

# European Newsletter 3 • 2002

## Letter from the European Chairman

The first issue of the European newsletter after the world-conference in the Netherlands is the first issue under a new 'management'. The previous European chairman, Herman Gresnigt, handed over his chairmanship to myself after the European participants had elected the new European committee 'by acclamation' during the world conference. Hermann did wonderful work for the development of ICEVI Europe by meeting the needs of and providing help for the Eastern European countries, by strengthening professional knowledge through organising teacher training seminars and by bringing Europe closer together through his openness and friendliness. We thank him for his contribution. His work encourages us to keep up progress on the European path and to further develop this unique association of people working in the field of visual disabilities which has the power to improve the educational system for all visually disabled people.

Herman was able to devote as much time as was necessary to the task of being European chairman as he had retired from his post as director of Sensis. For me, as his successor, it is not possible to carry out all the roles which Herman undertook because of my other duties as a head teacher and as the president of VBS, Germany. With this understanding the members of the new ICEVI European committee shared out the tasks and duties during its first meeting 10 - 13. October 2002 in Chemnitz.

We formed a new editorial group, chaired by Marianna Buultjens, UK, assisted by Marika Carlborg, Finland and Grazyna Walczak, Poland. Herman is still kindly acting as a consultant for his group. Responsibility for the minutes of the meetings and acting as a vice chair-person of ICEVI Europe is Marika Carlborg, Finland. Vladimir Radoulov, Bulgaria, had been confirmed as a second vice chair-person of ICEVI Europe, sharing representation of ICEVI Europe with me with the focus in Eastern Europe. Both vice-chairs and myself will be ex officio members of the ICEVI World Assembly representing Europe.

As you know ICEVI Europe has had a problem over lack of money because the previous sponsors withdrew their financial support. For this reason ICEVI Europe will in future have to rely on a membership fee system. We are glad and happy, that Mr Hans Welling will be the treasurer of ICEVI Europe and in this capacity responsible for fund raising. The office of ICEVI Europe will be at my place of work in Wurzburg, Germany, where all the secretarial work will be done and which will be the main address of ICEVI Europe.

In this issue of the Newsletter you will find the names and addresses of the members of the new ICEVI European committee, guiding ICEVI Europe through the next three years up to the next European conference in Chemnitz, 2005. Please have a look at the information on membership and note the procedure for transferring the membership fee. Join ICEVI Europe and strengthen it by your membership for the sake of all European visually disabled people.

Eberhard Fuchs  
ICEVI European Chairman



## ICEVI EUROPE

### International Newsletter

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# Integration of Children With Visual Disorders in Ukraine

Integration of children with visual disorders in Ukraine is developing intensively. Recently, it has been characterized by spontaneity, through the initiative of parents and public organizations (35%). The majority of children (55%) used to study in special boarding schools. This had positive and negative consequences. Positive consequences are: providing with special conditions, creation of suitable curricula, health and pedagogical routine, persistent correction of weak eyesight and et cetera. Negative consequences are: social isolation, losing touch with family and with children of the same age. It has a bad influence on the development of person, on social adaptation of children and their integration to the society.

Since 2000 scientific leadership of integration of children with special needs, including eyesight problems, is carried out by the Ministry of Education and by the Institute of special education of Ukraine jointly with the Pan-Ukrainian fund Step by Step, the member of the International Step by Step Association.

Owing to the support of Step by Step fund the experimental integrated education of children is occurring in 9 districts of Ukraine and in its capital Kiev (27 educational establishments). For purposes, mentioned above, the Project of social adaptation and integration of the children with special needs to the comprehensive educational establishments is being developed; training courses of teachers, instructors and organizers of the Project have been held; Regulations about integrated education of children have been created; 4 teachers' conventions have been held in order to bring together experts in different fields and specialties to solve questions of qualitative education of children with special needs; Step by Step has published a cycle of scientific-methodical and practical material to help bring about integrated education.

The main purpose is to reform the educational system of disabled children, to develop a mechanism to give children access to good quality education and to help schools. to contribute to changing society's views of disabled children. The realization of children's right to use all of the possibilities in quality education and integration, offered by society, is in the basis of the whole idea. It is guaranteed by the State National Program "Education (Ukraine of XXI-st century)" (2001 year).

There are programmes of total and partial integration.

## **Total integration:**

- teaching of blind and visually impaired children in class (group) of ordinary children of the same age.
- the classes of eyesight protection in ordinary

schools and kindergartens;  
- studying of group of partially sighted children in ordinary school.

