

EHF Report on activities - 2002

This report has been drawn up for the period going from March 2002 to March 2003.

Activities have been developed according to the Working Plan 2002-2003 adopted by the 2002 General Assembly.

General Assembly 2002

The General Assembly (GA) was held on Saturday 6 July 2002, in Noordwijkerhout, in the Netherlands.

It started with a keynote lecture delivered by Georges Ingber, European Civil Servant on "Humanism in Europe, a matter of survival". He showed how vital it has become for humanism to be really and concretely present in all the European institutions and explained that the future of humanism on a European level depended on how well its standpoints and the values it promoted can be made to prevail.

The GA approved the report on activities for 2001-2002, the accounts for 2001, the budget for 2002, a provisional budget for 2003 and the working plan for 2002-2003.

The GA elected Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux and Vera Pegna as members of the Board.

The GA re-appointed Tryntsje De Groot, Georges Liénard and Werner Schultz to the Membership Committee for 2003.

EHF GA admitted 8 new member organisations:

- Dachverband Freier Weltanschauungs-gemeinschaften (DFW) (Germany)
- Delphi Society (Greece)
- European Humanist Professionals (EHP)
- Het Humanistisch Archief (The Netherlands)
- Sidmennt (Iceland)
- Union des Familles Laiques (UFAL) (France)
- Vrijzinnig Trefpunt (Belgium)
- Vrijzinnig Studie-Archief-en Documentatie Centrum Karel Cuypers (Belgium).

The minutes of the GA are available separately.

Meetings of the Board

- 3 March 2002 — Brussels (Belgium)

A Working Plan for 2002-2003 was adopted. The Board noted that the EHF contribution to the European Commission White Paper on European Governance was almost finished. It decided to keep on using the memorandum to the Presidency of the European Union, to make a study of discrimination against non-believers in Europe and another on the blasphemy legislation in Europe.

The Board prepared the 2002 General Assembly and the EHF workshop on "Developing Humanism in Europe" set up in the framework of the IHEU congress, in the Netherlands, in July 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 by the European Commission.

It was agreed to sign 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 the EHF web site (www.humanism.be/english/04act-discrimination).

- 5 July 2002 — Noordwijkerhout (The Netherlands)

The Treasurer presented the accounts for 2001, the budget for 2002 and a provisional budget for 2003.

The Board worked on the organisation of a two-day conference, in Warsaw (Poland), on "Humanism and democracy in Central Europe : co-existence of different life-stances. Making of a humanist platform on human rights in view of the challenges of the enlargement", in the presence of a representative of the Polish Humanist Federation. The Board decided to be among the signatories of the constitution as an international non-profit-making organisation of the Initiative A soul for Europe — Ethics and Spirituality. The application for EHF membership of eight organisations would be presented to the GA as well as two applications for members of the board.

- 6 July 2002 — Noordwijkerhout (The Netherlands)

Further to the GA, the Board appointed Werner Schultz as First Vice-President, Tryntsje de Groot as Vice-President, Suzy Mommaerts as Treasurer and Claude Wachtelaer as EHF representative to the Initiative A soul for Europe—Ethics and Spirituality and to the Observatoire International de la Laïcité.

The Board agreed to support the Norwegian organisation Human-Etisk Forbund which was going to take the problem of the teaching of religion in Norway before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. It decided to prepare a meeting with Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission.

- 27 October 2002 — Warsaw (Poland)

The Treasurer reported on the financial situation of EHF. The Board decided to draw up a working document for the IHEU/EHF joint meeting planned in December 2002 to define the remit of both organisations and a practical working method.

The General Secretary gave an account of the activities and meetings to which EHF had been represented, in particular of those concerning the Convention on the Future of Europe. The Board took the decision to draw up documents on subsidiarity and on sustainable development and to start a project of study of blasphemy in Europe with Humanistisch Verbond (Belgium).

