

European Conference on Homosexuality and Disability in Sports

Physically Challenged People at EuroGames 2004



DOCUMENTARY ON A EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

Vision: Building Bridges

Physically challenged people as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people (LGBTs) are encountering several problems in society. Even if these problems seem to be very different, some of them have similar structures. Moreover, some people are part of both groups. EuroGames are the biggest LGBT sport event in Europe. In addition to sporting objectives EuroGames always have a political dimension. They intentionally work against discrimination in sports. The main focus here is the intolerance against LGBTs. By the integration of physically challenged people into EuroGames Munich the topic of sports and disability was

raised. The aim of the conference, which was held during the EuroGames in Munich, was to connect the issues of homosexuality, disability and sports. The focus was on exchanging experiences among the participants and speakers. Building bridges in terms of networking and exchange should take place.

In this documentary you can find all contributions of the speakers as well as a summary of the workshop. Moreover, an overview about the integration of physically challenged people into EuroGames in Munich is provided.

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European Conference on Homosexuality and Disability in Sports

Programme July 30, 2004

Location:

Zentrale Hochschulsportanlage (ZHS), Munich, Connollystrasse 32

09.00	Opening remarks, EuroGames Munich Opening remarks, Aktion Mensch Opening remarks, EGLSF
09.30 - 10.00	Plenary lecture I Homosexuality and disability Hans Hengelein, Officer for "male, homosexual beings" in the Lower Saxony State Government
10.00 – 10.15	Portrait Daniela von Raffay, Sociologist, Berlin
10.15 – 10.45	Plenary lecture II Disability in sports Reiner Krippner, Honorary President, BVS Bayern e.V.
10.45 – 11.00	Portrait Gerd Schönfelder, four times paralympic champion in alpine skiing
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break
11.30 – 12.00	Plenary lecture III Can sports serve as a way to integrate LGBTs and people with disabilities into society? Lucy Faulkner, Ethics and Sports Equity Manager, The English Football Association
12.00 – 13.00	Discussion with the speakers The speakers will share their views and discuss them with the audience
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch break
14.00 – 16.00	Workshop I Gay and lesbian youth with special needs (German/English) Dorothee Karle will present a study on gay and lesbian youth with special needs (Doppelt anders? Studie zur Lebenssituation junger Lesben, Schwuler und Bisexueller mit Behinderung von Silke Rudolph) Speaker: Dorothee Karle, pedagogue with focus on social education and social work, coordinator of LAMBDA hoch zwei Host: Verena Löhner, Technical University, Munich, lecturer for sports and special needs
14.00 – 16.00	Workshop II Sport: a safe haven for gays and lesbians in Europe? Exchange of information about the position and recognition of gays and lesbians in sport in Europe. Followed by a discussion on how this situation can be improved on the local, national and European level. • On a European level: Ben Baks (EGLSF contact to the Council of Europe) • On a grass root level: Stanislav Tanchev (Sportclub Tangra, Sofia, Bulgaria) • On outreach to gays and lesbians in sport: Lou Manders (EuroGames 2005, Utrecht, The Netherlands) Host: Ole Udsholt
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee break
16.30 – 17.30	Presentation of the workshop's summaries, discussion

Conference organisation: Iris Herwald-Schulz, amazed-Sportkommunikation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

the integration of physically challenged people into EuroGames Munich 2004 was one of the major goals of the organisers from the very beginning. Together with the Bavarian Federation of Sports for the physically challenged, the "Behinderten- und Versehrtensportverband Bayern" we developed a concept to integrate physically challenged people into EuroGames. This cooperation was established from the very beginning and was an important step for the success of the integration. As EuroGames are mainly organized by the local gay and lesbian sports community without experience with disabilities this cooperation was very fruitful. A meeting with all organisers of the different sport events was held at an early stage in the organisation to make sure that all organisers become familiar with the needs of physically challenged people. We would like to thank the Behinderten- und Versehrtensportverband Bayern for the good cooperation. We learnt a lot and the bridge-building really took place.

The outcome of our work is 46 physically challenged people with all different kinds of disabilities from different European countries registered in 17 different sports.

Beside the sports program there are some other activities to make the integration of physically challenged people visible. The impressive show of a local wheelchair dancing group at the opening ceremony and the translation service into sign language at different locations (like the press conference) are two examples to demonstrate that physically handicapped people are present within EuroGames.

