

# helios

flash

To subscribers

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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## a fresh start

On 25 February, after a long gestation period, HELIOS II was born further to a Council decision. Now that the programme is taking its first steps, the time has come to renew contacts with its partners and supporters throughout the twelve EC Member States, as well as with people with similar concerns from other countries in Europe, and indeed beyond. Since the completion of HELIOS I in December 1991, hundreds of readers have written in to ask for news or to enquire why they were no longer receiving the magazine. We would like to thank them for their loyalty and interest.

HELIOS flash will be published every two months. Its purpose is quite simple: to provide all interested parties with as much concise, accurate and factual information as possible on activities within the HELIOS programme and other Europe-wide initiatives concerning disabled people. Indeed, part of the brief for the HELIOS programme is to promote better dissemination of information on equal opportunities, integration and independence in daily life.

This first issue of HELIOS flash outlines the objectives and organisation of the HELIOS II programme and introduces the three advisory bodies provided for by the Council decision and established at the end of April 1993.

For practical and budgetary reasons, HELIOS flash is published in three languages only: English, French and German. Copies of this first issue have been sent out in the language of the destination country, but you may request another language version if you wish, using the coupon on page three. Other information documents on the HELIOS programme are in the pipeline, including a lengthier magazine which will be published three or four times a year. These documents will be available in the nine official languages of the Community. We also plan to produce publications in Braille; as part of our preparation for this, we have added a question on the subject in the answer coupon.

We hope you will enjoy the newsletter. Thank you for your trust and involvement.

**Bernard Wehrens** - Head of the Division

"Integration of Disabled People"

Commission of the European Communities - DG V C.4.

Bimonthly  
newsletter of  
the Community  
action  
programme  
to assist  
disabled people  
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The HELIOS II programme to promote integration and equal opportunities for all disabled people in the Community is seeking both continuity and renewal. On the one hand, the cooperation in this field which has developed between Member States in the past, and particularly during the HELIOS I programme, should continue to be fostered.

# equal opportunities for disabled

## a new challenge for Europe

But, at the same time, new areas of cooperation and more efficient pooling of practical information are needed if the Commission's objective in launching this programme is to be achieved, namely: to establish a Community policy of cooperative action to assist all disabled people - working together with national governments and the appropriate organisations and associations - based on the very best each Member State has to offer by way of successful experience and innovative experiments.

### Extending the scope

One innovation of HELIOS II over HELIOS I is that the scope of the programme has been extended to include functional rehabilitation. In addition, cooperation on education will now encompass pre-school, higher and further education. These new areas of cooperation, together with vocational training and employment rehabilitation, social and economic integration and independent living, will form the framework for national measures supported by the Commission.

### Improving exchanges of information and experience

There is also room for innovation regarding the measures initiated, coordinated or implemented by the Commission in the various fields. Primarily, the exchange of information and experience between Member States needs to be more intensive. As with HELIOS I, this practice-orientated cooperation will take the form of theme-based conferences and seminars, study visits and training courses organised in conjunction with Member States, NGOs or national disability councils. Such activities will be run in close collaboration with disabled people and their families, representative organisations, experts and research-

ers, skilled professionals, volunteers and the two sides of industry. A greater number of participants, improved coordination and more regular assessment will permit a wider dissemination of information and more effective transfer of positive experience.

### Further development of HANDYNET

In addition, the Commission will continue to develop the module on technical aids of the computerised information system HANDYNET. This is crucial, given the particular

importance of new technologies for the integration of disabled people. The module, available in the nine official Community languages, contains more than 40,000 items of practical, functional and economic information on aids available in the EC, their manufacturers and utilization in individual countries, and regulations regarding reimbursement of costs. It is of vital importance that the CD-ROM system should become widely accessible, in order to ensure that this information is put to optimal use.

## HELIOS

### consultation for effective action

The HELIOS programme, like many other initiatives of the Commission of the European Communities, must comply with certain principles:

**consistency and complementarity** with other Community measures and initiatives which have a direct or indirect impact on the disabled

**subsidiarity:** whenever possible, decisions must be made at the level closest to the individual and the Community must respect the decision-making autonomy of national authorities in matters outside the EC's competence

**participation:** what would be the point of a programme such as HELIOS without the active partici-

pation of disabled people themselves in the development and organisation of activities?