- 3 March 2003 — Brussels (Belgium)

After having examined the documents drawn up by the Treasurer, the Board decided to present the accounts for 2002, the budget for 2003 and the provisional budget for 2004 to the GA. A proposal to increase some of the dues in 2004 would be made to the GA : the dues for consultative members raising from 50 to 75 euro and those for Group IV of the full members from 150 to 250 euro.

A draft protocol agreement between EHF and IHEU was approved unanimously by the Board. The Secretary General reported to the Board on the numerous meetings, seminars, conferences to which EHF had been represented and on the current and planned activities. The Board prepared the 2003 GA and the events that would be held the day before.

Composition of the Board

President : Steinar NILSEN (Norway)

First Vice-President : Werner Schultz (Germany)

Vice-President : Tryntsje de Groot (Netherlands)

Secretary General : Georges Liénard (Belgium)

Treasurer : Suzy Mommaerts (Belgium)

Members :

Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux (France)

Marius Dées de Stério (Luxembourg)

Vera Pegna (Italy)

European Institutions

EHF was extremely active in 2002-2003 in the European Institutions, in particular concerning the Convention on the Future of Europe and the future European Constitution which is being drafted.

All the documents mentioned in this report are available in French and in English from the EHF secretariat and can be found on the web site at www.humanism.be

European Commission

- White Paper on European Governance sur la gouvernance européenne

The European Commission issued in July 2001 a White Paper on European Governance which contained a set of recommendations on how to enhance democracy in Europe and increase the legitimacy of the institutions.

EHF sent in a contribution which is posted on the European Commission White Paper web site .

http://europa.eu.int/comm/governance/debat_fr.htm .

The main subjects to deal with are : the European Union foundations : values, rule of law — civil society — science and society — role of public sector — lines of action to reinforce direct democracy.

- Coneccs database

EHF has registered with Coneccs, the European Commission 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.

Since its registration into this database, EHF has received regularly requests for information or documentation, for humanist views, partnership, collaboration for thesis, research work, ...

- European Group on Ethics in Sciences and New Technologies

It is an independent, pluralist and multidisciplinary body which advises the European Commission in connection with the preparation and implementation of Community legislation or policies.

EHF took part in the round-table debate on "The ethical aspects of clinical research in developing countries", on the 1st October 2002, in Brussels.

- Directorate-General for Education and Culture

EHF attended a conference, on 7 and 8 October 2002, in Brussels on "Convention and partnership with civil society", invited by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the Commission. One of the main aims of the conference which brought together many European NGO's was to examine the kind of projects that the Directorate-General supports to promote European citizenship through education and culture.

- Group of Policy Advisers (GOPA)

The Group which reports directly to President Prodi, has in its remit the dialogue with Churches, religions and humanist bodies, the institutional reforms and the contact with the countries candidate to the enlargement .

The GOPA sets up briefing meetings after each Council of Ministers for the representatives of various life stances, among which EHF for the European humanist movement.

The Secretary General and Claude Wachtelaer were received on January 21st 2003 by the director of the GOPA, Ricardo Franco Levi and by Michael Weninger, in charge of the dialogue with the Churches, religions and humanism. They were told about EHF concern that a status might be conferred to Churches in connection with the future Constitution.

- Audience by Commissioner Vitorino

The European Commissioner Vitorino having been held up at the last minute by the work of the European Convention, the Secretary General was received on 29 January 2003 by the

Commissioner's Deputy Head of Cabinet. Documents drawn up by EHF were handed over to him, the necessity of taking into account the separation between Churches and the Union and of avoiding to make any reference in the Constitution to god or to values not shared by everyone being stressed.

European Parliament

- Committee on citizens' freedoms and rights, justice and home affairs

EHF attended the public hearing on " The respect for fundamental rights : situation within the EU in 2001 ", organised by the Committee on citizens' freedoms and rights, justice and home affairs of the European Parliament.

The Secretary General had a meeting with Olga Zrihen, member of the European Parliament in order to prepare an action concerning the representation of Churches in the EU.