One other aspect is this conference on the topic of homosexuality and disability in sports today. We wanted to put a rarely discussed topic on the agenda and make discussions and bridge-building possible. Our aim was to build bridges between sports organisations, gay and lesbian organisations and organisations which deal with physically handicapped people. We wanted to open up space for discussions, networking and the exchange of experiences.

To make big events happen, money is necessary. I would like to thank the "Aktion Mensch" and the "Stiftung für Bildung und Behindertenförderung" for their financial support, especially for the integration of physically challenged people into EuroGames. Moreover, I would like to thank the Technical University of Munich, especially the faculty for sport for being our host today. I also would like to say thank you to Iris Herwald-Schulz, the main organiser of this conference.

I wish you all a very fruitful conference with new findings and good discussions.

Sabine Malecek
Sportsmanagement
EuroGames 2004

Aktion Mensch sends her best wishes to the “European Conference Homosexuality and Disability in Sport“. The EuroGames 2004 are supported by Aktion Mensch.

Experiences like discrimination and exclusion concern disabled people and gays and lesbians alike. Your events will bring affected persons from various countries together and give them the opportunity for an international communication. The public will be called to attention to the subject matter by media reports about sport contest, cultural events and the symposium. Exclusion and discrimination will always be found, when one comes across reservations. Your events will help the public to perceive the living and needs of disabled people and gays and lesbians, so that a positive attitude can be achieved.

Projects, which equate social injustices and campaign equal opportunity, will always be the epicentre of the Aktion Mensch support. Through our support we want to be an emitter for social commitment. We are pleased, that by the EuroGames 2004 you will succeed with this. We wish you an interesting symposium, inspiring conversations and interesting conclusions.

Yours

Dieter Gutschick

Executive Director of Aktion Mensch



Hans Hengelein
*Officer for “male, homosexual
beings” in the Lower Saxony
State Government*

My dear Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Organisers,

I would like to extend warm thanks to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the subject of “homosexuality and disability“, here within the context of the EuroGames 2004.

Those of you, who can see me, can see that I’m obviously disabled. What is perhaps not immediately apparent, is that I am also gay. I’m just the right person to give this speech today. And so – in contrast to other scientific or political speeches – personal details from my own life will often flow into my speech today.

First of all, briefly to my person: I was born as a twin on a Frankonian farm in a 200 person strong village in 1955. In 1958 I contracted polio. In 1977, together with other students both with and without disability, I founded an initiative for disabled students (STIB) in Erlangen. I worked for STIB and was its chairperson for many years until I left in 1984. Today the most active founding members are employed by the Centre for Self-Determined Living in Erlangen. My activity in the gay movement dates back to 1982. I’ve been active in both movements for many years without a connection between the two.

Professionally, I was employed by the Green Party of the German Parliament from 1984 till 1987. I initially worked on gay and disability issues and then as assistant to the Spokesperson of the Green Party in the German Parliament. From 1988 till autumn 1991, I was manager of the department for people with HIV and AIDS at the German AIDS foundation (umbrella organisation) in Berlin. Later, I worked as manager at a curatorium for persons with immune deficiency in Munich. Since 1st July 1992, I have been working for the Lower Saxony State Government – according to the official title – as officer for “male, homosexual beings”. Personally, I prefer to call myself the gay speaker. My qualification is a diploma in psychology.

In this speech, I will relate aspects of my life as a person with a disability to something of my engagement in self-help groups for persons with and without disability. Then in a further step, I will draw parallels and differences between the AIDS self-help movement and the disability movement. In a third and final step, I will bring together (homo)sexuality and disability. The aim of the speech is therefore to place the subjects of disability, AIDS and homosexuality in relationship to one another.

1. My first self-help group:

“In March 1977, at the Department of Psychology of the Friedrich-Alexander-University in Erlangen hung a notice ...“ You are not alone! Seek other severely disabled students to share experience, want to break out of my isolation“. The STIB, an initiative of dis-

It is just as difficult to speak of the typical disabled, as it is to identify the typical gay, lesbian or person with AIDS.

abled students in Erlangen arose from this notice. 25 years later, this group has developed, among other things, into a professional “centre for self-determined living” with 20 full-time, disabled employees. At the same time: many of the original group have died or now require artificial respiration at night due to the long term effects of their respective disabilities. Confrontation with death began early for many of us, for me it was at the latest when I was five years old and lay for the first time, in a clinic, in a so called “dying room”.

