

# helios

flash 11

## Commission: medium-term social action programme

In April, the Commission published its **Medium-Term Social Action Programme 1995-1997** (ref.: COM(95) 134 final), in which it translates its White Paper "European Social Policy, a Way Forward for the Union"<sup>(1)</sup> into specific objectives. The programme makes several references to the integration of disabled people and announces a number of specific measures:

- As HELIOS II ends in 1996, and in the light of the interim evaluation of the programme in 1995, the Commission will be launching wide-ranging consultations on possible future action in the field of disability.
  - In 1996, the Commission will concentrate on the issue of the employment of disabled people as part of the follow-up of the European Council meeting in Essen, and on the potential of new technologies and communications systems.
  - In 1997, the Commission will submit its proposals in these two areas after consulting the European Disability Forum and in the light of other studies carried out by the Member States.
  - Regarding equal opportunities, the Commission
    - is to publish a communication on the measures to be taken to remove the discriminatory barriers still faced by disabled people (second half of 1995); and
    - will submit to the European Parliament and the Council a proposal for a recommendation on the implementation of the United Nations rules on the equalisation of opportunities for disabled people (1996)<sup>(2)</sup>.
- As readers will recall, the Commission indicated in its White Paper on social policy that, when the treaties are next reviewed (at the 1996 inter-governmental conference), consideration should be given to the possibility of including a specific reference to combatting discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, age or disability.
- The Commission is also planning to submit a proposal for a decision establishing a standing advisory forum of disability organisations, on the model of the European Disability Forum set up under the HELIOS II programme. The new forum's remit would be to advise on issues relating to disabled people in all spheres of Community activity.
  - The Commission has further announced that it intends to:
    - prepare a code of good practice on the employment of disabled people at the Commission and in other European Union institutions (second half of 1995);
    - initiate discussions as of 1996, within the framework of the social dialogue, with a view to encouraging good practice among employers throughout the European Union;
    - submit a recommendation on the mutual recognition of parking permits for disabled people in the Member States;
    - continue to press for the adoption of the proposal for a directive on the transport of workers with reduced mobility, which was submitted to the Council in 1991.

<sup>(1)</sup> See *HELIOS Flash* No. 6, September 1994

<sup>(2)</sup> The United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993 (Resolution 48/96). The quarterly *HELIOSCOPE* will carry a feature on the rules at the end of the year. See also article on NGOs p. 4.





## TIDE

At the second European TIDE Congress, held from 26 to 28 April in Paris, Mr Richonnier, the director of the TELEMATICS APPLICATIONS programme (European Commission, DG XIII), reviewed a few essential points concerning TIDE. TIDE is a programme of research and development in the field of telecommunications and information technology of use for elderly and disabled people. During its first - pilot - phase, from 1991 to 1994, TIDE financed 21 R&D projects, and its achievements included:

- providing a forum for European research into technical aids;
- increasing awareness of the possibilities and potential of technical aids;
- initiating a framework for cooperation between industry, users, researchers and rehabilitation professionals;
- improving understanding of the market.

At the end of the pilot phase, it emerged that there was a need for more involvement and better representation of users and large industrial concerns.

The pilot phase led on to a transitional phase (1993-1996) with 55 projects and activities. The aim of this second stage is to strengthen the European market and make the technical aids industry in Europe more competitive.

Under the fourth framework programme for research and development, adopted in 1994, TIDE became one of the strands of the European Union's TELEMATICS APPLICATIONS programme (the other strands focus on areas such as education, administration, libraries and healthcare). The TIDE acronym now stands for Telematics for the Integration of Disabled and Elderly people (replacing the former Technology Initiative for Disabled and Elderly people). TIDE will give priority to catering for the needs of users rather than concentrating on pure research. We should note that Mr Boulinier, vice-chairman of the HELIOS European Disability Forum, sat on the committee which evaluated TIDE's pilot phase in 1994, further strengthening the emphasis on users' needs. The other strands of the TELEMATICS APPLICATIONS programme will also take the needs of elderly and disabled people into account: all applications must be accessible to all and easy to use and understand.

The programme has a total budget of ECU 843 million, of which ECU 65 million has been earmarked for TIDE. **On 15 September 1995, the Commission will issue a call for expressions of interest to organisations and groups which might like to take part in research to assist elderly and disabled people.** For further

information, please contact the TIDE office, European Commission, DG XIII/C/5, BU-29 3/10, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Bruxelles. Fax: +32.2 299 02 48.

