

REPORT ON ACTIVITIES

May 2001 -- March 2002 *

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* From 2002 onwards, the report on activities will cover a period starting in March of one year and ending in March of the following year.

ADMINISTRATION

1. General management of EHF

The Secretary General, the Deputy Treasurer and the two EHF collaborators have weekly meetings in order to see to the daily running of the federation.

2. Board

President : Steinar Nilsen (Norway)

First Vice-President : Tryntsje de Groot (The Netherlands)

Vice-President : Marius Déés de Stério (Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg)

Treasurer : Werner Schultz (Germany)

Deputy Treasurer : Suzy Mommaerts (Belgium)

General Secretary : Georges Liénard (Belgium)

Meetings

May 2001 - Oslo

The Board met on 4 May, in Oslo, and decided to draw up a memorandum to the Belgian government that was assuming the European Union presidency for the second half of 2001. It also examined the accounts for 2000 and the budget for 2001, prepared the General Assembly 2001 and the seminar on “Civil society in Europe” which were to be held in Ostend (Belgium) in June 2001.

September 2001 - London

On 8 September in London, the Board decided to create two new e-groups to improve the circulation of information within EHF.

A group of experts was to study the European Commission "White Paper on European Governance" open for discussion until 31 March 2002, and to draw up the contribution of EHF on several subjects .

November 2001 - Brussels

The Board met again on 3 November 2001 in Brussels.

Henk Manschot had to resign from his position on the Board because of an increasing amount of work due to new responsibilities.

Several projects being developed on the theme of “humanism and democracy in Europe” were discussed and decision about activities taken.

March 2002 – Brussels

The Working Plan for 2002-2003 was adopted. The EHF contribution to the European Commission White Paper on European Governance was nearly finished. It was decided to draw up a memorandum for the Danish presidency of the EU that was to begin in July 2002, to make a study of discrimination against non-believers in Europe in order to inform the European Institutions, as well a study on blasphemy legislation in Europe.

The Board prepared the General Assembly 2002 and the EHF workshop, both to be held during the IHEU congress in the Netherlands, in July 2002. Preparation were also made to celebrate the 10th anniversary of EHF later in 2002.

The Board agreed on EHF joining the European Network for Peace and Human Rights and the Permanent Forum of Civil Society and to ask for official recognition from the European Commission.

The membership committee reported on the applications for membership to be presented to the 2002 GA.

The European Humanist Professionals and EHF had decided on a closer co-operation so that humanism would be better represented on a European level. As a consequence of this, EHP had applied for membership of EHF.

The Board agreed on signing the petition of the European Women's Lobby "Convention for the future of Europe – Where are the women ?" and the International Planned Parenthood Federation petition to change the abortion legislation in Portugal.

The Board issued a press release on "Death sentence for religious reasons" which can be found on EHF web site.

3. General Assembly 2001

The General Assembly was held on 10 June at the Humanist House of Ostend (Belgium). It approved the accounts for 2000, the budget for 2001, amendments to the bylaws, a new set of dues, the report on activities for 2000 and projects for 2001.

Bylaws

The GA approved some changes in the federation bylaws, in particular it was decided to delete the mention that the member organisations had to be members of IHEU so that EHF could therefore be considered as an independent body and apply for membership with international institutions like the Council of Europe and others. It was stressed that a new political entity was being built in Europe and that a federative body was needed to represent humanism on a European level.

The new bylaws are available from EHF secretariat.

Dues

A new set of dues was adopted in order to enable members to really support an efficient management of the federation according to their financial situation. The dues of consultative members which do not have a vote at the GA was kept at 50 euro a year. Four groups were created for full members :

Group I	3700 euro
Group II	1000 euro
Group III	500 euro
Group IV	150 euro

EHF hoped that more organisations with financial strength would select one of the top groups for their membership fee. Actions would be taken in 2002 to try and increase the contributions from certain member organisations.

ACTIVITIES

Activities have been set up and developed according to the Strategic Plan 2000-2001 and the Working Plan 2002-2003 adopted by EHF Board.

