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Minutes

10th GA 1994

The European Union of the Deaf (E.U.D.)

MINUTES OF THE TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF DEAF PEOPLE
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 9 AND 10 OCTOBER 1994

1/94 Present

Knud Søndergaard	President
Terry Riley	Vice-President
Miguel Jimenez Mesa	Council Member
Dimitra Kokkevi-Fotiou	Council Member
Josette Rasquinet	Belgium
Maurice Hayard	
Mathieu Martens	
Klaus Jensen	Denmark
Arlette Morel	France
Rachid Mimoun	
Käthe George	Germany
Nikos Spanos	Greece
Helena Saunders	Ireland
Manlio Marcioni	Italy
Ida Collu	
Martie Koolhof	The Netherlands
Marjan Stuifzand	
Mario Moura	Portugal
<i>Luis Fonseca</i>	
Luis Canon	Spain
Feliciano Sola	
Gloria Pullen	United Kingdom
David Gomersall	
Johan Wesemann	staff
Angélique Nijman	staff
Susanne Carstensen	coordinator interpreters

Observers:

Lars-Ake Wikström Sweden and World Federation of the Deaf

Apologies:

Thomas Worseck Council Member
Asger Bergmann Denmark

Sign language interpreters were also in attendance.

2/94 Welcome and address

The President, Knud Søndergaard, extended a warm welcome to all persons present at this tenth annual conference. ECRS was now in existence for 9 years and next year we would celebrate the 10th anniversary of ECRS.

He was happy to see that more countries brought two sign language interpreters which would make their work easier. He hoped that each country remembered to give the papers to their interpreters before the meeting.

He welcomed the Swedish observers to this meeting and maybe Sweden would have an official delegation next year.

The President announced that the following day, the Chair of the All-Party Disablement Group of the European Parliament would come to the meeting to tell about her work and how we can use the European Parliament in the future.

3/94 Minutes of the ninth Annual Conference, held in Brussels on 6 and 7 September 1993

Helena Saunders (Ireland) explained that the Deaf Studies Unit (page 7 - Ireland) had not been set up yet, but that IDS was in the planning stage of doing so.

The minutes, circulated in November 1993, were approved.

4/94 Annual Report

The Annual Report September 1993-September 1994 had been previously circulated.

Knud Søndergaard explained that there had been many activities in the past year and that the work had increased. ECRS was in existence for 9 years now and the work had become more politically concentrated with the contacts with the European Commission and other disability organisations.

Many people are interested in telecommunications. There is much competition in the area and ECRS would need to look at the needs of deaf people. The Telecommunications Conference is taking place next month in Rotterdam.

TV Satellites programmes are expanding and ECRS needs to stay involved to ensure the introduction of sign language interpreters and subtitles on these programmes.

ECRS can support the work of each country in implementing the UN Standard Rules for Disabled People.

On 3 December 1993, 400 to 500 disabled people came to the Parliament's building in Brussels for the European Day of Disabled People. The results were not that big, but the meeting was a good start to manage change in each country.

Three big projects took place in the past year: the Management and Leadership Course took place in Bristol in October 1993. The participants brought a lot of material home and continue their work. The Council wants to continue this sort of courses.

The Elderly Conference took place in Siegen, Germany, in December 1993, and the Family Conference in Madrid, Spain, in July 1994. The resolutions from these conferences would be discussed later. The President expressed the wish that all member states would come to these conferences in the future and he thanked Germany and Spain for taking the responsibility to host the conferences. He also thanked the staff for their hard work for the benefit of all deaf people and he thanked the Council for the good cooperation in the past year.

The InfoBulletin had been changed in the past year. HELIOS II no longer funded publications. The Secretariat produced the InfoBulletin in English and asked the national member associations to translate it into their own written language. Almost all countries responded positively to this and it is hoped to produce 2 of such InfoBulletins per year.

Terry Riley, Vice-President, thanked the President and the staff for their work and he also thanked the Danish deaf association. Without this association, ECRS would no longer be in existence. He proposed that all countries would write a letter to DDL to thank them.

