 May 1990, as part of the European Regional Conference of Rehabilitation International.

In keeping with the spirit of Care Ireland 90, the HELIOS stand proved a great success. The presentation of the Commission's programme in favour of disabled people was well received, while the co-ordinator of the Handynet data bank —Josyane Pierre— was inundated with requests for demonstrations.

Care Ireland provided a meeting point for professionals and individuals from a large number of European (EC and non-EC, including many Eastern European countries) and non-European countries. An initiative which is well worth repeating.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS



From left to right - Jean-François Labes, Honorary Director of ECRS, Maria do Pilar Mourao-Ferreira, of the National Rehabilitation Secretariat in Portugal, and Arthur W. Verney, Head of the ECRS Secretariat, addressing Conference. In the foreground sign language interpreters from Greece, Belgium and Ireland.

DEAF Europeans Campaign for a jobs charter

The European Community Regional Secretariat of the World Federation for the Hard of Hearing (ECRS) is one of the six permanent Non-Governmental Organisations in the HELIOS Liaison Group. Its aim is to advance and protect the interests of the half a million deaf people within the Community.

The fight against inequality

"Deaf people can't reach the same level as hearing people. We'll never advance. Education does not prepare us enough: we only get jobs which allow us to feed ourselves, no more than that."

This bitter comment by a young deaf Spaniard reflects the widespread discrimination against people whose deafness remains a barrier to vocational training and jobs worthy of their skills.

In an attempt to combat this discrimination, over 100 people from national associations for the deaf in 10 Member States gathered at the Gulkenkian Centre in Lisbon from 23 - 26 May 1990. They met to attend a conference on 'Training and Employment for Deaf People'.

Their immediate goal: to devise a charter of rights for deaf people to be submitted to the European Parliament.

The idea for the conference came from the European Community Regional Secretariat of the World Federation for the Hard of Hearing. The ECRS had paved the way with a draft 'jobs and training' charter for which it then sought the conference's backing. The conference was given support by the National Rehabilitation Secretariat in Portugal, the Portuguese Institute for Professional Training and Employment and the National Association of the Deaf (Associacao Portuguesa de Surdos).

Defining basic rights

The draft charter spells out 15 basic rights, ranging from the right of access to information, vocational training, career advice and in-service training, to the right of access to literacy programmes, job promotion, trade union activities and governmental support. Underpinning these rights is the right of deaf children to full-time basic education and the right of all deaf people to Sign Language interpreting services.

The significance of Sign Language became clear as soon as the first speaker addressed the conference. Each signed presentation was translated by voice interpreters into English, French and Portuguese and then re-translated into the different national Sign Languages of delegates by an international team of Sign Language interpreters.

After the message of welcome by the Portuguese Minister for Employment and Social Security, speaker after speaker revealed the extent to which basic rights are denied to deaf people.

On a more positive note, Ritva Bergmann from Denmark described two initiatives designed to enhance deaf people's employment prospects. One is a bilingual programme enabling deaf adults to learn, read and write the Danish language as well as use their own national Sign Language. The other is a 3-year project funded by the Ministry of Labour to give deaf people free access to helpers at their workplace. Italy, too, is making progress, progress which has been translated into law. Armando Giuranna of the Italian Association of the Deaf, reported that there are laws to govern the compulsory recruitment of deaf people under an

employment quota system, to ensure the presence of a Sign Language Interpreter at job interviews, and to define the eligibility of deaf people for employment.

A contribution that made a particular impact came from UK researchers Lesley Jones and Gloria Pullen. They described their encounters with deaf Europeans forced into unemployment and under-employment by prejudice and ignorance. The findings provide a stark commentary on the waste and misuse of human resources. Jones and Pullen called for the recognition of deaf people as a linguistic minority, rather than as a disabled group.

Objective: the European Parliament

The 15 fundamental rights in the ECRS's draft charter were debated by the conference's seven working groups and then presented as motions at the final plenary session. After being considered by each national association they were submitted to the ECRS Annual Conference in Brussels in September 1990.

The next stage is for the final Charter of Rights to be submitted to the European Parliament. The parliament demonstrated its commitment to deaf rights on 17 June 1988 when MEPs voted unanimously to give official status to the national Sign Language used in Member States. These good intentions are encouraging deaf people to campaign for even more: the achievement of basic workers' rights through this jobs charter.