- Spolocnost Prometheus

On behalf of Spolocnost Prometheus (Slovakia), EHF sent an issue of the special edition of their magazine "Prometheus" to all the members of the European Parliament in Brussels. It presents the discriminations against of non-believers in Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic. EHF asked 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.

Several members of the European Parliament have answered the mail from EHF and the European Commission replied to a written question from member of Parliament Glyn Ford. Günter Verheugen, European Commissioner to the enlargement, gave the following answer, on 28 June 2002 : " Respect of human rights, including non-discrimination, is among those essential political criteria that candidate countries must fulfil in order to become members of the Union. The treatment of non-denominational citizens and non-governmental organisations representing non-denomi-national life stances has to match with those principles ".

European Economic and Social Committee (ESC)

- Forum of civil society

The ESC regularly gets together European NGO's and organisations to debate on the numerous topics dealt with by the European Commission. EHF has sent in several of the documents drawn up for the Commission or for the Convention.

- Sustainable development

EHF attended a stakeholder forum on "Sustainable development in the European Union", organised by the ESC and the European Commission on 12 and 13 September 2002.

This event followed the Johannesburg international conference on the same subject.

The President of the European Commission R. Prodi, the President of the European Parliament P. Cox and the temporary Presidency of the EU (Denemark) have also insisted on the necessity for the EU to adopt a resolutely innovative policy in this matter taking into account the interests of the

developing countries too. This agrees with the requirements of EHF.

EHF took part, on 25 November 2002, to the seminar of the Parliamentary Group of the Party of European Socialists, on "Public services and sustainable development", set up to prepare the contribution of this Group to the European Convention

Council of Europe

IHEU is the recognised humanist NGO of the Council of Europe, the representatives of which are Marius Dées de Stério and Georges Liénard, both being members of the EHF Board. The activities mentioned in this report are the ones in which EHF took part as such.

- Commissioner for Human Rights

In November 2002, the Secretary General met with Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, to talk about the respect of human rights concerning the discrimination between believers and non-believers in the countries of the European Union as well as in candidate countries.

He was reminded of the case of Slovakia. The special edition of the magazine "Prometheus" of Spolocnost Prometheus had been sent to him at the beginning of 2002. The Commissioner promised he would use this information when dealing with issues of relations between states and religious and non-denominational communities.

The organisation of a European seminar on the subject of "The exercise of the right to freedom of thought and of conscience in relation with the right to religious freedom" has been considered. EHF member organisations have been consulted and eight of them have shown an interest in participating as well as several organisations not members but in relation with EHF.

- Citizens Forum

EHF was present at the forum organised, on 4 and 5 November 2002, in Strasbourg, on "NGO's — Key players in democratic governance ". The general trends in Europe towards a greater involvement of civil society organisations in democratic policy making and the conditions and ways for empowering NGO's with a view to establishing participatory democracy were discussed.

- European Court of Human Rights

At the request of the Norwegian organisation Human-Etisk Forbund, FHE has sent a letter to the European Court of Human Rights of the Council of Europe, to support the action that Human-Etisk Forbund had brought concerning the teaching of religion in Norwegian schools.

Convention for the Future of Europe

Created following the Laeken European Council in December 2001, the European Convention brings together representatives of governments, national parliaments, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Its purpose is to propose a new framework and new structures for the European Union which are geared to changes in the world situation, the needs of the citizens of Europe and the future development of the European Union.

Its deliberations are public and its documents are available to the public on <http://european-convention.eu.int>

The Convention is drafting a European Constitution. A preliminary project was presented in October 2002.

Organisations representing civil society can contribute to the debate.

The EHF working group has drawn up several documents. EHF main concern is to see that the future Constitution is in no way discriminatory according to the religious or philosophical convictions and that it is inspired by the principles of secularism of society.

- Public hearing at the European Parliament (June 2002)

In order to prepare the public hearing of NGO's by the Convention, contact groups had been established to allow for an exchange of views with specific sectors of civil society.

