

# helios

flash

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## 1<sup>st</sup> european day of disabled persons

The first European Day of Disabled Persons will be celebrated on 3 December.

The main aim of the occasion is to draw the attention of the Community institutions, the national authorities and the general public to the work still needed to achieve the full integration of disabled people. This year, the focus is specifically on disabled people's human rights. Readers of Helios Flash will not need reminding that violence against disabled people is on the increase in some regions of Europe. And cases of discrimination and exclusion are still too numerous by far: take for example the court which awarded damages to a couple of tourists on the pretext that their holidays had been spoiled by the presence of disabled people in the hotel restaurant...

The idea of holding an international disabled people's day on 3 December was mooted by the United Nations Assembly on 16 December 1992. The European Community is supporting the idea by organising a range of events at European level to mark the occasion, and other activities are scheduled to take place at national and local level throughout the Community.

A spectacular event will undoubtedly be the first session of the European Disabled Person's Parliament, in Brussels on 3 December. For the space of one day, 518 disabled people from the 12 Member States will take the place of the Members of the European Parliament - with the latter's agreement - in the new Parliament build-

ing in Brussels. It should be noted that the new building is entirely accessible to disabled people, which is probably a first in Europe.

### Other events will include:

- national and local 24-hour vigils
- the signing by personalities and the general public of a statement of commitment to the principle of equal rights for disabled people
- an art competition open to disabled people on the theme of human rights and disabled people. The prizewinner will be announced on 3 December 1993, and the winning entry will be officially unveiled on 3 December 1994.

The Commission of the European Communities will be supporting the Day of Disabled Persons within the framework of the HELIOS programme and with the unanimous approval of the programme's advisory bodies. The initiative for the event came from the non-governmental organisations belonging to the European Disability Forum.

### General coordination and further information:

Disabled People's International (DPI),  
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The Council decision of 25 February establishing the HELIOS II programme provided that the exchange and information activities over the course of the programme should be organised on specific annual themes.

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## priority themes

Prevention,  
functional rehabilitation,  
Education,  
Economic integration,  
Social integration  
and independent living,  
Social, economic  
and legal protection,  
Staff training

The Commission consulted first the Member States, and then the three advisory bodies of the HELIOS programme (the Advisory Committee, the European Disability Forum and the Liaison Group) and the Integrated Education Group (IEG), on the themes to be selected.

It took into account their comments and drew up a final list of topics, divided into seven areas: prevention, functional rehabilitation, education, economic integration, social integration and independent living, social, economic and legal protection, and staff training.

A number of priority themes and sub-themes are listed under each heading. The list and a detailed description of each year's priority themes are available in a booklet published by the Commission in the nine official Community languages. Some of these themes have

been set for two, three or even four years in a row. In all, 33 themes were chosen for HELIOS activities in 1993-94.

The Commission then invited the Member States to designate their participants in the exchange and information activities on the basis of this list.

### HELIOS news in brief

Since the publication of the Council decision of 25 February 1993, no effort has been spared in the relaunching of activities under HELIOS II.

The programme's advisory bodies, which play an essential role by allowing direct involvement of governmental authorities and associations of disabled people, met for the first time in April and again in September. The three bodies were featured in the first issue of Helios Flash.

The final selection of the themes to be given priority in the programme's activities over the coming years was made at the end of September. At the time of going to press, the Member States were in the process of finalising the designation of participants in the future activities of HELIOS II; we will come back to this in the next issue.

Parallel to this, in order to give maximum publicity to the implementation of the programme and encourage the participation and suggestions of the organisations and individuals directly concerned, Commission representatives and members of the HELIOS team of experts have been taking part in a number of Europe-wide events; the major ones are listed on page 4.

Preparation of activities in the education sector and the development of the HANDYNET system have also been major concerns in recent weeks; see the articles on pages 3 and 4.

We also report on the groundbreaking participation of the Commission and the HELIOS programme at the REHA '93 exhibition in Düsseldorf, the world's largest exhibition on technical aids for disabled people. REHA '93 received the patronage of the Commission of the European Communities (page 3).

**Thanks to the many of you** who returned the reply coupon included in the first issue of HELIOS FLASH to inform us of changes in and corrections to your name and address; **your cooperation is much appreciated.**

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# reha 93

## REHA 93 international exhibition of aids for disabled people, Düsseldorf - *review*

The leading international exhibition of rehabilitation aids for disabled people made its seventh appearance in Düsseldorf this October. REHA was held in a European setting this year, under the patronage of Pádraig Flynn, Member of the Commission of the European Communities – an appeal to the public to help support action to improve the quality of life for disabled people throughout Europe.

This year, REHA hosted exhibits from 585 participants and 21 countries, and between 6 and 10 October more than 46,000 visitors came to obtain specific information on the international supply of aids and services for disabled people. There was also a full programme of sports activities, cultural events and conferences, with the active participation of the Commission of the European Communities.

On the Commission's stand, staff representing the HELIOS programme and the HANDYNET information system answered over 400 queries per day. At a HELIOS seminar on 7 October, disabled and non-disabled experts and visitors from various EC Member States discussed future prospects in the light of current trends towards independent living. Works by disabled artists were the focal point of a cultural festival organised by the German branch of EUCREA, the European association for creative activities for and by disabled people, with the support of the Commission. A panel discussion on opportunities for representation of the social and political interests of people with disabilities or chronic illnesses in Europe was another major event. Among other aspects, this topic highlighted the vital role played by the HELIOS European Disability Forum.

This was the commission's first experience of official partnership in the REHA exhibition. It is worth noting the intensity and quality of the contacts made on this occasion. We hope that the links forged with disabled people and their families, representatives of self-help groups, associations of disabled people, disability councils and non-governmental organisations at the exhibition will lead to further constructive development.