Terry Riley also raised the point of conference resolutions. He asked whether the resolutions were to be presented and discussed. He also asked whether the report on the bilingual project had been accepted.

Knud Sondergaard replied that the conference resolutions were always published in the Annual Report.

There was a lengthy discussion on the participation in European conferences and the reimbursement of delegates. In general it was stressed that the participation of all ECRS' members in ECRS' conferences was very important. Knud Sondergaard added to the discussion that ECRS would always pay the travel and accommodation of one delegate and one interpreter. Some countries stated not having received full information on this in the past, but this was not correct.

Knud Sondergaard explained why no financial statements had been sent out. The European Commission had not yet paid the final 30% of the 1993 subvention and furthermore the subvention for 1994 had not been received at all. This means that, for certain events (Granada-Year of the Family 1993 and Annual Conference 1993) delegates and interpreters had not been paid. Knud Sondergaard explained that the Danish Deaf association had been paying all running costs, such as staff's salaries. He promised that all reimbursements would be made as soon as the subventions were received.

Some countries complained that it would be difficult to explain this situation orally back home without any written materials. Without detailed background information it was impossible to understand the problem.

Knud Sondergaard promised that statements on 1994 would be sent out before the next Annual Conference and that he would provide better information next year.

The Annual Report was approved.

5. Reports from the national associations

Denmark

Klaus Jensen reported.

The Danish delegation thanked everybody for their support. The Board of DDL was very pleased to see its Director, Knud Sondergaard working so well with ECRS. There were 5 major areas of work:

- 1) There was no longer a distribution of videotapes, but special deaf programmes were now broadcasted on national TV (children programmes and news in sign language).
- 2) Research had been carried out into the working conditions of sign language interpreters. The outcome had been very shocking and had resulted in a radical change of the working conditions to prevent repetitive stress injuries.

- 3) A project being held in Uganda resulted in the foundation of a national deaf association. A seminar on sign language was held with 12 countries participating.
- 4) A sign language centre in Ethiopia was funded
- 5) The Danish association was now working on the standardisation of deaf education in Denmark at four schools.

Germany

Kathi George reported.

- 1) The German deaf association has 33 members in 16 Federal states. In 3 of these states sign language is now recognised
- 2) More than 1000 participants took part in a cultural festival in Hamburg in December 1993
- 3) The European conference on deaf elderly people was held, also in 1993 in Siegen.
- 4) DGB produced a resolution on cochlear implants
- 5) DGB was working on sign language on TV, on the recognition of sign language interpreters and on sign language in deaf schools.
- 6) A seminar on sign language linguistics was held in Munich in September 1994
- 7) A conference on Deaf History was held in Hamburg

In general, DGB had been very active, had achieved a lot of aims and was happy with the progress made.

Netherlands

Marti Koolhof reported.

A new organisation had been set up: NeDo. This organisation would work in project style. Three deaf and two hearing people would be involved in making policy, for example on cochlear implants.

The present training for sign language interpreters would stop in two years and a commission had been set up to look into the future training.

An Union of the Elderly had been set up.

Some research was currently carried out into the use of sign language of little children (1-4 years old) and this was already very successful.

Ireland

Helena Saunders reported.

A Women's group had been set up with funding from the social welfare.

A Conference was held in November 1993 "Understanding Human Rights of Deaf People"

In the framework of the International Year of the Family, a conference was held entitled "Families sharing experiences" and the report would become available soon. A pilot project was organised aimed at giving faxes to deaf people. Grants for this project paid for 50% of the costs of the fax.

Greece

Nikos Spanos reported.

The Greek association for the first time managed to obtain funds from the government to equip a small TV studio.

The HORIZON programme for training of deaf tutors ended successfully after 2,5 years. 10 deaf people are now working in this field.

Another HORIZON project, on research on Greek sign language, is still continuing.

The association supported various sign language courses.

A national conference on deaf people will be held with a subvention from the Ministry of Culture.

The sign language interpreters association now had its own office.

A written report was also available.

Spain

Luis Canon reported.