1. European Institutions

1.1 European Union

Citizens' Assembly 2004

EHF took part to the Citizens' Assembly that the Permanent Forum of Civil Society held on 13,14 et 15 December 2001, in Brussels, during the European Summit of Laeken. The Citizens' Assembly gives to Europe's citizens the opportunity to enter into a constructive and peaceful dialogue with EU Institutions and governments to create a democratic and inclusive Europe.

A Citizens' Assembly will be held during each presidency of the EU until at least the adoption of the next reform of the EU in 2004.

« Declaration of Laeken : Europe is our future »

EHF is among the signatories of this declaration adopted by an impressive number of European networks and presented to the Belgian presidency before the European Summit of Laeken. Civil society advances in it its demands to be closely involved in the shaping of the future direction of the EU and calls for policies which will benefit to everyone living within the EU.

1.2 Presidency of the European Union

Memorandum

For the first time, EHF drafted a memorandum of humanist positions for the European Union. It was sent to the Belgian government which presided the European Union in the second half of 2001 and was supported by the Belgian federal member associations, Centre d'Action and Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen, which also wrote to the Belgian Ministers.

The memorandum is available in French and in English and can also be found on EHF web site.

EHF is collecting information from its member organisations to elaborate a memorandum for the Danish EU presidency to start in July 2002.

Dr. Shaikh condemned to death for blasphemy in Pakistan

Please see Point 3.5

Appointment of the members of the Convention for the Future of Europe

Please see Point 1.8

1.3 European Commission

White Paper on European Governance

The European Commission issued in July 2001 a White Paper on European governance which contains a set of recommendations on how to enhance democracy in Europe and increase the legitimacy of the institutions (http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/index_en.htm).

A process of consultation was organised until March 2002.

An EHF working group has drawn up a contribution which has been posted on the European Commission web site : http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/contributions/index_en.htm and on the EHF web site (in French and in English).

Life Sciences and Biotechnology – A Strategic Vision

EHF General Secretary, Georges Liénard, who is also responsible for EHF Bioethics Network, attended a consultation conference organised by the European Commission, in Brussels, in September 2001. The Commission intends to present in 2002 a policy paper on life sciences and biotechnology which will contribute to the development of a strategic vision for the next decade and beyond. That initiative should take a comprehensive and forward-looking perspective and propose concrete actions in the short-term to meet the challenges of tomorrow and to contribute to the continued public dialogue and consensus building.

“Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society” (Coneccs)

EHF has registered with Coneccs, the database for “Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society”. One can find there information about the Commission formal or structured civil society consultation bodies and search a directory of pan-European civil society organisations representing a wide range of interests in Europe.

1.4 European Parliament

Dr. Shaikh condemned to death for blasphemy in Pakistan

Please see Point 3.5

European Movement - Belgium

EHF was present at a debate organised by the European Parliament and the European Movement- Belgium on “1 July – 31 December 2001 : a turning point for the European Presidency”

Seminar on « The Role of Religion in International Policy Making »

Three European MEP’s organised a seminar on « The Role of Religion in International Policy Making » in November 2001. Georges Liénard, EHF Secretary General, took part in it, along with representatives of several EHF member organisations.

1.5 European Economic and Social Committee (ESC)

EHF was invited as the European organisation representative of the European humanist life stance, to participate to several meetings in order to define the role and the contribution of the civil society organisations to the building of Europe. One key issue being debated is the representation of “civil society”. Important questions arise when trying to define "civil society organisations", like can churches and religions be considered as belonging to this category.

An interesting contribution of ESC to the White Paper on European Governance of the European Commission has been drawn up.

1.6 Group of Political Advisors of President Prodi

Audience

The President and the Secretary General were received on 11 June 2001, by Mr. M. Weninger, one of the heads of the Group of Political Advisors of President Prodi.

This new group (formerly Forward Studies Unit) has been assigned, among other issues, to deal with the dialogue with the churches as well as with humanist organisations, with the institutional reforms and with the relations with enlargement applicant countries

After the aims and the organisation of EHF-FHE had been explained, the memorandum to the Belgian government which was presiding the European Union was handed over.

Mr. Weninger called on EHF to state the humanist point of view on the main European issues that are of interest for its members and to become member of a task force.