Further details:

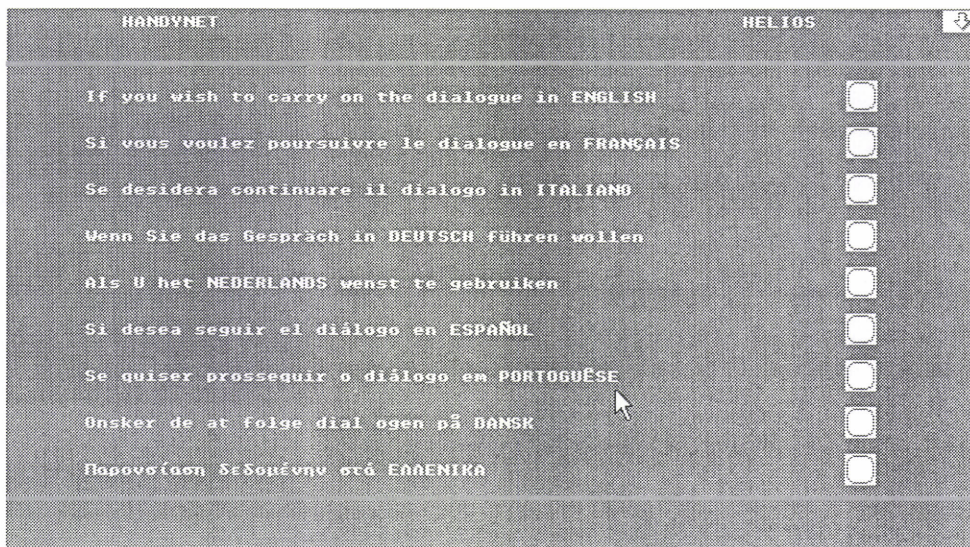
**ECRS
South Bank House
Black Prince Road**

On your marks, get set, go...

After many years of preparation, the Handynet technical aids module is finally operational. As readers will already be aware, Handynet is made up of four sub-modules which cover technical aids for motor disabled and visually impaired people, aids designed to facilitate communication and training software packages.



The Handynet multilingual information system enables the user to follow the dialogue in the language of his or her choice. However, this choice is not fixed : it is possible to switch languages at any point in the interview.



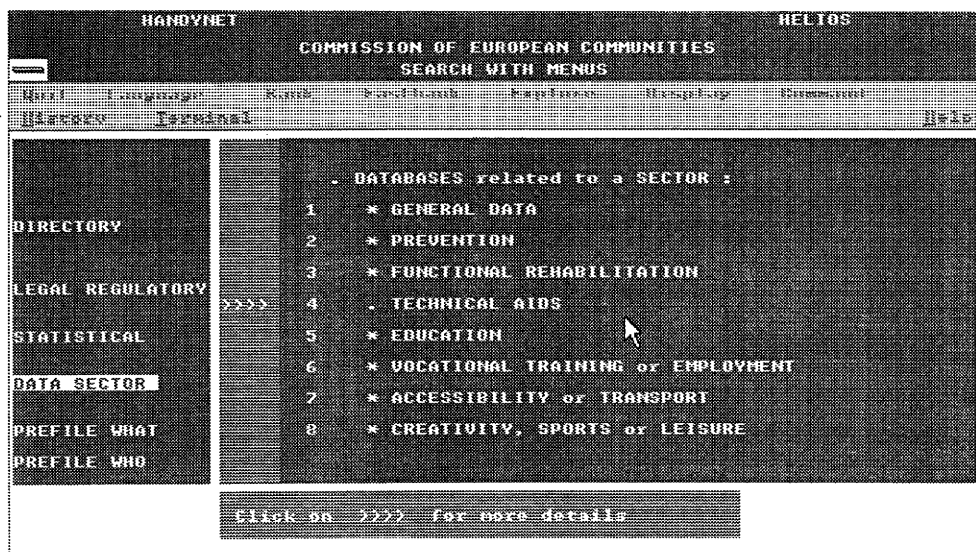
Gathering information

The task of gathering information on technical aids for motor disabled people is due to begin before the end of the year. In concrete terms, this means that following a three-day training session in September, the national co-ordination centres appointed by the Member States will begin to analyse the wide range of technical aids available on the European market. They will also analyse the organisations which deal in the sale, importation and distribution of technical aids and will process information relating to the national regulations which allow disabled people to buy, hire or borrow technical aids.

