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Minutes

9th GA 1993

The European Community Regional Secretariat
of the World Federation of the Deaf

**MINUTES OF THE NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS OF DEAF PEOPLE
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 6 AND 7 SEPTEMBER 1993**

1/93 Present

Knud Søndergaard	President
Terry Riley	Vice-President
Miguel Jimenez Mesa	Council Member
Dimitra Kokkevi-Fotiou	Council Member
Josette Rasquinet	Belgium
Mathieu Martens	
Asger Bergmann	Denmark
Arlette Morel	France
Rachid Mimoun	
Käthe George	Germany
Nikos Spanos	Greece
Helena Saunders	Ireland
Louise O'Reilly	
Manlio Marcioni	Italy
Armando Giuranna	
Sam Pattipeiluhu	The Netherlands
Bert Nijman	
Mario Moura	Portugal
Luis Canon	Spain
Feliciano Sola	
Lorna Allsop	United Kingdom

Johan Wesemann	staff
Angélique Nijman	staff
Liz Scott Gibson	coordinator interpreters

Observers:

Stig Kjellberg	Sweden
Lars-Ake Wikström	

Liisa Kauppinen	World Federation of the Deaf
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Apologies:

Thomas Worseck	Council member
José Bettencourt	Portugal
Klaus Jensen	Denmark

Sign language and spoken language interpreters were also in attendance.

2/93 Welcome and address

The President extended a warm welcome to all persons present and he specially welcomed Mr. B. Wehrens, Head of Division for Measures in Favour of Disabled People of the European Commission, DGV C4. He also welcomed Arthur Verney.

The President then presented the ECRS Council and the delegates to Mr. Wehrens. He said that ECRS was happy that HELIOS II had finally been adopted. He thanked Mr. Wehrens for the continuing cooperation with the Commission and also for the payment of the sign language interpreters. He then gave the floor to Mr. Wehrens.

Mr. Wehrens expressed the regret that ECRS, among other NGOs, could no longer use the facilities of the Borschette building because of an increasing number of internal meetings. He would however insist on the same conditions for sign language interpretation.

Mr. Wehrens then went on on HELIOS II and the European Disability Forum. He informed the delegates that the HELIOS II programme has been adopted by the Council of Ministers in February 1993. He explained how this new programme was constructed and that ECRS had a very important role to play in HELIOS. ECRS had been selected coordinator for six partners in the sector "hearing impairment", which involved a certain number of tasks, responsibilities and also opportunities.

Mr. Wehrens congratulated Johan Wesemann once again for being elected Chair of the European Disability Forum and he welcomed Knud Søndergaard on the Forum, being now the ECRS representative. Mr. Wehrens was convinced that these two famous persons in the deaf community would contribute to the success of the Forum.

Mr Wehrens expressed his appreciation for the different activities of ECRS, such as the work of the commissions, EuroSign, the bilingual project and so on. He also recognised the importance of the ECRS InfoBulletin, being a highly appreciated magazine in the European Community. Finally, he mentioned the first European Day of disabled people, next 3 December, which could have a significant impact on deaf people as well. After a short question and answering session, Mr. Wehrens left the conference.

The President expressed the wish to say some words to Arthur Verney. He, together with John McYoung founded ECRS in 1985. On behalf of the Council of ECRS, Knud Søndergaard handed over a personal certificate in which the gratitude to Arthur Verney was expressed and a European tie and a tie pin. He then gave the floor to Arthur Verney.

Arthur Verney thanked the Council for the certificate. He explained the delegates that he had started working for Disabled Peoples' International in London and that he was currently working on the first European Day of Disabled people, on 3 December 1993. This Day would hopefully become an annual event, at both European and national level. This year, there would be a European Disabled Persons' Parliament, composed of 518 disabled people representing the 12 Member States. The national councils of disabled people in the Member States were requested to appoint these persons.

Terry Riley asked Arthur Verney what the official link was in Europe with DPI. Arthur Verney explained that DPI is an all disability organisation. DPI does not recognise organisations for disabled people and focuses mainly on human right issues. The main objective of the organisation is the equalisation of opportunities of all disabled people. It does however not intend to take over any other organisation of disabled people.

3/93 Minutes of the eight Annual Conference, held in Brussels on 7 & 8 September 1992.

The minutes, previously circulated, were approved.