“The legal aspects of the relation between the European Union of the future and the communities of faith and conviction – The role of these communities and co-operation for a common European future”

The Group of Political Advisers and the Initiative “A Soul for Europe – Ethics and spirituality” held, on 12 and 13 November 2001, a two-day on invitation only symposium on “The legal aspects of the relation between the European Union of the future and the communities of faith and conviction – The role of these communities and co-operation for a common European future”. A five persons EHF delegation presented the humanist stand on the necessary separation between churches and European public authorities and on the dangers of mixing up religion and governance.

1.7 Council of European Ministers

European Summit briefing meetings

EHF attends the briefing meetings organised after each Council of Ministers for the representatives of various life stances by the Group of Policy Advisers.

1.8 Convention on the Future of Europe

Appointment of the members of the Convention for the Future of Europe

At the end of December 2001, EHF circulated to the ministers of the Belgian government in charge of the presidency of the EU a press release from the Unione degli Atei e degli Agnostici Razionalisti concerning an Italian socialist candidate to the presidency of the Convention on the Future of Europe that would not ensure a genuine secularity.

“Convention on the Future of Europe : where are the women ?”

EHF signed the petition of the European Women’s Lobby which deplored the imbalance in the representation of women in the Presidium of the Convention (1 woman out of a total of 12 members) and in the Convention, and asked to ensure that women’s rights and interests are fully taken into account and to ensure the introduction of parity democracy in the institutions and bodies of the European Union.

Meeting with civil society

An EHF work group is drafting a document on the issues related to the Convention for the Future of Europe with a view to the meeting planned for June-July 2002 between the Convention and civil society.

2. Representing European Humanism

2.1 Permanent Forum of Civil Society

EHF attended all the ordinary meetings of the PFCS and the preparatory meetings for the European Summit of Laeken.

Along with numerous NGO’s gathered in Brussels within the Permanent Forum of Civil society, EHF has taken part in the drawing up of a frame document on how to build a Europe closer to the desires of its citizens.

It deals with three main subjects: democracy, controlled globalisation and enlargement.

Leaving aside the language of technocrats, abstruse for most people, this text aims first of all at defining clearly what it is concerned with, then it reminds the values with which the citizens want to have Europe function in particular to elaborate a democratic Constitution and to establish sustainable development.

2.2 European Network for Peace and Human Rights

EHF has joined the European Network for Peace and Human Rights that was launched in February 2002 by the Bertrand Russel Peace Foundation. The network aims at building and securing peace, guaranteeing human rights and protecting the environment. It calls for new concepts of security, nuclear disarmament, welfare not warfare, education for peace, ...

2.3 “State and civil society face-to-face”

EHF secretary general attended this conference organised by the Movement of Civil Society and the Free University of Brussels, in Brussels, in May 2001.

The European Union is studying how to get organised in a more efficient and democratic manner with the help of the civil society. This is a matter in which humanists have to get involved.

2.4 Humanistisch Verbond (HV) (Belgium)

EHF was present on 21st June, International Day of Humanism, when the HV awarded the 7th Prize for Freethinking Humanism to Hubert Lampo, defender of freethinking values, novelist and essayist, considered as one of the most eminent authors in present-day Dutch literature. His works have been translated into many languages and some have been adapted for the screen.

EHF took part to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of HV on 15 December 2001, in Antwerp.

2.5 Ligue Française de l’Enseignement et de l’Education permanente (France)

EHF took part in the workshop on the European Union that was organised during the triennial conference of the Ligue, in Bordeaux, in May 2001. There were many other workshops on various issues related to teaching, under the general topic “ To associate to do what”.

The participants presented a course of action akin to the one of EHF : for humanist messages to go through, it is essential to act in a concerted way on two levels with regard to the national institutions (parliament and government) as well as to the European Institutions.

It was noted that several federations (Fédérations des œuvres laïques) have undertaken actions in the frame of the European Union like exchanges of young people, development co-operation, ...