A practical tool

So what are the advantages of such a system for someone seeking information ? Thanks to the various advice and information centres currently operating in the Member States, disabled people will soon have access to two main services :

- An electronic journal which will keep them informed about the latest



Handynet offers great scope for development. The technical aids module is operational. The system has a modular structure which enables it to add other sections of information relating to disabled people : the sections on vocational training and employment, for example, or access and transport, can all be supplemented later as and when more data is gathered.

products to appear on the European market.

The electronic journal will also provide information on European events organised together with details of facilities for disabled people at different conferences, exhibitions, etc. A section entitled "voluntary services" will help to promote exchanges and co-operation between institutions and individuals.

• A data bank which will enable people to choose a particular technical aid according to their disability, financial resources and the technical characteristics of the products available on the European market.

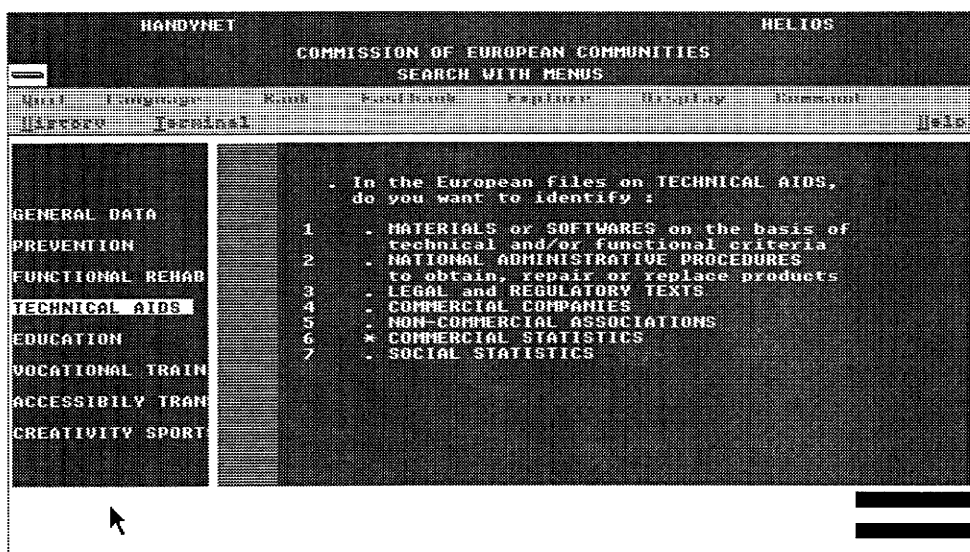
Handynet will also help people to identify gaps in the market and, in so doing, act as a catalyst for research and development.

Lastly, the data bank will enable users to refer to national regulations in order to find out what options are available for purchasing, borrowing or hiring equipment and how this should be done. The service will be offered in the nine official languages of the European Community.

In the field of technical aids, the research can be focused on products, organisations (commercial or other), regulation etc.

Whenever a choice is made, it is recorded on the left of the screen in order to make it easier to refer back to previous research.

Moreover there is a "search" function for running through a series of screens to ensure that research activities are heading in the right direction.



Handynet is therefore a practical tool designed to provide information for disabled people.

A means of integration

Now that it has finally materialised, Handynet will provide a reliable service, giving disabled people the chance to make the best possible

choice of technical aid.

Integration invariably begins with proper information. The system is now operational and there is no doubt that its introduction will greatly help this process.

Use Handynet and move one stage closer to integration. ■

Not always a "pretty" picture ...

The first international meeting on "The portrayal of disabled people through the mass media", organised by the Association "Progetto handicap" (Val Vibrata local model activity (Italy) — HELIOS social integration network), was held on 25 and 26 May 1990 in Colonnella (Abruzzi).

The meeting formed part of the HELIOS programme; it was attended by professionals from the media and representatives of Italian associations who have been fighting for many years against the tendency to marginalise disabled people. The aim was to analyse the various attitudes of the press in general to disability and to exchange ideas with a view to heightening media awareness of the process of social integration.