## HANDYNET: CD-ROM 5

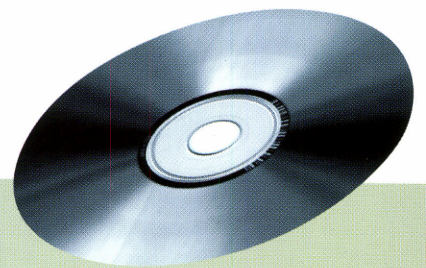
HANDYNET is one of the central planks of the HELIOS programme, alongside exchange activities and public awareness raising. It is a computerised information system and network for disabled people in Europe, containing nearly 50,000 items of information on technical aids, the addresses of specialist companies and organisations, specific regulations in the Member States, etc. The data are stored on CD-ROM, and the fifth update came out in November. The information on the HANDYNET CD-ROM can be accessed in the nine official Community lan-

guages, in digital sound and on Braille hard copies. The system contains 300 illustrations of 60 products, as well as demonstrations of education and rehabilitation software.

The HANDYNET CD-ROM is not distributed directly to the general public, but it is already available for consultation in nearly 140 information and advice centres across the European Community. HANDYNET is also a network of national coordination centres (13 in all) which will also be able to direct you to your nearest HANDY-

NET information centre. A list of national HANDYNET coordination centres is available from the HELIOS team of experts.

HANDYNET is designed to operate in symbiosis with users' needs, and to this end assessment sessions are held in each Member State, involving disabled people, associations and professionals in the field, representatives of public institutions, and product suppliers. Sessions have been scheduled for the UK (on 26-28 October) and Spain (on 11-12 November in collabo-



ration with the Autonomous Communities, and on 15-16 November with CRECER, the European association of people of restricted growth). Assessment meetings are also due to be held in five regions of France in the coming weeks, and the plenary assessment meeting of the European network is to be held in Germany in April.

# education

Educational integration is one of the five main objectives of the HELIOS II programme.

The Commission collaborates on implementation of this aspect of the programme with the Integrated Education Group IEG - consisting of two government representatives from each Member State and one from the *European Association for Special Education (EASE)* -, which is the NGO designated as coordinator for education within the European Disability Forum.

The IEG also collaborates with the Commission and the Education Committee to ensure that all Community programmes and initiatives take into consideration the special needs of disabled people (*the Education Committee comprises representatives of Member States and was established by the Council of Ministers of the European Community*). Activities are also coordinated with the Task Force for Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth.

The HELIOS II programme is concerned with all levels of education, from early educational assistance (for the under-threes) and nursery school to higher and adult education.

Please note that the reports on the three seminars on education organised by HELIOS I in late 1992 and early 1993 are now available:

**the Valencia seminar (E)** (Oct. 92) on the integration of deaf pupils (*available in Spanish, French and English*)

**the Hadsten seminar (DK)** (Nov. 92) on careers advice and academic guidance (*available in English*)

**the Bonn seminar (D)** (March 93) on secondary education and disability (*available in English and German*)

The reports and a list of IEG members is available on written request from the HELIOS team of experts.

## in brief

### timetable of events

In November and December, the participants designated by the Member States for HELIOS exchange activities will meet in Brussels. The dates for each area of activity are as follows:

**29-30 November 1993:** education

**6-7 December 1993:** economic integration

**16-17 December 1993:** social integration

**19-20 December 1993:** functional rehabilitation

### other events

**3 December 1993:** 1st European Day of Disabled Persons (see article on page 1)

**13-15 December 1993,** Brussels: meetings of the advisory bodies of the HELIOS programme (European Disability Forum, Liaison Group, Advisory Committee)

### commission

Since 1 September, there have been changes with regard to the structure of DG V (*Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs*).

Unit **DG V/C/4** for "Measures for the disabled" has a new reference and a new name: **DG V/E/3**, "Integration of the disabled".

## european events

HELIOS has been active at a number of recent major events at European level:

**21-28 April** Hanover fair (D) Information stand and HELIOS seminar on vocational training and the economic integration of disabled people.

**22-26 May** Hindsgavl (DK) European conference on special education for children with physical and mental handicaps.

**15-18 June** Maastricht (NL) Conference on information technology and the quality of life and services.

**2-4 August** Maastricht (NL) First European conference of people with a disability (Eurable).

**8 September** Brussels (B) European Citizen's Week devoted to the fight against discrimination of all kinds (European Citizen Action Service).

**7-11 September** Munich (D) 8th congress of the Confédération européenne des Laryngectomisés (CEL).

**15 September** Londonderry, Northern Ireland (UK) Seminar on the employment of people suffering from psychiatric illness.

**28-30 September** London (UK) NAIDEX '93, international exhibition of equipment and services for disabled and elderly people.

**6-10 October** Düsseldorf (D) REHA '93, international exhibition of technical aids for disabled people, under the patronage of the Commission, hosting the following HELIOS activities:

- HELIOS seminar on independent living
- panel discussion on the defence of the social and economic rights of disabled people in Europe
- HELIOS information stand and HANDYNET demonstrations
- art exhibition and festival (EUCREA)

**7-9 October** Bütgenbach (B) 3rd European symposium on early intervention for disabled children and their families in the European Community.

**13 October** Paris (F) "Ensemble pour la dignité" ("together for dignity" - mentally handicapped people's day, organised by the French national union of parents and friends of mentally disabled people).

**19-21 October** Brussels (B) Employment Week.

**10 November** Madrid (E) National HELIOS information day in Spain.

**17-18 November** Lyons (F) Biennial international HANDI-INSERTION meeting on the occupational integration of disabled people.