## Education, training and youth

Readers will recall that we reviewed the new EU programmes in the fields of education, training and youth in *HELIOS Flash* No. 7 and *HELIOSCOPE* No. 3. These programmes are now moving into their operational phase. We would advise interested individuals and organisations to contact the national agencies responsible for the pre-selection of projects as soon as possible. All the programmes place particular emphasis on the involvement of disabled people and take their specific needs into account (in particular, some additional costs will be covered). There is room here for only a very brief summary of these wide-ranging initiatives. DG XXII (Education, training and youth) has just published guidelines and practical handbooks for applicants, and national days are being organised to launch the programmes.

## SOCRATES: action programme in the field of education

Decision No. 819/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 1995, Official Journal L 87 of 20 April 1995, p. 10

# HELIOS programme

## Liaison Group

Since the enlargement of the Union on 1 January 1995, the government representatives of the three new Member States have joined each of the programme's three advisory bodies, including the Liaison Group. The group previously also comprised 12 representatives of disability organisations, appointed by the European Disability Forum from its membership. To maintain a balanced representation of disability organisations, the HELIOS forum has elected three new delegates from among its members: Mr Österwitz (Action européenne des handicapés), Mr Könköla (National Council on Disability, Finland) and Mr Domingos (Grupo das ONGs Nacionais, Portugal). The Liaison Group therefore now numbers 30 full members and three observers (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

## National information days

The provisional schedule of national HELIOS information days planned for the second half of 1995 is as follows:

**Finland:** 25 August

**Italy:** 12-13 October (following the meeting on 9 June)

**France:** 17-18 October

**Norway:** 20 October

**Denmark:** 8 November

**Spain:** 14 November

**Ireland:** 23 November

For any further information on these events, please contact your Advisory Committee members. See also the article in *HELIOS Flash* No. 8 (November-December 1994).

## HANDYNET

As announced in issue No. 10 of the *Flash*, the production, marketing and distribution of the HANDYNET CD-ROM have been subcontracted to an independent organisation. 120 organisations applied for the tender documents and four submitted a formal bid. After detailed examination of the offers, the Commission selected HANDYCOM, a consortium of three organisations: Portsmouth University (UK) will handle the marketing, IMEXPERT (F) the production and Promi (E) the distribution.

*For further information, contact: IMEXPERT, c/o Yves Dambach, 5, rue Jacob Mayer, F-67200 Strasbourg, France, fax: +33.88 77 73 75.*



# mission news

## Measures:

- higher education (ERASMUS): financial assistance for universities in support of activities with a European dimension and grants for student mobility;
- school education (COMENIUS): partnerships between schools, including teacher exchanges and visits; education of the children of migrant workers, occupational travellers and gypsies; training for teachers and teaching staff;
- horizontal measures: promotion of language skills (LINGUA), open and distance learning (ODL); exchange of information and experience, in particular through the EURYDICE networks and by means of study visits for decision-makers in the field of education (ARION).

## Youth for Europe: action programme outside the context of education structures

Decision No. 818/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 1995, Official Journal L 87 of 20 April 1995, p. 1

## Measures:

- intra-Community activities directly involving young people: youth exchanges, support for projects developed and implemented by young people, and periods of voluntary service;

- youth workers: direct support for measures involving young people (such as study visits and training projects), and European cooperation on training youth workers;
- cooperation between national, regional and local structures in the Member States;
- exchanges with non-member countries;
- information for young people and youth research.

It is worth noting that Article 4 of the decision stipulates that the Commission and the Member States must ensure that at least a third of the appropriation for the first of the above measures is used for the benefit of disadvantaged young people, i.e. those young people who have the most difficulty taking part in the existing action programmes for cultural, social, economic, physical, mental or geographical reasons.

## LEONARDO da Vinci: vocational training

Council Decision No. 94/819/EC of 6 December 1994, Official Journal L 340 of 29 December 1994, p. 8

## Measures:

- support for the improvement of vocational training systems and arrangements by means of transnational placement and exchange programmes for young people in initial vocational training, young workers and instructors;

- support for the improvement of vocational training measures, including university/industry cooperation, with regard to undertakings and workers, by means of:
  - transnational work placement programmes for undergraduates and graduates;
  - transnational exchange programmes between undertakings and universities and/or training bodies;
  - transnational exchange programmes for people in charge of training;
- support for the development of language skills, knowledge and the dissemination of innovation in the field of vocational training by means of various transnational exchange programmes.