4/93 a. Annual Report

The Annual Report September 1992 - August 1993 had been previously circulated.

Knud Søndergaard explained that the past year had been extremely difficult and busy because of the delay in the adoption of the HELIOS II programme.

He thanked Denmark and Spain for hosting the EuroSign seminar and the preparatory Year of the Family meeting respectively.

A few delegates wanted some clarification on the coming Management and Leadership Course in Bristol. Johan Wesemann gave answer to the different questions.

Lorna Allsop (UK) expressed the wish of the British Deaf Association to receive information to be discussed at the Annual Conference in an earlier stage in order to discuss this within the association. Knud Søndergaard replied that new information could then not be included but that he understood this problem. He suggested that the Annual Conference could perhaps be organised later in the year (October), so that the papers are not received during the holiday period. It was agreed that this problem would be discussed further in the next Council meeting and that the delegates would be informed later.

b. Accounts 1992

An overview of the Accounts 1992 had been circulated previously.

Armando Giuranna (I) requested a more detailed overview of the financial situation, such as actual office costs (furniture et cetera). Knud Søndergaard agreed to send ENS these details later.

The Annual Report and the Accounts 1992 were approved.

5/93 Brief oral reports of the World Federation of the Deaf and of each of the Full Members.

WFD

Liisa Kauppinen, General Secretary, reported.

- WFD had been working in close cooperation with the United Nations on the disability programme of their World Programme of Action. This

programme was a very general one and the Standard Rules were more specific. Meetings were held on how the General Rules could be implemented in each country. Liisa Kauppinen stressed the importance for national deaf associations to work on this.

- last August, an international conference on bilingualism was organised in cooperation with the Swedish deaf association (SDR) and Stockholm University. More than 70 countries were present at this conference. Liisa Kauppinen suggested that information from this conference could be used in the ECRS programme.

- a report on the statutes of sign language had been published and included recommendation on who to increase the statutes. Liisa Kauppinen expressed the hope that national associations of the deaf would use this report.

Asger Bergmann reported further.

- he informed the delegates that there were four secretariats now and it was hoped that there soon would be more: in Asia, in the Eastern part of Europe and in the Arabian part of Africa.

- a manual on management and leadership had just been finished.

- the next World Congress would be held in Vienna in 1995 and an international youth camp would be organised in connection with the congress.

- at the next general meeting, Yerker Anderson would resign as President and Liisa Kauppinen would resign as General Secretary. The question raised who could replace them in these very important jobs. The WFD Secretariat was still in Finland, but the subvention from the Finnish government has stopped and it was hoped that funds could be raised to establish the secretariat in Geneva in the International Disability Center.

The Netherlands

Sam Pattipeiluhu reported.

There had not been any activity in the past year and the state subventions had stopped as from July. It was foreseen that a different structure that would protect the interest of deaf people would be established: an advisory committee with deaf people had been set up to look at this. It was hoped that the new organisation would start in 1994 and Sam Pattipeiluhu promised that new and exact information would be sent to ECRS in due course.

Greece

Nikos Spanos reported.

- the Greek Federation of the Deaf was participating with two projects in the HORIZON programme: a deaf tutors training and Sign Language research. Ten young deaf people were involved in the training and at the end of the year Greece would have 10 deaf Sign Language teachers. The Sign Language research would still take some years but it started very well. The HORIZON project was conducted in close cooperation with Durham University (UK) and the Center for Total Communication in Copenhagen. Nikos Spanos took the opportunity to thank Asger Bergmann (DK) for his support.
- the Greek Federation had financial problems but was working very hard.
- deaf people had the opportunity to buy Minicoms imported from the UK. Since these minicoms were very expensive, the government had been asked to fund this. The Greek government was not willing to help, but wanted to give hearing aids instead.

United Kingdom

Lorna Allsop reported.

- due to financial problems, the BDA had to reduce its staff.
- the BDA published the BSL dictionary.
- courses for hearing parents with deaf children had started. -
- counselling courses for deaf people were being developed by Aids Ahead.
- the BDA produced a number of information videos on different issues, such as "how to use an interpreter". "how to claim welfare benefits", "healthy eating" etc.
- the BDA was collecting information on Cochlear Implants.
- a bilingual project started in Bristol.
- a new post had been created: advocacy officer. This person would liaise with the local authorities.
- television news would be nationally interpreted as from October.