2.6 Union of Rationalist Atheists and Agnostics (UAAR) (Italy)

Fourth UAAR Congress

Suzy Mommaerts and Georges Liénard represented EHF at the Fourth Congress of UAAR in Florence, on 17 and 18 November 2001, the theme of which was “Religions divide, humanism unites”. They took the opportunity to meet with representatives and members of UAAR.

EHF Secretary General gave a talk on the actions and activities of the federation with regards to the European Union and on the White Paper on European Governance published by the European Commission in July 2001.

Conference “2004: a humanist Constitution for Europe”.

UAAR organised on 9 February 2002, in Rome, with the Società laica e plurale and other organisations, a conference entitled “2004: a humanist Constitution for Europe”. Georges Liénard gave a talk on “From the charter of fundamental rights to the European Constitution” and met with representatives and members of different Italian humanist organisations.

2.7 Human-Etisk Forbund (Norway)

Seminar “Towards a secular society”

Several EHF representatives attended the seminar “Towards a secular society” on 4 May 2001, in Oslo that dealt with freedom of religion and belief in Christian and Muslim cultures and with the rites of passage and family ceremonies in secular cultures and subcultures.

50th Anniversary Celebration of Norwegian Civil Confirmation

Several EHF representatives took part to the anniversary celebration that was held in Oslo City Hall on 6 May 2001.

2.8 Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands (Germany)

EHF presented a paper at the two-day conference “Challenges of biotechnology : social, economic and ethic problems” that took place in Berlin, in October 2001, on the humanist angle on biotechnology.

2.9 British Humanist Association (United Kingdom)

EHF board members met, in London, with representatives of BHA for an exchange of views and information in September 2001 and in March 2002.

2.10 Association pour la Diffusion des Connaissances (Hungary)

This organisation contacted EHF because they were looking for some young people from 17 to 20 years old to take part in a project called “At the centre of Europe” that took place in Budapest, in July 2001, all expenses being taken charge of.

The Secretary General had a meeting with this organisation in Budapest, in June 2001.

2.11 National Secular Society (NSS) (United Kingdom)

A meeting between the Secretary General of NSS and EHF President took place in London, in September 2001 and another one with EHF Secretary General in November 2001, in Brussels for an exchange of views and information.

2.12 Union Rationaliste (France)

EHF Secretary General had a meeting with a representative of the Union Rationaliste in Paris, in September 2001 to exchange views and information.

2.13 Mouvement Europe et Laïcité (France)

EHF Secretary General had a meeting with a representative of the Mouvement Europe et Laïcité” in Paris, in February 2002 to exchange views and information.

2.14 Het Humanistisch Archief (The Netherlands)

The Director of Het Humanistisch Archief, Bert Gasenbeek, visited EHF head office in Brussels, in March 2002, where he had an exchange of views and information with EHF Secretary General.

2.15 European Humanist Professionals (EHP)

There was a meeting between EHF Secretary General and EHP newly elected President, Freddy Boeykens, to increase the collaboration between both organisations which are the only humanist organisations on a European level. It was decided to work more closely and EHP would apply to become a member of EHF.

2.16 Nigerian Humanist Movement

EHF sent a message of support to the Nigerian Humanist Movement at the occasion of the First International African Humanist Conference that was held at the University of Ibadan in Oyo State in Nigeria, in October 2001, congratulating them and wishing them much success for their conference which dealt with “Humanism, Science and the African Renaissance ».

2.17 International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU)

IHEU General Assembly

EHF sent several representatives to the general assembly of IHEU which was held in Oslo, in May 2001. EHF President Steinar Nilsen presented a proposal of protocol between IHEU and EHF but it was not accepted by the IHEU GA.

International Campaign in support of Dr. Shaikh

EHF relayed and actively took part to the campaign.

15th World Congress

In the frame of the 50th anniversary world humanist congress to be held in the Netherlands, early July 2002, EHF has been preparing the organisation of a workshop on “Developing humanism in Europe”. It will deal with applying for grants and subsidies from the European Commission, co-operation on projects and influencing the political debate on European issues.

2.18 International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organisation (IHEYO)

IHEYO contacted EHF in January 2002. Gert Van Eeckhout and Suzy Mommaerts met the new IHEYO staff member Gea Meijers. Information was exchanged. EHF provided information concerning subventions from the European Commission and the Council of Europe for youth projects.