Sensationalism was one of the issues raised. Some delegates condemned the biased relationship that exists between disabled people and the media, a

relationship in which the latter is all too often content to focus on the more marginal aspects of disability. Several experts also made the point that most journalists are only interested in the more sensational stories.

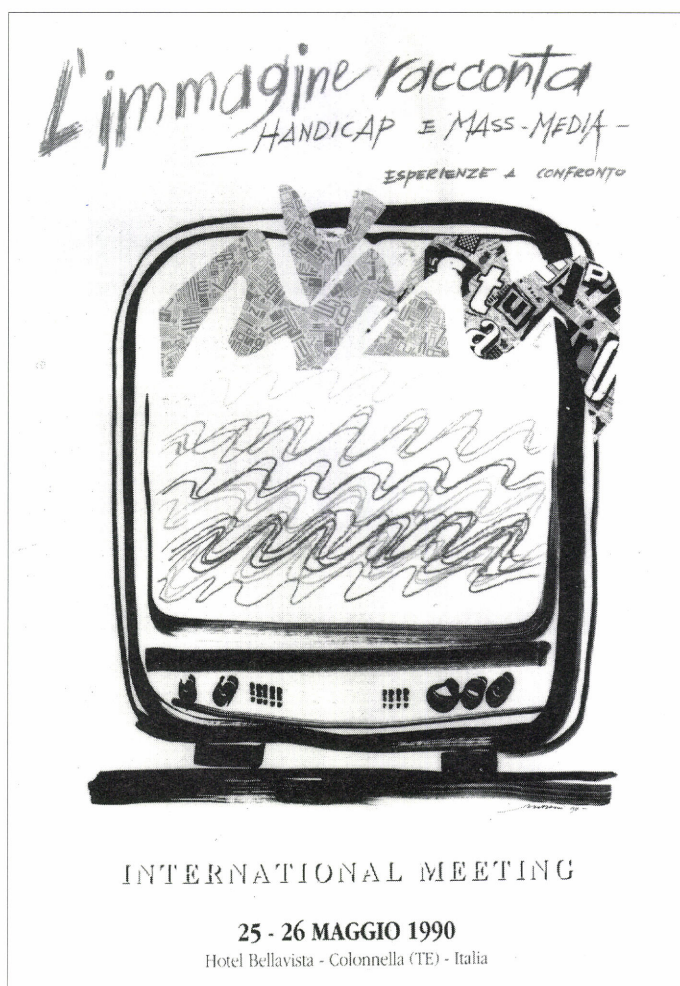
These conclusions in turn led to others and this time it was the members of the press who spoke. Firstly, in reply to the criticism that the media tend to marginalise disabled people, they argued that this was only to be expected: the most outstanding feature of any disability is the fact that it sets the sufferer apart, particularly in the eyes of the media who,

by their very nature, are more concerned with the "extraordinary" than "normal" everyday occurrences (an aeroplane taking off and landing on schedule, for example, is hardly a newsworthy event). It is therefore inevitable, claim the media, that newspapers and television etc. should focus on the more unusual aspects of an individual. Secondly, as regards criticism over their choice of topics—which tend to be consigned to the "news in brief" column rather than the other pages—journalists have to consider the economic constraints of their industry: it is a sad fact that sensational news sells better than humdrum accounts of everyday life.

Another area where there is clearly a fundamental difference of opinion concerns the links which could be forged between the media and disabled people. On the one hand, there is the belief that the press should help to promote the image of the disabled as people in their own right rather than as disabled people. There is a need to play down the issue among the general public, by educating them about the abilities, capacity for independence and integration of this section of the population. It is high time, too, that we stopped talking about them almost exclusively in terms of differences, pity or even heroism... To do this, we need to achieve a high degree of co-operation and liaison between representatives of disabled people and those in charge of the press.

I am well aware that this proposal, one of several put forward at the Colonnella meeting, will raise the hackles of a large number of journalists (not to say the majority), for whom freedom of information is sacrosanct and who firmly believe that the role of the press is not to educate the public but simply to inform...