Belgium

Josette Rasquinet (Walloon provinces) reported.

- FFSB had organised a successful manifestation to maintain sign language interpretation on television.
- as from January, a deaf sign language tutors training would start.
- the financial situation within FFSB was very weak, there were no government subventions at all.
- a subvention application in the framework of the HORIZON

programme had been rejected.

Mathieu Martens (Flanders) reported

- a sign language interpreter training was established
- a national conference on deaf awareness and several study days had been organised
- in October, a HORIZON project would start in cooperation with Bristol University, for the training of deaf sign language tutors.
- a scientific survey on sign language would end in 1994
- FEVLADO was working on the recognition for the profession of sign language interpreter in Flanders
- a sign language interpreter service had been set up for all deaf people in Flanders
- FEVLADO was working on a management and leadership course.

Ireland

Helena Saunders reported.

- IDS cooperated in a HORIZON programme with the University of Bristol in a training for Irish sign language interpreters.
- a Deaf Studies Unit had been set up in Trinity College with the European Social Fund
- IDS had organised a conference on Human Rights
- an Irish Deaf Journal had been set up

Spain

Luis Canon reported.

- Luis Canon was elected President in October 1992
- CNSE now had 6 branches and established a good collaboration
- CNSE wanted to change the situation of deaf people and to do so it had organised a number of seminars to inform deaf people and to raise their awareness:
 - a seminar on sign language
 - a seminar on employment
 - a seminar on education and bilingualism
- sign language teachers meetings
- CNSE hoped to get recognition for sign language in 1993, so that the professional sign language interpreters would also be recognised.

Portugal

Mario Moura reported.

- APS had developed several projects, but the financial support from the government was very poor. It was hoped that, through campaigning the Ministry of Employment and social security would support APS.
- a new board would be elected next year.

France

Arlette Morel reported.

- the French government had, through new legislation, recognised sign language
- a new board was elected 4 months ago, so there was not much to report yet.

Italy

Armando Giuranna reported

- two deaf persons had been appointed in important positions: deputy in the Italian Parliament and town councillor in Rome
- by the end of the year two films would be produced
- 4 Italian television channels used subtitles for 6 hours a day/ 5 days a week for deaf people
- the first seminar had been organised for hearing and deaf parents of deaf children
- a seminar for sign language interpreters had been organised
- a sign language dictionary had been published
- the sign language interpreters association had elected a new president

Germany

Käthe George reported

- the DGB had been extended to 15 member associations of the 15 federal states and the German deaf sports association also grew.
- several commissions had been established: rights of deaf people, sign language teaching and interpreting, arts & culture, elderly, women, rehabilitation, cochlear implants.
- a cultural event would be organised in Hamburg coming October with 5 workshops
- as from 1992, German sign language could be studied as a language within the Linguistic Studies at University and also an interpreters

training had been provided at University level: full time during three years.

- the ECRS "New Regions" project had been very stimulating for starting the cooperation between East and West, even though this cooperation was still very difficult.

Denmark

Asger Bergmann reported.

- the Danish association had managed to obtain both sign language and subtitles on national television for deaf people
- the work within the association was expanding and there were currently 13 staff members
- a project in Uganda had been set up to encourage people to establish a deaf association
- an employment project had been set up because the unemployment rate among deaf people was 25-30%, mainly deaf women and young people
- two seminars were being organised on elderly deaf people
- an information manager had been appointed to focus on public relations

Sweden

The Swedish delegation was also asked to give a brief report on their activities in the past year.

- in 1991, Sweden applied to become a member of the EC. A referendum might be organised in 1994.
- SDR produced a number of video programmes and sent these to the deaf clubs
- SDR gives lectures on EC matters and already travelled all around Sweden to 30 places and there were 15 remaining places to go
- research was currently being conducted on the kind of status EFTA countries could have and SDR would like to participate in the activities.

6/93 Reports on ECRS Commission meetings

Telecommunications

The members of the Telecommunications Commission were mainly working on the organisation of the European conference on Telecommunications for deaf people that would be held next year, for the harmonisation of the different text telephone systems in Europe.

TV & Video

A written report was available

Women

A written report was available

Arts & Culture

This Commission was not yet very active. It had its first meeting at the end of August, but a report was not available yet.