I believe that this brief account illustrates the possible path of a successful self-help group. From feeling alone, through self-discovery and group experience to the development of a “we” identity, to the development of counter-publicity, to political action, through to the development of its own alternative business.

What can be generalised from my experience:

When a self-help group functions well, a return to one's own or to the group's experience is always possible following unexpected turns in the personal biography.

2. The AIDS self-help movement:

Sixteen years ago – pentecost in 1988 – I stood excited, here at Marienplatz in Munich at the 2nd European meeting for people with HIV and AIDS. Meanwhile I had become director of the department for people with HIV and AIDS at the German AIDS foundation.

Memory fragments from 1988:

The year of the “Bavarian action catalogue against AIDS”. The “European positive meeting” in Munich took place under the motto “It takes courage”. We were moved by the fear of civil rights restrictions. The reform of article 175 of the criminal code, which decriminalised male homosexuality lay less than 20 years behind us. The struggle for tolerant drug work with HIV positive drug consumers still lay ahead. “BINE”, the bisexual network had not yet been established; functioning networks of and for HIV positive women had not yet been called into life, and migrant networks hadn't even been thought of.

The first AIDS medication AZT, Retrovir had just been released. The real hits were the alternative treatments such as AL 721, Auto-vaccine, Padma 28, or astrological homeopathy. The conflict between the two conservative politicians Rita Süßmuth and Peter Gauweiler about the correct way out of the AIDS crisis was still politically undecided.

Fear of repression coloured our everyday life. How far this sometimes went, could be seen in Munich “When a third of the participants had diarrhoea after the first day, some feared that the food

had been poisoned, or when five taxis that had been ordered failed to arrive, discussion quickly moved to speculation of a possible boycott. On the other hand, at that time, I expressed my opinion in the gay magazine “Siegessäule”: “From a politics of representing others, a demand develops for the right to represent oneself. What this means for the German AIDS foundation and the individual AIDS support groups remains to be seen. We hope that it raises the pressure on the AIDS support groups to deal with their “own” HIV-AK positive members constructively”. It appears that due to increased individual strain, political action is initially possible only in exceptional cases.” Following the first National Positive Meeting in 1990 we read, “Although there are great differences in how we choose to live, we won't allow ourselves to be divided, especially not on the most important point. Our lives – however limited our time may be – will be self determined and we will consciously and independently participate in decisions concerning all the external influences on our lives such as: medical research and therapy, legal questions, care in the case of illness, the form of our self organisation, and naturally in decisions related to AIDS, drug and gay politics.”

And today? After only 20 years, the German AIDS foundation has become the umbrella organisation for 130 regional self-help groups across the land. It has an estimated – in spite of all funding cuts – 500 full-time employees and several thousand voluntary workers. As such, it is its own welfare organisation.

Why am I telling you this in such detail?:

1. My professional development in the last 20 years has always been closely tied to my personal choice of lifestyle. In 20 years of professional experience, I have always been and I am an expert on my own issues.

And

2. For 25 years I have accompanied – sometimes as initiator, sometimes very closely, sometimes from a distance – self-help groups and NGOs that represent the interests of gays, the disabled and persons infected with HIV in Germany. And the processes involved are similar even when each self-help group perceives its own problem and lifestyle as unique.

Self help groups demand the right to participate in decision-making on grounds of their expertise, their experience and expert status in terms of their own illness or disability. And they are often very successful in this regard.

However, it is just as difficult to speak of the typical disabled, as it is to identify the typical gay, lesbian or person with AIDS.

Consequently there is no fail-safe recipe for the establishment and maintenance of self-help groups. To be taken to heart is without a

doubt: that when self-help groups have fulfilled their purpose or when they no longer have a positive psychological effect, the time has come to disband them. Unfortunately this is too seldom practiced.

So this morning we can only make an approach to understanding this complex subject and the individuals involved.

Now to the third and most difficult part, the connection between disability and sexuality or, how sexual would we disabled like it to be, and can these wishes be realised? Do I, as a disabled man even have the right to desire an intact male body? And vice versa, are those without disability even permitted to find a disabled body sexually attractive?

As early as 1919, we read in the book about disabled persons: "Is the display of beautiful forms not repressive for the invalid? Should perhaps a specific aesthetic for invalids or other influences that effect the feelings be conferred precedence over art?" This old quote certainly casts a provocative tension over today's theme.

While it was important for me to organise and politicise myself in groups for the disabled and cripples in the mid 70s, confrontation with my sexuality and particularly with being gay remained an absolute taboo till the end of the 70s.