EHF representatives took part in the work of the contact groups on culture, on human rights and on citizens and institutions.

EHF drew up, for the plenary session of the Convention, a document on "Communities of faith and conviction convictions and the European Union ".

The representatives of the Catholic Church set out the position of the COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conference of the European Community) that had been much mentioned in the media and heavily backed by the Pope. The catholic bishops demanded asked that god and transcendence were mentioned in the preamble of a future Constitutional Treaty.

EHF expressed its refusal of this and pointed out that contrary to what COMECE claims, Churches do not represent the citizens at all.

The rapporteur of the group on culture was thus forced to explicitly state the EHF standpoint at the hearing of the plenary session and his report does not mention the bishops' demand.

Agence Europe mentioned the EHF standpoint in its bulletin of 24 June 2002 stating that EHF requested the Convention to avoid any discrimination between confessional and non-confessional convictions, that it was opposed to any mention, in the text of the future constitutional treaty, of god or to any mention of a religious tradition, that referring to the wars of religion, EHF said that to recall a religious heritage in order to found Europe, is to forget that religions have been and are still a factor of division between peoples, vectors of intolerance in the name of a truth, which is called the "only one" by each and every religion and that it could be simply and clearly stated that "the Union is based on the indivisible and universal principles of human dignity, on liberty, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of Law".

- Contributions to the Convention

All along the year 2002, EHF has been very present in numerous meetings and events, EHF has gathered information and held regular meetings to study this information and to draw up documents presenting the humanist points of view.

One must point out the outstanding work of the work group on European issues, composed of volunteers particularly competent in these matters, which studied and drew up the documents.

Moreover, EHF and several member organisations presented the evolution of the work of Convention and the humanist positions developed by EHF, at talks and conferences.

Conferences, talks and documents

Conferences

In 2002-2003 EHF set up two activities with a financial support of the European Commission which treated of the co-existence of different religious and humanist communities in the European area (Warsaw in October 2002 and Brussels in March 2003).

ROME (Italy), February 2002 — "A humanist Constitution for Europe"

EHF Secretary General gave a talk on "From the Charter of fundamental rights to the European Constitution" at the conference that the Società laica e plurale organised with the Unione degli Atei e degli Agnostici Razionalisti (UAAR) and many other organisations

ROME (Italy), March 2002 — "Convention on the Future of Europe and the European Constitution"

Vera Pegna, UAAR National Vice-Secretary, represented EHF at a conference organised by the Evangelical Cultural Center. She set out the main points of the EHF contribution to the White Paper on European Governance.

NOORDWIJCKERHOUT (The Netherlands), July 2002 - Workshop on "Developing Humanism in Europe", organised in connection with the IHEU congress

In the first part of the workshop, it was shown how to apply for subventions from the European Commission which should be done with the utmost accuracy. A document on this is available from the EHF secretariat.

The second part was dedicated to European humanists in action.

The European Commission is in a process of consulting civil society. EHF and its member organisations have thus an increased possibility to intervene. Now they can have a say in European matters and therefore shape and construct a Europe in which humanism is taken into account.

DELPHI (Greece), September 2002 — "Ecological Dynamics and Human Nature — The risk of a mass extinction of life on the planet "

Steinar Nilsen, EHF President, gave a talk during this conference organised among others by the Delphi Society. The text of his talk " We who kill for peace " can be read on www.humanism.be/english. He also chaired a session that dealt with " The Philosophical Approach" and took part to the panel for the conclusions.

EHF Treasurer, Suzy Mommaerts, also took part to this congress as President of the Vrijzinnig Trefpunt.

PALERMO (Italy), September 2002 - "Faith and Culture within Conflict and Dialogue"

Vera Pegna, member of the EHF Board and national Vice-Secretary of UAAR, presented a paper at a conference during which the introduction of god and the Christian heritage into the European Constitution was dealt with. Her paper is on www.humanism.be

WARSAW (Poland) LIEN !!! October 2002 - ." Humanism and democracy in Central Europe : co-existence of different life stances"

EHF and the Polska Federacja Humanistyczna (Poland) organised together a two-day conference with the financial support of the European Commission. The first day was devoted to "Human rights and freedoms in the Constitution of the European Union. A humanist platform on human rights in view of the challenges of the enlargement was drawn up.