## **Partial integration:**

- Blind and visually impaired children among their classmates in ordinary school for several times a week, or several hours in a day.

The first results of the integrated teaching are:

- children master their abilities of independent life and of new forms of behavior in the community;
- communicate successfully, and interact with other children;
- are encouraged to be active, to think critically, and to make their own decisions;- more possibilities for creativity and decision making;
- children study to be responsible for their deeds and decisions, to help each other;
- the social experience, positive social relationships and social support is formed;
- motivations and reason for studying is increasing;
- children become more self-confident and self-respecting, tolerant and sympathetic to needs of other people.

All this will be achieved by:

- systematic teaching and educational process;
- creation of positive psychological conditions for integration;
- adaptation of curricula and material;
- development of supporting program of children;
- mutual activity of the team - a teacher, an educator, a psychologist, a logoped, a social teacher, parents and mentors (supervisors) from the scholars.

Revealed problem, which need their solving:

- to definite objective data indications for integrated education;
- creation of individual curriculum, programs and methodical recommendations;
- organization of health - correcting measures;
- providing children by means of individual correction and rehabilitation;
- creation of appropriate curriculum;
- preparing for personnel staff, accustomed of volunteers.

The problem of integrated education in Ukraine is topical, the first steps which have been made, give an evidence about chosen direction.

Ludmila Vavina  
Institute of Special Pedagogies, Kiev, Ukraine

## THANKS

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On 1 August, during the meeting of the European Region, I handed over the chairmanship of ICEVI Europe to my successor, Eberhard Fuchs from Germany: a very special moment for me after 10 years of co-operation with so many colleagues from all over Europe, even from all over the world, of whom many became friends.

The participants of the Conference, especially the European ones, gave me a heart-warming farewell.

During the conference I received many beautiful presents, and after the conference many kind letters and e-mails, for me a lasting memory of 10 fantastic years, which have really enriched my life. It is a pity however that there was not enough time during the conference to meet and talk to each other more extensively and to look back on our co-operation during study visits, workshops and conferences and in many twinning contacts.

I would like to thank:

all of you who contributed to this farewell in one way or another,  
all of you with whom I co-operated during the 2 quinquennia within ICEVI,  
the members of the European Committee with whom it was very pleasant to co-operate.

Thanks, many thanks to all of you.

I wish ICEVI, and especially ICEVI in Europe the very best in the future.

Finally, as I wrote in the last issue of the European Newsletter:

To all of you: *au revoir*, but not completely *adieu* !

You can always contact me:

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Herman Gresnigt

**“Learning together”** by Mary Lee and Lindi MacWilliam describes how to create an active learning environment for children with visual impairments and multiple disabilities. It explains and illustrates methods that have been developed over many years, with children of all ages, at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh. Building upon their acclaimed communication programme, “Movement, Gesture and Sign”, the authors offer practical guidance on creating opportunities for children to make and reinforce vital connections with the world. The publication includes 150 illustrated signs from the “Canaan Barrie” adapted signs vocabulary. This book is recommended for teachers, speech and lan-

guage therapists, parents and early years professionals.

Learning together by M Lee and L MacWilliam. RNIB 2002 (ED291), £15.95 is available from the Book Sales Service, RNIB Customer Service Centre, PO Box 173, Peterborough, PE2 6WS Telephone 0845 702 3153 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm, Weds 10-6, Sat/Sun 9-4) Textphone 0845 758 5691, Fax 01733 371 555, E-mail cservices@rnib.org.uk

Book sales web page <http://www.rnib.org.uk/wesupply/publicat/booksales.htm>

**Keep in touch** with ICEVI world news by going to [www.icevi.org](http://www.icevi.org)

**Keep in touch** with ICEVI European news by going to [www.icevi-europe.org](http://www.icevi-europe.org)

## EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ICEVI 2002 – 2005

The committee held its first meeting in October 2002 as guests of the Vocational Training Centre for Blind and Partially Sighted Persons in Chemnitz, Germany. In our last Newsletter this Centre was featured as the venue for the next ICEVI European conference which will take place on 15-22 August 2005.

The meeting had a very full agenda covering a range of urgent matters including promotion of membership of ICEVI Europe, management of finance, contact persons, conference planning

and ICEVI plan of action for 2002 – 2005.

Karsten Hohler, the director of the centre, showed us around the extensive campus and we were delighted to be able to meet and speak with staff and the students as they followed their various courses.

Chemnitz is very proud of its long history and Karsten arranged for us to experience the traditional hospitality of the region of Saxony.