In accordance with these principles, the HELIOS decision provides for the establishment of three advisory bodies, which held their first meetings in Brussels at the end of April.

**The Advisory Committee** is composed of two government representatives of each Member State and is chaired by a Commis-



# people

## Involvement with other

### Community programmes and initiatives

HELIOS II provides a framework for further cooperation on occupational rehabilitation and employment with the HORIZON initiative and on the use of efficient technologies with the TIDE initiative.

Moreover, disabled people will be encouraged to take part in other Community programmes, particularly in the areas of training and preparation for working life, new

technologies, vocational training, employment, equal opportunities for women and men, foreign language courses and last but not least, youth exchange with the Community.

### Intensifying public awareness-raising activities

Greater efforts to distribute information and raise public awareness regarding the possibilities for integrating disabled people will form a major part of the programme. Activities will primarily take the form of competitions and awareness-raising national model projects. The Commission will also be able to give valuable support to information sessions organised by HELIOS II partners at national

### Furthering cooperation with

Finally, the Commission will extend the scope of its cooperation with governmental organisations and NGOs. As part of the information and awareness-raising activities of HELIOS II, the Commission will encourage and promote cooperation between the European NGOs in respective fields, and specifically encourage them to draw up common

# important message

In order to help us to reorganise our subscriber file and in particular to arrange the distribution of the new HELIOS flash publication, please read the following carefully and, if necessary, return the answer coupon (postage stamp required).

1. In all correspondence relating to your subscription, please quote your subscription number, indicated on the address label.
2. Please check that your name and address are correct and complete; if not, please fill in the correct details on the answer coupon.
3. Please also let us know if you have received unwanted copies by returning all the codes on the various labels and specifying the number of copies required. NB: should you wish to receive more than two copies, please attach a short letter giving your reasons.
4. HELIOS flash is published in English, French and German. You have been sent the English version. Should you prefer to receive one of the other two versions, please specify the language on the answer coupon.
5. You or someone you know may be interested in receiving a Braille edition of the newsletter. If so, please let us know, indicating the desired language.
6. If you received this first issue at a conference or exhibition and wish to be included on our list, please complete the answer coupon and return it to the above address, indicating the language version required. Subscription is free.

Thank you for your kind cooperation.

# HELIOS

sion representative. Its main purpose is to deliver opinions on the proposals for activities submitted by the Commission.

It is worth noting that the selection of partners for activities under the HELIOS programme (excepting NGO activities) is the responsibility of Member States. The 24 Advisory Committee members are listed on page 4

HELIOS intends to increase cooperation between the Commission and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). **The European Disability Forum** was set up with this in mind. The Forum is made up of the following:

- 12 European NGOs representing all the various types of disability and fields of rehabilitation

- 12 representatives of national disability councils, where these exist, or major national NGOs
- two representatives of the two sides of industry (workers and employers).

This new European forum for debate will give disabled people direct influence over the implementation of the HELIOS II programme.

**At its first meeting**, on 28 April, the Forum elected its chair and vice-chair.

The chairman is Mr Wesemann, Director-General of the European Regional Secretariat of the World Federation of the Deaf. Mr Boulinier, President of the Conseil français des personnes handicapées

*pour les questions européennes (French disability council for European affairs)*, was elected vice-chairman. The vote was by secret ballot, using ballot papers which were both printed and in Braille. The anonymous vote of blind representatives was thus safeguarded - a first step towards equal opportunities.

**The Liaison Group** is made up of one government representative from each Member State, drawn from the Advisory Committee, along with twelve elected representatives of the European Disability Forum. The Forum elected its representatives using the same procedure as for its chair. The purpose of the Liaison Group

is to compare and discuss the opinions of the Forum and the Advisory Committee in a constructive manner.

*The Liaison Group representatives are designated by an asterisk in the list of Forum and Advisory Committee members (see list page 4)*



# consultation for effective action

## Advisory Committee: list of members

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Mr BOULINIER, Vice-Chairman  
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### A. EUROPEAN NGOS: COORDINATORS

#### I. Areas of impairment, disability and handicap

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2. **Hearing disability**  
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3. **Motor disability**  
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4. **Mental handicap**  
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Handicapped- European Association  
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1994 and 1996: C.O.F.A.C.E. - Committee of  
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