I had my fantasies of sexy, able bodied, firm, white arse that was unconditionally subordinate and at the same time, a rage towards the gays, who I didn't even know and towards their unconditional penchant for the physical. I was afraid to enter a gay group because as polit-cripple, who over years in the disability movement had critically confronted the fantasy of the intact body, had to suddenly accept a group of men who had raised pure sexuality with clean, perfect bodies to their political program; perhaps not openly since it was the height of the theoretical revolution but at least secretly.

I was afraid to live as a gay because my idea of gay sexuality was paying hustlers for sex, and then allowing myself to be robbed by them. I feared endless loneliness, because as I said, talking about sexuality in disabled groups was taboo. Only progressive social workers and educators loudly demanded the right to sexuality for the disabled, as long as they were not to become the object of desire.

For those of us disabled, who, alongside the sinking of street curbs, the right to wheelchair compatible housing and theatres, material security, the right to education and training, the right to consultation in the alteration to public buildings went beyond that

to articulate the most basic emotional needs a very painful process began. A few decided that they wanted to live and work only with other disabled persons.

The 80s gave rise to the defiant term the "cripples" and the "cripple group" from which, for various reasons, only the "cripple lesbians" remain.

And what about us, the disabled men? Our protest was very weak – a socially caring woman (wife) without disability beside the wheelchair of a disabled man is closer to the social ideal than is usually the case when disabled women or gay disabled men begin to express their emotional and sexual wishes towards able-bodied persons.

Those of us with disabilities remained silent too often when it came to criticising the behaviour of the able-bodied persons with whom we lived and shared our needs. A public confrontation of the various dependencies of those without disability hardly occurred. And today it still occurs very seldom simply because it is too painful.

In spite of this – in the early 80s I began, first slowly, and then with increasing confidence to decide in favour of the gay, able-bodied world. I have worked in gay projects, have criticised and have demanded things mostly gay issues. There was no open discussion of gay sexual practices among gay men. When I addressed that issue the criticism remained only semi-public. Tears still come to my eyes today when I think of the effort that the gay movement put into the media in the 80s to document every discrimination – such as disapproval of a "gay book stand" in the pedestrian zone – by the hostile heterosexual world. Exclusion in their own ranks was assiduously overlooked. Those who cannot be perceived because they cannot be present – they don't exist – that's it."

This is how aggressively I expressed myself in an article on the tension between disabled gay men and the gay subculture thirteen years ago.

What has changed since then, particularly through the confrontation with HIV and AIDS or simply as a result of being 13 years older?

Self-help for people with HIV and AIDS certainly hasn't found its place in the disability movement, rather AIDS self-help has remained much more closely bound to its communities of origin, particularly the gay community. Lots of people with HIV and AIDS carry a disability ID card in their pockets, many of them would reject the label of "disabled" although the current medication for persons with lipodystrophy or cricibellis have created them.

The dignity of humanity is sacrosanct. To respect and protect it is the duty of all state power.

Today, the German AIDS foundation still represents a specific culture, one that has an open attitude to drugs and sexuality and which in other organisations for disabled and chronically ill persons, is often responded to with a mixture of alienation and fascination.

In spite of this, we have the German AIDS foundation to thank that subjects such as chronic illness, disability and dying on the one hand and on the other, sexuality – particularly homosexuality – have been woven together in the public consciousness over the past 15 years.

Meanwhile, the right to express one's own needs and the right to one's own sexuality has moved much more into focus.

As long as eight years ago, the Lower Saxon Ministry of Social Affairs conducted a well-appraised event under the motto "Disabled Love". We didn't find any patent solutions however we did manage to bring together persons with the very different disabilities, with different sexual orientations, whether they lived in private houses or in institutional homes, with or without personal assistance. 300 people attended the event. They confirmed what is already stated in Article 1 of our Constitution: "The dignity of humanity is sacrosanct. To respect and protect it is the duty of all state power"

The dignity of the individual is not expressed through a perfect body, whatever that may be. "Dignity" is expressed through mutual respect, esteem and recognition on a personal level.

I hope that in this short time, it has been possible for me to illustrate some of the aspects that characterise "homosexuality" and "disability".