CNSE prepared a list of objectives and aims to be reached:

- to promote sign language in deaf education and within families
- to train deaf sign language teachers
- to improve the quality of deaf education
- to improve the sign language interpreters training
- to improve the spreading of information on technical developments for deaf people

A lot of activities were organised in order to reach these aims, such as a meeting of sign language teachers and a seminar on sign language research. Thanks to the resolutions of the latter, the university in Valencia expressed the interest to conduct some research.

A national conference on deaf education was held and the European conference on deaf families.

The Day of the Deaf was also celebrated nationally, with a big demonstration. A conference on bilingualism will be held in November.

An agreement was signed with the Ministry of Education to include sign language interpreters for deaf people in vocational training.

Belgium (Flemish part)

Mathieu Martens reported.

An international meeting in the framework of the HORIZON programme was held in January.

In April, two deaf persons were employed at the secretariat to organise educational work for deaf adults.

In July, a law was adopted that allows a deaf person the right to 18 free hours of interpretation in social settings. Also, for a maximum of 10% of the working time, a sign language interpreter can be used free of charge. Special provisions such as text telephones are now paid by the government.

In November, the news on TV will be subtitled.

Belgium (French part)

Josette Rasquinet reported

This report is not available, since the presentation was done in International Sign. The delegation did not bring an English speaking interpreter ~~was~~ therefore the report could not be recorded on tape.

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France

Rachid Mimoun reported.

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Portugal

Mario Moura reported

At a national conference various issues were discussed such as education, sign language, employment.

A new board to APS was elected.

Thanks to the training course for interpreters in Bristol, there was an improvement in this area.

A HELIOS seminar was held for the various disability groups .

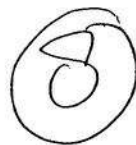
The Portuguese government is now funding the purchase of text telephones.

In November a conference on sign language in the future will be held.

Italy

Ida Collu reported.

In general, ENS worked on the same issues as the other associations.



Education of deaf children is still difficult, because parents usually place their children in mainstream education. Sign language is highly promoted by deaf people, because oralism is still very strong in Italy.

Training of sign language interpreters is being developed in various areas.

A project on sign language interpreting in universities is financed by the Ministry of Education.

On TV, there is now a daily newsprogramme of five minutes for deaf people.

Special equipment like flash lights and text telephones are now provided by the government.

The association has various active commissions: elderly, women, employment, arts & culture and youth.

United Kingdom

Gloria Pullen reported.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to minute this report, since the presentation had not been recorded.

6. Report HELIOS II

Johan Wesemann gave a report on the structure of HELIOS II (see summary in the Annual Report).

The double role of Johan Wesemann, being both Chair of the Forum and Director-General of ECRS was discussed. The future of these roles would depend on whether he was going to be re-elected as Chair or not this December.

Even though the delegates supported Johan Wesemann, they expressed their worry about his work for ECRS. Knud Sondergaard stressed that it was politically very important that Johan Wesemann was the Chair of the Forum, even though it takes a lot of his time away from ECRS.

7. Reports on ECRS Commission meetings

Knud Sondergaard explained that just 1 out of 5 commissions worked effectively.

TV & Video - Terry Riley reported

The European Broadcasting Union had a conference and a few items were agreed: ECRS should set up a pilot TV programme with various items which could be a satellite programme, provided in International Sign. The latter could be a danger, because of the misconception that all deaf people use the same mode of communication, so it should therefor be presented in all indigenous sign languages.

European countries are all trying to provide some sort of news programme for deaf people. Terry Riley felt that there is still a very long way to go in this area. Deaf people

are still way behind hearing people. The commission exists of 5 members of which 3 had a full time job. For this reason it had been extremely difficult to organise the meetings.

Women's Commission - Dimitra Kokkevi Fotiou reported

The first meeting of this commission was held in Athens, early 1993 and several problems were discussed.

The second meeting was held in Verona.

The third was held in Bonn, organised by Gerlinde Erkens and Kathi George. This meeting had been organised very well and the commission worked very hard. The statutes, drawn up in Athens and Verona, were changed into by-laws and a questionnaire on the situation of deaf women was completed. It was agreed that the current President of the Commission, Ida Collu, would represent the Commission at the WFD conference in Vienna.