All of which brings us back to the age-old dilemma between respect for the independence of the press and respect for the dignity of the disabled person. It is an argument which will run on for ever, since the only way to win your case is to agree with your opponent!



When it comes to disability, the media image can —unfortunately— appear very confused.



This is the first in a series called Lifestyles where we will focus on the work of disabled individuals in the European Community. In this article we hear from Julie Cleves, a fine art student. In spite of a severely restricting physical disability, she is showing the determination and strength of character necessary to translate her creativity into works of art.

My name is Julie Cleves and I am disabled from birth with arthrogryphosis. I was born in 1969 at Hereford General Hospital in England. The cause of the disability is not quite known but it is not hereditary. The muscles and joints are not formed properly in my body and some parts are weaker than others. Movement in my arms and legs is restricted but I can walk short distances with leg calipers and crutches. My trunk and neck muscles are very strong, and I can write and paint with my mouth.

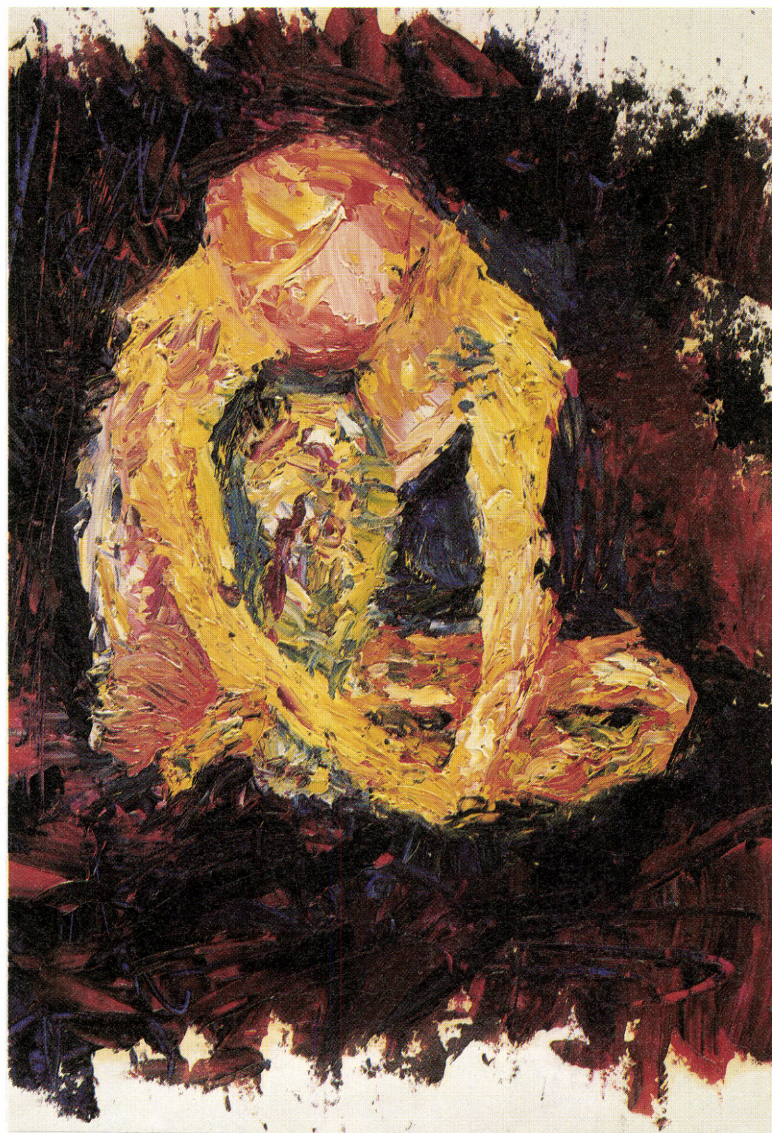
When I was younger I attended normal schools where I was fully integrated. This was a great advantage as I was able to come to terms with mixing with all sorts of different people.

I thoroughly enjoyed my school days and the experiences and problems that I had to overcome. It has given

me an enthusiastic outlook on life and I can solve problems confidently.

In January 1986 I moved away from home to an assessment centre in Surrey where I learnt how to live independently, as far as it was possible. The centre is not academically oriented and I only stayed for eight months. But the social life was fantastic and I experienced a lot of things that I never thought I would.