Before I close, allow me to lose a few words on our central theme "sport". During my entire schooling, I was exempted from sport classes because of my disability. If dedicated teachers hadn't given me individual tuition, I wouldn't have learned to swim; nor would I have learned the elementary skills of other sports. I have those dedicated sports teachers at the Secondary School in Lauf on the Pegnitz to thank, among other things, for the fact that I developed a positive body awareness, learned to accept and challenge my body, but also to appreciate its beauty. These are the possible achievements of successful sport classes. I regard these hours at school as an example of real togetherness. In her speech, Daniela von Raffay will also share further positive experiences from her life.

My hope for school sport and for sport associations is that in the future, not only disabled persons, but also lesbians and gays will

be able to say: "I am and was a part of it. I felt comfortable and wasn't labelled as an outsider in sport."

My dear Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends, I am aware that there is no simple recipe for a harmonious life together. And that's okay. If, in the coming hours, we manage to enter into conversation with one another, to learn from one another, this would be an important contribution.

There are, for example, deaf gays and lesbians in wheelchairs. We must at least learn to deal with the minorities within our own minority respectfully.

But in all our integration euphoria, those individual idiosyncrasies that make you special are something that we should never "lose sight of".

Therefore I would like to close with a quote from the gay, deaf writer, Raymond Luczak: "When I meet hearing men, who have met other deaf men, their first remark is almost always „You have good speech!“. In such moments I can understand how a black person feels when the lightness of his skin is commented upon."

Many thanks for your patience and your attention.

Portrait Daniela von Raffay
Sociologist, Berlin

Good morning and hello to all participants!

Hello polionauts, thalidomide junkies, one-legged people, lame, blind, deaf people ... all you 'challenged' sportswomen and men!

How am I 'challenged'? Vertically and horizontally – in other words, too short and too fat.

The reason being that polio hit me when I was three. Back then the vaccination wasn't compulsory, and that's how Hans Henglein and I caught the virus.

The two of us met ten years ago (1991) in the Netherlands, at a European conference of disabled lesbians and gay men in Utrecht. There were lots of workshops open to the hundreds of participants. During the conference the rain was pouring. The workshops were held inside different white tents on a huge field. That we wouldn't get wet, the organisers had set up an 'umbrella service'. As soon as we rolled up towards the tent entrance, attractive female martial arts practitioners turned up with umbrellas to accompany us from tent to tent. Of course, this was a ticket to instant contact and the cruising could begin ...

There was a very strong, proud feeling of self-confidence in store for those of us who attended the workshop with Lydia Zijdel, a black-belted wheelchair user. Each woman was to chop through a piece of wood resting on two bricks.

For some of us, this was the beginning of many years of training in assertiveness and self-defence, for example Wen Do or Karate. Each woman learned techniques that made her able to defend herself in her own individual way – whether verbally or non-verbally.

Shortly after the Utrecht meeting, Hans and I founded the 'freak-show', an annual meeting of German-speaking lesbians and gay men from Germany, Switzerland and Austria. In the following years it was held in the idyllic surroundings of the Waldschlösschen, an independent conference centre in woodlands near Göttingen, Lower Saxony.

The main reason was getting to know each other. So there were individual massage sessions, relaxation training and erotic walks in the woods. One of the workshops was called: 'What unites lesbians and gay men with disabilities?'

One area of common ground that we discovered, was making contacts in the gay subculture. We sometimes try to make our disability invisible, maybe by hiding the white stick or the crutches. Then we feel all the more embarrassed when we get asked to dance and may have to say no.

Do you know the term 'tabs'? They are the 'temporarily able-bodied' – people who for now have no disability, who have all their physical, emotional and intellectual abilities, but maybe just for a limited time.

In sports, especially, it can happen all of a sudden: a body that was functioning perfectly collapses abruptly.

Many of us watched the European cup in Portugal, and saw how the young shooting star Wayne Rooney suddenly broke his foot and had to drop out.

The obstacles faced by people with disabilities are many and various. We are permanently challenged to overcome one hurdle or another.

I want us to see disability as a challenge, and not always as some kind of deficit.

Before we set off travelling or even just go out of the front door, we have to check whether the place we are going to is accessible, in other words, will it be free of barriers?

For wheelchair users, every door-frame, step or toilet can be a serious obstacle. For each differently abled person there is a different challenge to be met.

Yesterday, for example, when I wanted to take the night train from Berlin to Munich, that's what happened: I can't spend more than seven hours sitting in a train. The train was due to leave the station at 12 minutes past midnight. I need help with a lift to get myself and the wheelchair into the train. I was informed that the staff who offer this help only work till midnight. I was told: 'Well, they have to go home sometime.' Luckily there is a station mission in Berlin, our capital, which is staffed around the clock – often by volunteers. And that's how I managed to get the help I needed.