Further information (and in particular the list of national agencies responsible for the programmes) is available from the European Commission, DG XXII, fax: +32.2 223 01 50 (SOCRATES and Youth for Europe office); +32.2 227 01 01 (LEONARDO office).

## Other information

### *Innovations in Information*

*Innovations in Information* is a periodical providing information for disabled people and their families and professionals. *Innovations* monitors practical initiatives in Europe, and is published by the National Information Forum.

Articles are published in English, French, Spanish and German.

Sample copies and audio tapes are available on request from the National Information Forum, Post Point 202 C, BT Camelford House, 87 Albert Embankment, London, UK-E1 7TS, United Kingdom, tel.: +44.171 582 76 03, fax: +44.171 735 82 29.

### Conference on supported employment

EUUSE (the European Union of Supported Employment) is holding its second conference in Dublin (IRL) on 19 and 20 October 1995, on the theme "Supported employment - More than just a job?".

A seminar will be held on the eve of the event (18 October), focusing on social and vocational rehabilitation for people with brain injury. Further information: Irish Union of Supported Employment, Lower Eyre Street, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, Ireland, tel.: +353.45 31544, fax: +353.45 32707

### "One society for all - Learning from Europe about social inclusion"

An international conference on social integration is due to be held in Edinburgh (Scotland), from 11 to 15 September 1995. Discussions will centre on four main themes: combatting ageism, closing the institutions, design for inclusion and supported employment. Two-day workshops will be organised on related issues.

Further information is available from SHS Limited, 1a Washington Court, Washington Lane, Edinburgh, UK-EH11 2HA, United Kingdom, tel.: +44.131 538 77 17, fax: +44.131 538 77 19

### *HELIOS Flash:*

forthcoming issues

The next issue of *HELIOS Flash* will be a double issue (No. 12-13) dated August-October 1995, and is due out in mid-September. Issue No. 14 will be published in November.



# NGOs

## European Disability Forum

### • UN rules

At its seventh meeting, on 26 and 27 April, the European Disability Forum welcomed Mr Lindquist, formerly a Swedish minister and now UN rapporteur on the implementation of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (see footnote on page 1). The forum meeting was also attended by Ms Schmidbauer, Chair of the All Party Disablement Group of the European Parliament (EP), and Mr Magahy and Mr Howitt, two of the EP group's members.

The rules were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 December 1993 (Resolution 48/96). They are a collection of brief, clear and concise guidelines which look set to become an international instrument for promoting equal opportunities and upholding the rights of disabled people. They provide a conceptual reference framework and pointers for policy-making. Their implementation implies a degree of commitment on the part of governments and, crucially, the involvement of disability organisations. Mr Lindquist has been appointed as special rapporteur to monitor this process. He is assisted in his task by a group of experts representing 10 international NGOs of disabled people. The rapporteur's three-year mandate is to:

- assess the extent to which the rules have been implemented in the UN member States;
- identify obstacles to the integration of disabled people;
- respond to requests for guidance from member States of the United Nations;
- promote the exchange of information and experience between countries.

Mr Lindquist has written to 185 governments to request their comments on the UN rules. By the end of April, 35 had replied, among them only nine of the 15 EU members. A new questionnaire on six specific fields is currently being prepared.

Mr Lindquist also put a number of suggestions to the European Union, which could:

- encourage the efforts of Member States to promote the integration of disabled people;
- undertake measures based on the UN rules and the White Paper on social policy;
- consider the designation of a European regional adviser for the implementation of the rules;
- play a significant role in developing policies for disabled people in central and eastern Europe.

The forum unanimously gave a favourable opinion on these four suggestions and adopted them as a resolution. Its members also undertook to submit an account of the governments' responses to Mr Lindquist's questionnaire and the comments of national disability councils on the matter, an account of the initiatives taken by national councils to promote the implementation of the rules, and reports on any collaboration between national councils and governments for that purpose. The forum also established the profile of a possible regional European adviser on the UN rules: he or she must be a disabled person with a proven ability to negotiate at governmental level, and must be well informed on policies for disabled people in the EU Member States. The budgetary authorities will be investigating the issue of financing a regional adviser for the European Union.

## NGOs: Europrogrammes

### Newsletters

In *HELIOS Flash* No. 10, page 2, we mentioned the Commission's decision "to provide financial support for the publication of sectorial newsletters by the 12 coordinating European NGOs within the HELIOS forum". We should add that it was on the initiative of the European Parliament, and more specifically the All Party Disablement Group, that the decision was made to earmark an appropriation for these newsletters from the HELIOS budget.