In September 1986 I moved on to Hereward College of Further Education



in Coventry, which is residential for the disabled. During my final year there, I completed the arts foundation course which was linked to Coventry Polytechnic. I found the course very difficult and intense: I had to push myself hard and use a lot of self-discipline to be able to paint what I felt. This experience has made me much more self-motivated.

I am now at Leeds Polytechnic completing a degree in Fine Art which I am thoroughly enjoying. It has opened up new opportunities for me because now

I feel my work is developing into something exciting.

Oil paint is my favourite medium, which I use very thickly on the paper. I have a specially designed palette knife used most of the time with a brush. The marks I make with these tools, on paper, are very important to me, especially because I love to use bright, vibrant colours and to drag one colour through another with the palette knife. I also have a stick with a sponge on the end which I use to dab the paint on and to drag it across the paper.

Most of my paintings have some sort of figure-feeling to them, whether intentional or not. I usually like to start by laying the paint down, then I work into it until I get what I feel is right. I don't usually use a definite line to signify the figure; it is the way the colours work against each other that captures it. Most of the figures that I

create have got a strange, ghostly feeling to them which both disturbs and interests me. My work can also be moody and atmospheric depending on how I feel at the time.

The image presented in this magazine is very energetic, full of vibrant colours which I have layered thickly. My aim was to experiment with colour and texture within the figure. The painting was created at a very quick pace.

Social Charter and the Helios Programme : a concerted approach

On 9 December 1989, 11 of the 12 Member States of the European Community adopted a declaration in Strasbourg instituting the "Community Charter of Workers' Fundamental Social Rights" (cf. editorial by M. Degimbe, p.2).

The drafting of this Charter first began in February 1990; one of the articles, in particular, focuses on disabled people (article 26) :

"All disabled persons, whatever the origin and nature of their disablement, must be entitled to additional concrete measures aimed at improving their social and professional integration.

These measures must concern, in particular, according to the capacities of the beneficiaries, vocational training, ergonomics, accessibility, mobility, means of transport and housing".

The introduction of this Charter has led to plans for two further initiatives by the Commission : the first is a new HELIOS action programme, due to start in 1992, while the second concerns measures aimed at increasing the mobility of disabled workers.

- Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the third EC action programme in favour of disabled people (HELIOS) for the period 1992 to 1996 inclusive.

After the conclusion of the second action

programme at the end of 1991, efforts should be made to pursue and step up European policy for the integration of disabled people by means of a five-year programme. If we are to attain our goal of promoting equal opportunities for disabled people and maintain the economic and social cohesion of the European market, it is vital that we have the necessary means to build on the progress made to date.

- Proposal for a Council Decision concerning the introduction of measures aimed at improving the mobility of physically disabled workers.

Alongside the HELIOS programme, the Commission is currently involved in presenting various political initiatives, particularly proposals concerning the mobility of disabled workers, including the issue of transport.

Further to its findings on the employment of disabled people in the Community (12 June 1989), the Commission is now drafting proposals "which ensure a greater degree of co-ordination and consistency in the initiatives taken by Member States". Better opportunities for mobility - an essential pre-requisite for vocational training and employment - are obviously a key consideration in this approach.

N.B. : *the full text of the Social Charter can be obtained from the HELIOS information service.*

Handicap and education : a major step forward

A new resolution for disabled people has just been approved by the European institutions; its aim : "the integration of children and young people affected by a handicap into mainstream education systems".

This measure was largely the work of the Rotterdam Conference (October 1989) which was the first European conference on "Education and handicap", organised by the European Commission in the framework of the HELIOS programme.

The resolution was adopted on 31 May 1990 by the Council of Ministers for Education before appearing in the Official Journal of the European Communities C162 on 3.07.1990.

Basically, the text recommends stepping up co-operation - skills, teaching methods, staff, programmes, etc. - between mainstream education establishments and special schools or centres for children and young people with a handicap.

The resolution also stresses the need for in-service training for teachers and the educational potential of new technologies. Finally, there are plans to increase the role played by professionals in developing integrated education; in order to achieve all this, fresh financial resources are envisaged.

N.B. : *the full text of this resolution can be obtained from the HELIOS Information Service.*

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