But how do people with mobility difficulties in other cities get by? Do they have to be tucked up in bed with the lights off before midnight? Hands upon the blanket ...

As for sporting barriers in my own life: I caught polio aged three. I forgot how to walk unaided, then tried it afresh using leg splints and crutches. At school I always got good marks in gymnastics, because the teacher saw that my 'different ability' made me extremely flexible. Many exercises, such as the parallel bars or the wall-bars, I could do better than my classmates. I developed a very muscular upper body. It was easy to pull myself up over the bars. Because of my polio, I could amuse my classmates with exhibitions of the splits and slinging my legs over my shoulders.

Okay, the grown-ups saw this as noisy showing off – clowning around. But it was fun for me, and everyone needs some fun in their life. I think the colleagues with cerebral palsy here today will be able to confirm that too.

Of course, soon I could swim, as well: the master discipline of the polionauts. I learned to ride a bike, loved horses, went riding, fell off – but my 'polio flexibility' meant the falls didn't bother me much.

I'm telling you these stories because I want us to see 'disability' as a challenge, and not always as some kind of deficit.

The physiotherapy – by the way, the word in German literally means 'gymnastics for the sick', which says a lot – the physiotherapy I was privileged to have in the 1950s and 60s was all about getting my lame leg to rise, stretch, press, push.

That caused me endless frustration, since a completely paralysed leg just can't be stretched.

Luckily, as time went on, alternative methods were developed. They supported the physical functions I did have, and helped me to many great successes.

Yoga, Qi Gong, Feldenkrais are just a few of those methods. In therapeutic Qi Gong, for example, all the participants are seated, so people with mobility problems can easily take part.

In the early 80s, we set up a wheelchair basketball group in Berlin. We agreed on the rules so that each player could join in according to her own individual abilities. For example, women who could only use one arm due to spastic paralysis got a goal if the ball just touched the pole. 30 years later I'm a little older and I don't do as much active sport.

Wouldn't it be great if more initiatives could be started for disabled lesbians and gay men who are no longer slaves to the cult of youth.

What about sexuality, homosexuality? Luckily for me, there are already several lesbians and gay men in my family. Even though homosexuality isn't either contagious or inherited, I certainly seem to have a suspicious number of gay relatives! That meant I didn't have any problems coming out.

Women with disabilities are often told – right from their earliest childhood – that they'll never manage to get a man. Unfortunately – if looked at statistically – this is quite realistic. Women have the role of doing the household, and so they don't mind taking on a disabled man. A disabled woman, in contrast, will seldom find a husband or wife to care for them. The same thing applies to homosexual men, who usually don't enter long-term partnerships.

What we need to do is explore the borders between illusion and reality. On the one hand not giving in to the cult of youth, and on the other hand facing up to the obvious reality that we're all getting older – and yet despite that, despite our different restrictions, making the best we can of it.

Researching this talk, I haven't found anywhere in Berlin, or right across Germany, a sporting organisation of lesbians and gay men with disabilities. It's certain that many disabled lesbians and gay men play in disabled people's sport clubs – or, depending on their abilities, they may enjoy sport together with able-bodied people.

Speaking for myself: I'm not really sure whether, as a differently abled lesbian, I should be aiming to do sport exclusively with other differently abled lesbians.

The main thing is that we have fun, and that our feeling of self-esteem is reinforced – whether it's on a handbike tour or playing boules, watching football together or ski-jump.

And living out our sexuality – let's call it 'bed-sport' – would be another tempting possibility.

Hang on! Don't give up! Keep on rolling.
Thank you very much.



Reiner Krippner
Honorary President BVS Bayern e.V.

My subject „Disability and Sport“ could also be titled: „Sport in spite of Disability“, or „Disability Sport“.

In any case, I think it would be useful to briefly define both terms. In doing so, I would like to define sport as a physical and intellectual activity – chess is also a sport.

The scope, the quality, the quantity of this activity is limited by disability. The concept of “disability” in this sense, is closely associated with the concept of “health”. Today, health is no longer defined as the absence of illness. A much broader understanding of the notion of health, one that includes physical, mental and social well being, is enhanced by consideration of environmental problems, and the question of individual and community responsibility for the restoration of health.