Youth

The Youth commission had applied for subvention from the EC PETRA- YOUTH Bureau, but unfortunately this application had been rejected. The Youth Commission would need to look at alternative sources of funding to achieve their objectives, such as organising an annual general assembly with representatives of all the member states.

EuroSign

EuroSign had its first meeting in Copenhagen in the beginning of this year. The second meeting would take place later and a report would be available after this meeting.

7/93 Year of the Family 1994: preparations and follow up

A written report of the preparatory meeting for the Year of the Family meeting, held in July in Granada, was available. An amendment was made to this report: the seminar had been organised by the national deaf association, CNSE, in close cooperation with the regional deaf association, FAAS.

It was decided that the conference organised in the framework of the Year of the Family would be held in the summer period, to enable the participants to bring their children.

After discussion, Spain was appointed to be the host country of the conference. Greece would be the second in line, in case Spain would not be able to organise the conference.

A letter of the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS), UK, inviting ECRS to their European conference in July 1994 in the framework of

the Year of the Family, was discussed. This conference would be organised in cooperation with FEPEDA (European Federation of Parents of Hearing Impaired Children). The NDCS/FEPEDA requested the cooperation of ECRS in this conference. The delegates expressed the wish to have a separate ECRS conference, starting from a deaf perspective. It was decided that it was important for ECRS delegates to participate in the parents' conference, but that ECRS would still organise its own conference for which NDCS/FEPEDA would be invited.

8/93 Motions

1. British Deaf Association

The motion tabled by United Kingdom concerning the formulation of a policy on cochlear implants was not adopted. Instead of this motion, it was agreed that ECRS would collect information on cochlear implants as soon as possible, which would enable ECRS to formulate a policy. The Council of ECRS would prepare a questionnaire to be sent to all Full Members to do this. It was agreed that this questionnaire would also be sent to the EFTA countries.

2. Council

The motion tabled by the Council to withdraw from the World Federation of the Deaf was withdrawn after an open discussion by the delegates. It was requested that the Member States would submit any amendments to the WFD statutes.

3. Council

The motion tabled by the Council to adopt a new name for ECRS in which the word "deaf" would be mentioned was withdrawn as a good alternative could not be found. It was agreed that this would be reconsidered on the occasion of ECRS' 10th anniversary and that it might be a good idea for a competition.

4. Council

The motion tabled by the Council to delete Affiliated Membership and the Liaison Commission and to amend to statutes accordingly was not adopted because it was felt that due to lack of information to the background behind this motion, a decision could not be taken.

9/93 Determination of an annual fee.

The proposal of the Council to increase the annual fee from 100 to 1000 Ecus was not adopted. An alternative proposal was tabled to increase the annual fee to 500 Ecus. This amendment was carried. If this would cause problems for one of the Full Members, a letter would need to be sent to ECRS to apply for reduction.

10/93 The appointment of a national association to be responsible for the financial administration of ECRS in 1994.

It was agreed that the Danish National Association of the Deaf would continue being responsible for the financial administration of ECRS in 1994.

DDL was thanked for their support in the past year.

11/93 Programme of action 1994

After discussion, the following annual programme was adopted:

1. Conference - "Year of the Family" (E)
2. Conference - "Telecommunications for Deaf People" (NL)
3. Commission already in existence: Women, Youth, TV & Video, Arts & Culture, Telecommunications and EuroSign
4. Continuation of previous work, such as Council meetings
5. Conference - "Women", depending on the budget

12/93 Budget 1994

It was agreed that the Council would be responsible for this item because the budget for 1994 was not known yet.

13/93 Any other business and closure

A policy note on the quality of sign language interpreters at annual conference and other international events, jointly written by EFSLI and the ECRS Council, was circulated for information. The importance of national associations of deaf people to follow the example set by ECRS, was stressed.

Liisa Kauppinen, of the World Federation of the Deaf, said she was

very impressed by the work of ECRS and that she had enjoyed the meetings very much. She expressed the wish to cooperate and work together in the future.

The Swedish representatives expressed the wish to receive all information and to participate in ECRS activities.

Knud Søndergaard thanked the observers for their comments and said that they would be welcome to attend Annual Conference next year. He thanked the delegates for their active participation and their valuable ideas and proposals. He also thanked the sign language and spoken language interpreters for their work.

Josette Rasquinet (Belgium) thanked the Chair.

Being no further business, the Annual Conference 1993 was closed.