## Plan of action for ICEVI Europe 2002 – 2005

Taking into account the goals of ICEVI World it was decided that the plan of action should include the following:

- The European conference in Chemnitz in 2005
- A teacher training seminar in 2004. Solveig Sjöstedt agreed to be the coordinator.
- Raising awareness of ICEVI, distribution of material promoting what ICEVI stands for, recruitment of new members.
- ICEVI Europe to raise its own funds using a membership fee.
- Identification of contacts to support developments in Eastern Europe.
- Forming special interest groups, which can then organise their own seminars, workshops, and work toward sharing information and resources. The special interest groups would function within ICEVI guidelines, perhaps with a committee member present. There are already special interest groups in Europe eg in MDVI and Early Intervention and it is important to involve these existing groups. There will be a feature on the progress of these groups in a future edition of the Newsletter.
- Further developing the icevi – europe website by creating bulletin boards and other features.

### European conference, 15 – 22 August 2005

Preparations have already started. The host committee is headed by Karsten Hohler. The membership of the program committee is: Marianna Buultjens (content), Eberhard Fuchs (organisation) and Herman Gresnigt (organisation). The official languages will be English, German and Russian. The programme committee will hold its first meeting from 14 – 16 February in Wurzburg. The high standard of ICEVI European and world conferences sets a stiff challenge for

both host and programme committees for 2005!

Suggestions are welcomed for the focus of the conference and the topics for keynote addresses and presentations. Please send ideas and comments to Marianna (address on front page of Newsletter).

Remember that membership of ICEVI Europe entitles you to a 10% reduction in the conference fee!

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## Contact Persons

By now many of you will know who the contact person is for your area in Europe. When contact details have been checked the list will be put on the icevi – europe website. The contact person will play a crucial role in encouraging those involved in the education of persons with visual impairment to take up membership of ICEVI Europe. The health and success of our organisation depends on a thriving and enthusiastic membership! The Newsletter editors have set themselves a goal: each edition to contain *at least* one report or

feature from a different area. The Ukraine have the distinction to be the first! Who will be the next contributors? Contact persons are in a good position to know what is going on in their area. Surely there are important projects and interesting developments or publications? Share these with your colleagues throughout Europe by sending articles in for publication in the Newsletter. An editor's dream is to have too much material for one edition!

## ICEVI Europe Membership and Membership fees

Some of you will already have filled in an application form for membership. Membership entitles you to 3 copies of the Newsletter each year; free copy of The Educator.

It brings you into a community of people who are committed to the exchange of knowledge and know-how, the on-going improvement of staff training and expertise, and the continual development of the quality of education and resources available to persons with visual impairment.

**Individual** member:

- fee 25 Euros a year
- 100 Euros for 4 years

**Corporate** members:

- fee between 100 and 500 Euros per year, depending on the number of people employed at the school, institute, centre etc:  
100 Euros for schools etc without own budget  
200 Euros for schools etc with less than 100 employees  
350 Euros for schools etc with between 100 and 200 employees  
500 Euros for schools etc with more than 200 employees

**Individual** members receive 10% reduction in the European Conference fee.

**Corporate** members receive 10% reduction

- for 2 persons if they pay 350 Euros or less
- for 3 persons if they pay 500 Euros or more a year

### Method of payment

The international bank account-number (IBAN) is DE86790900000003318400 Please make sure that all the transfer-expenses are covered by you!. The fee must include the taxes in Germany too! The minimum fee of the banks for each transfer is 10,2 Please do not send cheques/checks! The fee for cheques/checks would be higher than the fee for individual membership. If you can afford it, please transfer the membership fee for 4 years, at 100 Euros (individual member) to keep the transfer-expenses as cheap as possible. Members from the Eastern European countries will receive a letter which clarifies the transfer procedure in Eastern Europe

## New European special education technology network

**SEN-IST-NET is the acronym for a new project that aims to establish a European communication platform and to create web resources for professionals in the fields of Special Educational Needs and Information Society Technologies.**

SEN-IST-NET presents a vision and a plan to establish a so-called European Network of Excellence to share knowledge between two communities:

\* Information Society Technologies (IST) - researchers and developers working in the

field of IST;

\* Special Educational Needs (SEN) – professionals, researchers, policy-makers, industrial enterprises and NGO's in the area of SEN.

A **dedicated web portal** has now been launched which includes focussed discussion forums and will host a Virtual Library and European Resource Guide.