The second day set up by EHF dealt with discriminations in law and practice as well as with the different possible solutions on a national and a European level.

The proceedings of this conference are to be published.

10th ANNIVERSARY OF EHF

EHF was officially constituted in 1992, the year of the publications of its bylaws. Its 10th anniversary was celebrated in Warsaw, on 26 October 2002, in the symbolic place that is the Parliament of Poland.

On the programme, speech by EHF President, Steinar Nilsen, and by EHF first Secretary General, Claude Wachtelaer, followed by a convivial and festive meal in a restaurant in Warsaw.

BRUSSELS (Belgium), October 2002 — "Giving a chance to dialogue : the role of communities of faith and conviction for a mutual understanding in the cities of Europe today"

The Group of Political Advisers of the European Commission and the Initiative "A Soul for Europe — Ethics and spirituality"(the presidency of which is held by Claude Wachtelaer on behalf of EHF) organised an on invitation only symposium, in a European Commission building.

An EHF delegation attended it and presented the humanist positions (V. Pegna, G. Liénard, L. Mateus, M. Ambrus). W. Schulz gave a talk on the learning of tolerance.

C. Wachtelaer co-chaired the symposium, the proceedings of which are to be published.

BRUSSELS (Belgium), October 2002 — "The European State : from the Convention to... a Constitution?"

What interest in mentioning or not mentioning a reference to a transcendence in the future Constitution of Europe ? (European Parliament)

Georges Liénard presented a paper at this conference, organised by the Group Avicenne, "Facing the Churches' institutional desire" and defended the principle of neutrality of public authorities and the separation between Churches and State. The proceedings of the conference have been

published in "La Revue Nouvelle" of March 2003.

LICHTENFELS (Germany), January 2003.- "Für ein Europa der Bürger "

The Secretary general presented a paper on the European Convention at a conference organised by the Dachverband Freier Weltanschauungsgemeinschaften

BRUSSELS (Belgium), March 2003 - "Islam and Muslims in the European area. Europe between Islamic fundamentalism and Muslim Humanism" (European Parliament)

This conference was co-organised by EHF and la Pensée et les Hommes, the Belgian French-speaking humanist media organisation and received a financial support from the European Commission.

During two days, 22 speakers examined the various aspects of the issue, in particular what concerns the citizens of Muslim origin in Europe, the emergence of a political Islam, the different attitudes of Islam facing secularism, problems linked to teaching, to the women's condition, to fundamentalism ...

The Secretary General presented a contribution "The reference to religions in the European States". President Nilsen chaired the closing of the conference.

The proceedings will be published.

Publications

"Humanism and laicity in Europe" — "Laïcité et humanisme en Europe "

Another issue of the brochures "A Key to Humanism in Europe" came out of press in June 2002. In this 36 page brochure, the European diversity in the notions of laicity and humanism is explored by different authors. The aim is to show what is common to these views and what unites the people of Europe instead of cultivating the differences.

It has been published with the financial support of the European Commission. It is available in French and in English.

" Vrijzinnigheid en humanisme in Europa "

The Humanistisch Verbond (Belgium) and the Vrijzinnige Koepel, in collaboration with EHF, have published a Dutch version of the brochure "Humanism and laicity in Europe" to which a few more texts have been added.

These brochures are available from EHF for 3 euro plus postage.

Proceedings

The proceedings of several conferences organised in collaboration with EHF or to which EHF member organisations have contributed have been published, anniversary, Avicenne, Islam, dialogue, Delphi, Spolocnost, subvention, Dachverband, Warsaw

Documents

All the documents can be found on the EHF web site www.humanism.be and are available from the EHF office in French and in English.