2.19 The Federal Trust (United Kingdom)

A member of Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands represented EHF at a conference that took place in Berlin, in November 2001, on « EU Enlargement and Integration – Linking Civil Society, the Citizen and the State », focusing on the need to ensure that civil society is linked into the process of EU enlargement.

2.20 Association for Gender Issues (AGI)

EHF was represented by Suzy Mommaerts and other members of the Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen at the European conference on “Civil Society Agenda for the Future of Europe”, in Brussels, in November 2001. The main goals were to analyse the role and input of civil society in EU decision-making and to reflect on the future implications of this involvement. Workshops dealt with conflict prevention, democracy and human rights; trafficking in human beings; enlargement of EU; e-privacy; aids, sexual and reproductive health and rights; EU’s development policy.

2.21 Conseil des Associations d’Europe (CAE)

The 2nd « Assises des Associations d’Europe » were held in Strasbourg, in December 2001. EHF Vice-President, Marius Déés de Stério, and Anne-Marie Franchi, Vice-President of the Ligue française de l’Enseignement and former EHF Vice-President, each chaired a session while EHF General Secretary gave a lecture on “Civil society and citizenship”.

2.22 UNITED

EHF is part of the network UNITED, European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees, which gathers more than 550 organisations from all European countries. UNITED publishes a bimonthly calendar containing detailed information on the action campaigns, a yearly «European Address Book Against Racism» which comprises the addresses of over 1500 organisations active in the field and produces material such as posters, brochures and leaflets, ...

3. Actions

3.1 Thinking freely about Europe

This cultural club recognised by the European Commission and supported by EHF aims at fostering, in Brussels, a network of people having close connections with the European institutions and at guaranteeing a permanent visibility for humanism among the civil servants of the European institutions and the public interested in European matters.

A lunch and debate is organised once a month.

Topics debated in 2001-2002

- Can European values be universal ?
- How have the principles of war propaganda been put into practice in recent history ?
- Information and communication technologies : which surprises does the future have in store for us ?
- Prisons ... and humanism
- Common language or Tower of Babel
- Reducing poverty in the world. A utopian dream !...
- The children of the streets, an item on the political agenda

3.2 Observatoire International de la Laïcité

It is a group for contacts and reflection created by the Mouvement “Europe et Laïcité”, the Grand Orient of France, the Ligue Française de l’Enseignement et de l’Education permanente and the European Humanist Federation, which were later joined by Europe et Laïcité Portugal and by several French liberal freemason organisations.

The Observatoire allows contacts between the various organisations and the exchange of information. Even if the first meetings were mainly centred on French issues (like the Alsace-Moselle status), the Observatoire has been widening its range of concerns and now studies issues like the European humanist model, citizenship or the role of public services.

Claude Wachtelaer represents EHF at the Observatoire International de la Laïcité.

More information and the report on the first enlarged meeting of reflection that took place in November 2001 can be found on the web site of the Mouvement “Europe et Laïcité” www.europe-et-laicite.org

3.3 Initiative “A Soul for Europe – Ethics and Spirituality”

It aims at promoting the dialogue between communities of faith and conviction on a European level. Since its creation, the Co-ordinating Committee has been chaired by Claude Wachtelaer, former EHF secretary general. The aims of the Initiative having been redefined and thanks to regular contacts between the Co-ordinating Committee and Michael Weninger, member of the Group of Political Advisers of the European Commission, who is more

particularly in charge of the relations with the communities of faith and conviction, a two day symposium was organised in November 2001, in Brussels, on “The legal aspects of the relation between the European Union of the future and the communities of faith and conviction – The role of these communities and co-operation for a common European future”, which was attended by about 60 participants, among which 5 representatives of EHF member organisations. The symposium was chaired by Michael Weninger and Claude Wachtelaer.

The proceedings are being published.

The Co-ordinating Committee is preparing the 2002 symposium which will deal with religions and convictions, mutual respect and contribution to peace.