Ida Collu reported further. She thanked the Danish deaf association and ECRS for their work.

Ida Collu stressed the importance of the work of the Commission which should continue to make people aware of the specific problems of deaf women. One of the projects of the Commission was the questionnaire and Ida Collu asked all delegates to spread this in each country. She added that the research would be carried out by a university.

Furthermore, Italy would propose to ECRS to organise a European meeting on the situation of deaf women. After approval of ECRS, Italy would seek for further funding.

Barbara Schmidbauer, MEP

Barbara Schmidbauer, MEP, Chair of the All-Part Disablement Group of the European Parliament, gave a presentation on the European Parliament and its work on disability issues. *(The full text of her speech is available from ECRS.)*

8. Report Elderly Conference

The report and the resolutions of the European Conference on Elderly Deaf people, held on 17-19 December 1993 in Siegen, Germany, had not been sent out. The delegates did not want to discuss without papers. The German delegate promised that the report and resolutions would be sent to everybody as soon as possible.

The report and resolutions of the European Conference on Deaf people and their Families, held in July 1994 in Madrid, Spain, would be ready soon.

It was agreed that the approval of resolutions would be done in writing by the members as soon as reports were received.

9. Motions

1. CNSE

The Spanish delegation briefly explained the background behind this motion. CERMI is the Spanish national umbrella organisation of disabled people. Members of CERMI are various Spanish disability organisations, representing a specific disability.

The Spanish national deaf association, CNSE, is not a member of CERMI, because the parents' association wants to represent deaf people in CERMI. This obviously caused a major conflict between CNSE and the parent's association in Spain.

The Spanish delegation underlined that this could also spread to other countries and could become a European problem.

Lars-Ake Wikstrom, the WFD representative, said that it was WFD policy that deaf people should always represent themselves and that hearing people could not speak on behalf of deaf people.

Even though ECRS could not intervene in national matters, it was agreed that it was necessary to take certain steps. It was decided that ECRS and DPI (Disabled Peoples' International) would write a letter to CERMI and so would WFD.

Motion 2: the motions of DGB was withdrawn

Motion 3:

After a lengthy discussion the name

European Union of the Deaf

was chosen.

Motion 4

This motion was adopted unanimously.

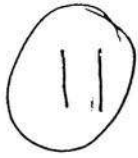
Motion 5

The following comments were made before it was agreed that Member States that can afford to pay more than 500 ECU's to EUD should do so. The Council would discuss a new motion for next year.

Spain: Contribution to EUD should depend on the national budget and therefore be proportional.

Greece: Deaf people in Greece prefer to focus on national issues rather than spending on European matters

Terry Riley was extremely disappointed by the responses of the delegates and added that if it wasn't for the Danish deaf association, EUD would not even exist anymore. The German delegate expressed her agreement.



Motion 6

This motion was adopted

10. Elections

The Council nominated Terry Riley as Vice-President. There was no other candidate for this function.

Terry Riley remarked that this was against procedures and that, if delegates would not agree, they could say so.

Miguel Jimenez Mesa was re-elected as Council member.

11. A national association to be responsible for the Secretariat in 1995

It was agreed that Danske Doves Landsforbund would be responsible again for the Secretariat in 1995.

12. Programme of action and priorities for 1995

Rachid Mimoun (France) proposed that EUD would fund a meeting of sign language researchers in France.

Terry Riley proposed to hold a small women's seminar, for example on human rights. This would allow the women's commission to stay in existence for the coming two years.

It was agreed to celebrate EUD's 10th anniversary with a cultural festival in Belgium.

Helena Saunders (Ireland) proposed to hold a meeting with national TV companies to discuss the resolutions from the TV Conference in Denmark in 1991.

Kathi George, Germany, proposed to hold a youth conference in Germany to be hosted by a section of DGB.

13. Closure

The President thanked all delegates for their active participation and the sign language interpreters for their work. He wished everybody a safe journey home.

There being no further business to discuss, the Annual Conference 1994 was closed.