Contribution to the White paper on European Governance

Published in March 2002, the document lists the fundamental principles on which a democratic European Union must be based.

Civil society and the European Union

Circulated at the 2nd (May 2002) Session of information and dialogue on the European Convention of the European Economic and Social Committee.

Contribution to the Convention on the Future of Europe

Sent in June 2002 to the members of the Convention.

- EHF considers that a new article of the Treaty should recognise the consultative role of civil society organisations, offering them a structured communication channel independent from socio-economic partners.
- a democratic legitimacy is indispensable within the organisations requesting their recognition.
- the Union should not discriminate between citizens according to their philosophical and religious convictions. Churches should thus not be given a special status within the European institutions.
- EHF proposes that a structured dialogue be set up between civil society and the European institutions under the political responsibility of the European Parliament.

Communities of faith and conviction and the European Union

Presented in June 2002 at the hearing of the organisations of civil society by the Convention.

- good European governance must ensure that the legislation and the practice concerning the Churches and the religions in the countries of the European Union are not likely to be discriminatory with regards to all the citizens, in respect of article 13 of the Treaty.
- the Union separates religion and governance. It is not concerned with the specific contributions that Churches can bring to their members.
- the Union invites the Churches to promote dialogue between them, to give up proselytism and to avoid resorting to the concept of religious identity which still stirs up so many conflicts.
- the Union cannot take any stand with regards to the citizens by seeking its legitimacy in religion or in an invocation to god.
- the European Union must not set any discrimination between the convictions of the citizens who believe in heaven and of those who do not.

Second contribution to the Convention

Sent in March 2003 to the members of the Convention

- sustainable development durable
- neutrality of the institutions of the Union
- science and society
- public services and services of general interest
- subsidiarity

Relations with the organisations

- *Meetings*

The President of the Ligue Française de l'Enseignement et de l'Education permanente and several members of the Board received EHF Secretary General for an exchange of views and of information, in Paris, in May 2002.

The Secretary General met, at the EHF head office in Brussels, 13 September 2002, with a delegation of the Union des Familles Laïques (UFAL).

EHF Board members met in London, in March 2002, with representatives of the British Humanist Association for an exchange of views and of d'information.

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 of information with the Secretary General.

The European Humanist Professionals (EHP) and EHF regularly meet and contact each other to exchange information and co-ordinate humanist actions on a European level.

The Secretary General had a meeting, on 17 September 2002, with H. Kunneman, President of the Humanistisch Alliantie, a Dutch co-ordination organisation, in order to examine the projects of both organisations.

Suzy Mommaerts attended a humanist lecture at the free university of Brussels (VUB), on 21 June 2002, International Day of Humanism.

She also attended, on 16 November 2002, the International Day of Tolerance held in the university of Antwerp.

EHF President Steinar Nilsen, Secretary General Georges Liénard and Claude Wachtelaer represented EHF to meetings with an IHEU delegation (15 December 2002 in Brussels and 15 February 2003 in London) in order to draft an agreement protocol between both organisations. The document was adopted by the IHEU Executive Committee and by EHF Board in March 2002 and will be circulated during the General Assembly.

In January 2002, Gert Van Eeckhout and Suzy Mommaerts met with Gea Meijers, IHEYO staff member, to exchange information. EHF also gave her information on the European Commission and the Council of Europe subventions for youth projects. At another meeting in March 2003, Gea

Meijers, Frederik Dezutter (IHEYO Board member and UVV staff member), Gert Van Eeckhout and Suzy Mommaerts examined co-operation possibilities.

The Secretary General received at the Brussels EHF head office, the President of the Swedish Humanist organisation, Carl-Johan Kleberg, for an exchange of views and of information.

The National Secular Society (NSS) (United Kingdom) and EHF have regular contacts and exchanges of information. Such a co-ordination was particularly useful concerning a conference at the University of Newcastle on the subject of "Practical legal framework for faith in the EU", which NSS was very keen to attend.