3.4 Actions against discrimination

Dr. Shaikh condemned to death for blasphemy in Pakistan

Dr. Shaikh was arrested in October 2000 and charged with blasphemy for allegedly having said, during a lecture in a medical college where he was a lecturer in Physiology, that neither the prophet Mohammed nor his parents could logically have been Muslims before Islam was revealed to the Prophet.

On 18 August 2001, he was sentenced to death.

EHF wrote to the government of Pakistan as it had done in October 2001 after Dr. Shaikh's arrest. A letter has also been sent to Mrs. Nicole Fontaine, President of the European Parliament and to Mr. Louis Michel, Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs who was assuming the Presidency of the European Union.

EHF president Steinar Nilsen participated in a demonstration in front of the Pakistani High Commission in London on 10 September 2001. In his speech he urged, on behalf of EHF, the Pakistani authorities to release Dr. Shaikh immediately.

SeeChange Campaign

EHF is an endorser of the Seechange Campaign which is an international effort to open a review of the "state" status of the Catholic church at the United Nations. The Holy See, the government of the Roman Catholic church, should participate in the UN in the same way as the world's other religions do - as a non-governmental organisation.

EHF and some of its member organisations were represented at a meeting of the European endorsers of the campaign in Brussels, in November 2001.

Elfriede Harth, the European representative of Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), had a meeting with EHF General Secretary. CFFC which co-ordinates the Seechange Campaign, is an organisation that shapes and advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice, reflect a commitment to women's well-being, and respect and affirm the moral capacity of women and men to make sound and responsible decisions about their lives.

Spolocnost Prometheus (Slovakia)

Spolocnost Prometheus set up a meeting in Bratislava, at the end of September 2001, where delegates of humanist groups of the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia presented the situation of humanists and non-denominational citizens in the countries concerned, analysed the steps to be taken to improve and remove discriminatory treatment on national and international levels and drew up a resolution to be presented to national and international bodies.

EHF had sent some information beforehand on this issue.

Spolocnost Prometheus asked EHF to send the documents on the discriminatory situation of non-believers in Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic to all the governments of the UE member states and to European institutions and bodies concerned by this issue. EHF urged

them to see that the respect of the rights of non-believing citizens be taken into account in the negotiations with these three countries applicant to the enlargement of the UE.

A special English edition of the magazine “Prometheus” has been published on this matter early 2002, which EHF was asked to send to all the members of the European Parliament.

European Women’s Lobby petition “Convention on the Future of Europe : where are the women ?”

Please see Point 1.8

International Planned Parenthood Federation

EHF has signed the petition to change the restrictive abortion legislation in Portugal which leaves many women with the only option of back street abortion.

3.6 Conference on “ Civil society in Europe - Role and action of EHF-FHE and of its members ”

EHF organised on 9 June 2001, the day before the general assembly, in Ostend, a conference on “ Civil Society in Europe – Role and action of EHF and of its members ”.

After the welcome address by President Steinar Nilsen, Vincent Obozinski showed why this seminar was being held at the right moment because of the important projects being developed in the European Union.

High level European experts talked more particularly on science and society, on the precautionary principle, on good governance, on the Charter of fundamental rights and the future Constitution of the European Union (Georges Ingber), on sustainable development (Philippe Bourdeau), on the European initiative “A soul for Europe” (Claude Wachtelaer, former EHF general secretary). Georges Liénard gave an overview of the European actions undertaken previously by the federation.

4. Networks

Bioethics

International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (IBC)

The eighth session of IBC, held in Paris from 12 to 14 September 2001, was attended by EHF. Among the main topics of the conference, one can mention "ethics, intellectual property and genomics" and "protection of personal data" in relation with genetic data for which guidelines were proposed.

Life Sciences and Biotechnology – A Strategic Vision

Please see Point 1.3

Conference “Challenges of biotechnology : social, economic and ethic problems”

Please see Point 2.8 Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands

5. Communication – Publication – Video production

Aiming at a better co-ordination between the member organisations and EHF secretariat, different ways of communication have been set up and developed, in particular an egroup which links together the member organisations.

5.1 Egroups

The board decided to work only one egroup for the time being, a French and English bilingual egroup for member organisations to have information circulated, EHF draft documents examined and current European issues discussed. The main concerns of European humanism and humanists can thus be better defined and the most effective ways on how to act and react on a wide range of issues (ethics, human rights, environment, European policies, ...) determined.