Please visit the SEN-IST-NET web portal at <http://www.senist.net/>

## MEETING WITH N.C. BARRAGA

Conferences are aimed at presenting reports, participating in discussions, exchanging experiences. But they are also a good occasion for informal contacts- meeting outstanding people, who have significantly changed the approach to education and rehabilitation of visually impaired people. This was my experience when I met Mrs Natalie C. Barraga at the 11<sup>th</sup> ICEVI World Conference in Noordwijkerhout. I had known her only through her publications before. However, I had an occasion to get acquainted well with her programme of skills development , being a member of a team preparing the Polish adaptation of it. The first version was published in 1989 and the second one in 1997. Taking advantage of this , on behalf of the whole team and those who use the programme, once again , I would like to thank Natalie Barraga for her consent for free of charge adaptation of her programme to suit the needs of Poland. Natalie Barraga fascinates others not only with her achievements but also with her personality. She is extremely charming, kind , having a sense of humour , always enjoying life and as you can see in the picture, able to manage in unexpected situations.

Let me explain this: during the 11<sup>th</sup> ICEVI Conference in Noordwijkerhout Herman Gresnigt- the European Chairman of ICEVI- invited the members of the World and European Committee of ICEVI and those of the programme and organising committee of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference for a dinner party. This party took place on a boat going along the canals in the "Green Heart of Holland". As the weather was favourable, it was hot, the guests accepted the choice of venue with approval. However, by the end of the dinner party there struck a raging thunderstorm. Naturally, the guests were not prepared for such a sudden weather change. On leaving the boat everyone was trying to protect themselves against the pouring rain the best they could. While Natalie Barraga just put a plastic bag on her head and you must admit that even in that "exclusive" hat she looked extremely elegant, "every inch a lady". I wish all the readers to gain the same ability to manage in such difficult situations with as much cheerfulness!

Grazyna Walczak



### **Photos from the 11th World Conference (ICEVI- 27.07-02.08.2002)**

I would like to inform you about the new web site I have created, consisting of photos from the 11th World Conference. The address of this web site is: [www.cafeja.pl/beata.htm](http://www.cafeja.pl/beata.htm)

Beata Makuszynska, Wroclaw, Poland.

## 170 anniversary of the Aloys Klar School In Prague, Czech Republic

Aloys Klar school is one of the oldest European schools for people with visual impairments and shares its huge experience, especially in the field of vocational training, with other institutions in Europe very successfully.

A seminar was held on October 14, to celebrate this anniversary. There was an international audience and an exhibition which was hosted by the German Goethe Institute in Prague. Eberhard Fuchs, chairman of ICEVI Europe, took the opportunity to congratulate the Czech colleagues by a talk dealing with the expected development of special institutions for people with visual disabilities.



Vera Kovarikova, Head Teacher of Aloys Klar School, Mieczelaw Koslowski, Cracow, Eberhard Fuchs, ICEVI

### Award for “The Chatroom”

John Ravenscroft of VI Scotland has given presentations at the European conference in Cracow and the world conference in Noordwijkerhout on the work of his organisation and, in particular, the website for children. The efforts of all concerned in this development were recognised at the UK Computing Industry Awards 2002. VI

Scotland received the Special Award sponsored by Ability Magazine, a magazine for disabled computer users. The award was for “The Chatroom” for being a unique and secure way to ensure visually impaired children can safely use chatrooms. You can see all the awards at [www.computingawards.com](http://www.computingawards.com)

## Congratulations to Boguslaw ‘Bob’ Marek OBE

When you meet Boguslaw for the first time (and if you are not Polish!) he says: “Call me Bob”, and this is how he is known to many ICEVI members. He is also known for his wonderful work for young learners on tactile graphics and managing spatial relations (see [www.hungryfinger.com/](http://www.hungryfinger.com/)). On the 17 October 2002 he received an award for another aspect of his work: developing English-language teaching materials for blind and partially sighted students and training students to teach English to learners with a visual impairment.

This award is all the more amazing in that it is the ‘Order of the British Empire’ conferred by Queen Elizabeth on, as Bob says in his acceptance speech: “someone, somewhere in Lublin, two

thousand kilometers from Buckingham Palace”. In an email about his award, Bob wrote in his characteristic modest manner: “I am both happy and embarrassed about it (the award for the ‘English for the Blind’ programme which I set up in Poland more than ten years ago) since I have received a distinguished award for doing something which should be quite normal – giving talented totally blind children and students in Poland access to a foreign language”.

To read more about the award and see photographs of this happy event, go to [www.nctd.org.uk/news/bobmarek-obe.asp](http://www.nctd.org.uk/news/bobmarek-obe.asp)