- *Member organisations database*

Since 2001, EHF has been working on a database of information on all the member organisations. The information comes from the web sites and from the reports on activities received in 2002.

Member organisations received, at the beginning of 2003, a request for further information intended to the directory which will contain a presentation of the organisations, of their field of action, of their main activities, their address, ...

- *External relations*

 - *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 Russell 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, ...

George Liénard attended the June 2002 meeting of the Liaison Committee in the European Parliament which dealt, among other items, with the analysis of current conflicts and on how to react, of the arms lobbies. How the EU could get organised to maintain peace was also discussed.

 - *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, ...

 - *Darwin Day Program*

EHF has signed the support list for the Darwin Day Program which organises and co-ordinates activities and events related to Darwin and to the theory of evolution (www.darwinday.org).

 - *IARF*

The Secretary General has met with the President of the "International Association for Religious Freedom", E. van Herwijnen . This organisation is composed of members of a liberal protestant Church and of other non-religious people. It defends freedom of religion and of conscience and is preparing a religious education project in the respect of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Circulation of information

- Internet

The EHF web site www.humanism.be is in two languages (French and English). It 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, ...

Of course, all the contributions that EHF has drawn up for the Convention on the Future of Europe can be found on it.

- 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. Among the topics that were debated :

- The children of the street, an item on the political agenda
- Islam, its origins and et the present time ...
- Edmond Picard, at the source of modern anti-Semitism
- Philosophy at the aid of civil servants
- European defence. Which defence for Europe ?
- Tchador ou mini-skirt ? The situation of women in Tunisia
- Towards a Europe of armament.

- Egroup

Since the beginning of 2003, Gert Van Eeckhout has replaced John Leeson as moderator of the egroup. EHF is very grateful to John for having set up its electronic communication system and for having managed it.

The EHF egroup is only for member organisations, it is a relay between them to circulate information, to discuss current European issues and to undertake different types of action. The EHF secretariat regularly sends to this egroup, but being careful not to overload the letterboxes, two types of messages : messages concerning only the management of EHF and messages with an action

intended.

A second group has been set up. Persons and organisations interested in humanism have been added to EHF member organisations and to the Board. More general information is sent to it about concerns of EHF, of its member organisations and of the humanist movement.

- [Newsletter](#)

There were 3 issues of the Newsletter in 2002, one of which was exclusively devoted to the Convention on the Future of Europe and to the future European Constitution.

EHF Newsletter is free and sent mainly by email.

- [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.

During the year 2002, the Committee undertook some administrative work in order to transform the Initiative into an international non-profit making organisation. The procedure was successful and EHF has signed the bylaws. In the beginning of 2003, the General Assembly elected a board which will be presided by the EHF representative, C. Wachtelaer.

- [Videos](#)

The Belgian Centre Laïque Audiovisuel has produced a video on EHF which presents the reasons of the creation of EHF, its organisation and the main European issues that it is concerned with.

It is in French and a version in English will soon be available.

Three Belgian organisations, Centre d'Action Laïque, Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen and the Centre Laïque Audiovisuel have produced two video films on " 2500 years of free thinking in Europe ". Georges Liénard and Suzy Mommaerts were members of a group of experts working on the scripts.

The films have been made so that they can easily be translated; they will first be in French and in Dutch. They are 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.

Conclusion

This year, EHF celebrated the tenth anniversary of the official publication of its bylaws. The place was symbolic, of democracy by the choice of the Parliament and by the country Poland, one of the new members of the European Union.

The work of the European institutions has given the opportunity to express the concerns of the humanists on many subjects of society, through documents, positions and public hearing

A large number of conferences colloques on humanist and European topics were organised, in collaboration with member organisations, which have contributed to strengthen the relations between humanists in Europe.

The protocole ratified by the Boards of IHEU and of FHE must be pointed out. It aims at a better coordination of the activities and collaborations of both organisations and at promoting humanism in Europe and in the world.

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