EHF secretariat sends two types of messages : plain information messages and messages with an action intended, then a reply is expected with a deadline for it.

5.2 Newsletter

There were 3 issues of the Newsletter in 2001 and one in January 2002.

It is free and sent mainly by email.

5.3 Website : www.humanism.be

EHF has now its new web site in two languages (French and English) which is regularly updated. One can find the list of EHF member organisations, a list of humanist organisations in Europe and world wide, EHF latest news, main events of humanist organisations in Europe, current European issues being discussed, various documents and texts, ...

5.4 Brochure on “Humanism and Laïcité in Europe”

A brochure will be published in June 2002, in French and in English, and a Dutch version will be done by the Belgian UVV, on humanism and laïcité (secularism) in Europe.

Please see Point 6.2

5.5 TV broadcast on EHF

The Belgian French-speaking media organisation, La Pensée et les Hommes, broadcasted several times early 2002, on the French-speaking public television channel a programme on EHF and on its main concerns and activities.

5.6 Video film on EHF

A video film on EHF has been produced by the Belgian Centre Laïque Audiovisuel. It explains why EHF was created, how it is organised and presents the main European issues dealt with.

It is available in French but an English version of it will be made.

5.7 Video films “2500 years of free thinking in Europe”

Three Belgian organisations, Centre d’Action Laïque, Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen and the Centre Laïque Audiovisuel, are producing two video films on « 2500 years of free thinking in Europe ». Georges Liénard and Suzy Mommaerts are members of a group of experts working on the scripts.

These two films are being made so that they can easily be translated ; they will first be in French and in Dutch. They were intended for broadcasting on national and private television or used as a start for a debate.

EHF has introduced an application for subsidies from the European Commission for the translation of the films into other languages and for their dispatching.

6. Service to member organisations

6.1 MO Activities Database

During 2001, EHF started to design a database comprising information on all member organisations found on their website. This information is categorised with keywords. Recently, EHF launched a call to all its members to receive their most recent activity report. The information will be incorporated in the database.

6.2 European subsidies

There has been an active search for subvention opportunities offered by the European Commission.

It has resulted in three projects for which the role of the EHF is not limited to filling in the forms.

Brochure “Laïcité and Humanism in Europe” (Call for proposals DG EAC N°80)

In this 36 page two languages (French and English) brochure, the European diversity in the notions of “laïcité” (secularism) and humanism are explored by authors from all over Europe. The aim is to show what is common to these views and what unites the people of Europe instead of cultivating the differences.

The European Commission granted a subsidy in December 2001.

Projects on “Humanism and democracy in Europe” (Call for proposals DG EAC N°60/01)

They deal with the coexistence of humanism and other life-stances and religions.

1. “Humanism and democracy in Central Europe : coexistence of different life stances. Elaboration of a humanist platform for human rights »

The Polish Humanist Federation proposed to EHF to collaborate to this project of conference to be held in Warsaw, sometime in late 2002.

The celebration of the tenth anniversary of EHF would take place at the same time.

2. « Islam and Muslims in the European area. Europe between Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim Humanism”

La Pensée et les Hommes, the Belgian French-speaking humanist media organisation has asked EHF to collaborate to this conference to take place in Brussels, in November 2002.

“2500 years of free thinking in Europe” (Call for proposals DG EAC N°61/01)

Please see Point 5.7

A subsidy has been asked for the translation and reproduction of these video films.

CONCLUSION

Year 2002 and the next will surely be most important in the construction of Europe : enlargement of the European Union to new member states and a better taking into account of the interests of the citizens and of civil society.

With this in view, European humanists have not only to remain watchful, but must be able to act in close collaboration with one another, the role of EHF being co-ordination of action.

In this past year, EHF secretariat has benefited of the support and assistance of a greater number of volunteers and experts on European issues which are warmly thanked.

EHF has also received a large logistical assistance and important financial support from the Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen, from the Centre d'Action Laïque and several other member organisations.

Steinar Nilsen
President

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