The term “health sport” was created within this context. Health sport is concerned with either the maintenance of existing health, or the partial or complete restoration of lost health through exercise, training and sport. Here, we have the classical dichotomy of health sport – prevention and rehabilitation.

The German Disability Sports Association (DBS) and its regional groups previously assumed that preventative sport was primarily the responsibility of the able-bodied sport associations, while rehabilitation, by nature, was the task of disability sport. This will possibly change in the future as a result changes to legislation – that reduce financial support for rehabilitative sport – and increase it for preventative sport. This is a problem specific to Germany and I will not go into further details here.

Disability and Sport – Sport in spite of Disability – Disability Sport

Allow me to make a few comments about the structure of disability sport in Germany. 17 state associations are organised under the umbrella organisation of the DBS. The DBS identifies its primary responsibility as the promotion of serious, competitive sport – it is simultaneously the National Paralympic Committee – the areas of general and rehabilitative sport are rather the responsibility of the state associations. The highest decision making body of the DBS is the association conference which takes place every four years. Between these conferences, decisions are made by the executive committee (whose members are the chairpersons or Presidents of the state organisations and the members of their executive committees) and the chairperson.

DBS exercises the role of specialist or central association in representing the interests of disabled persons involved in sport. At

the same time the DBS provides an umbrella association, which, particularly in regard to the range of sports it supports, is comparable to the German Sport Association (DSB) in able-bodied sport. Further, the DBS acts as the Paralympic Committee, comparable to the National Olympic Committee, in that it nominates the Paralympic teams and performs the organisational tasks associated with their participation. This includes conducting negotiations with the Ministry for the Interior which – as for Olympic participants without disability – also provides funding for the Paralympic participants.

The very name of the German Disability Sports Association (DBS) indicates that the organisation is not an association of persons who play a particular sport (football, tennis, rowing) but rather represents the interests of a particular group of people – the physically challenged. Disability sport is not a discipline or a type of sport. The only other sport association where this is also the case, is the Sports Association for the Deaf. Here however, the limitation is that only persons with this particular disability are accepted as members.

Disabled persons do not constitute a homogenous group. Just as variable as the nature of the disability itself, is its degree of expression. The causes of disability are diverse – for example, heredity, birth trauma, accident or illness. The DBS organises the physically disabled (disability associated with the nervous system, the organs and the muscular or skeletal systems), the visually impaired (blind or partially sighted persons), the intellectually disabled (those with intellectual or learning disability), and persons with psychological disabilities (psychosis, neurosis and behaviour disturbances).

The structure of the DBS can, with minor modification, be transferred to the state associations. Let me briefly describe Bavaria as an example. Every non-profit organisation in Bavaria is eligible for membership of the umbrella organisation, BVS Bavaria as long as the association’s objectives include the provision of sport for the disabled, or as rehabilitation in accordance with the legal regulations and agreements with the responsible rehabilitation sponsors. Membership of an organisation that belongs to BVS Bavaria accords the individual person affiliation with BVS Bavaria.

Within this structure, the state association – in this case BVS Bavaria – which as I mentioned, is primarily concerned with general and rehabilitative sport and as “groundwork” for BVS, competitive sport. This is only possible however when clear guidelines exist. BVS Bavaria has consequently developed a training system in which the knowledge and skills – required for the effective operation of sport training events in the area of disabled sports are

Sporting events for the disabled have risen from having an absolute fringe role to a place in the upper third of media reporting.

perpetuated. It must be acknowledged however, that an acquired qualification is not perpetually effective but must be updated at regular intervals (as a rule every three years). This ensures that trainers and assistants are constantly informed of the most recent insights in medicine and sports medicine. This is extremely important, especially for disabilities in the area of internal medicine. Persons with coronary illness or asthma and dialysis patients, just to name a few, need specially trained exercise instructors, coaches and assistants in order to avoid damage caused by overstrain. Particularly in sports groups for coronary patients, this helps to avoid a situation where group events are deemed worthy of sponsorship only when a doctor is present. According to the German Sports Association for the Deaf, it is not possible to integrate the deaf into general disability sports.

Disability and Sport – Competitive Sport

At this point I'd like to mention a problem that has always led to controversial discussion – also within competitive disability sports.

Should disabled persons engage in competitive sport when they are already handicapped by their disabilities? I usually answer this question with a counter question: Why is this question not raised and discussed in the area of able-bodied sport? Specific physical and intellectual abilities must be present in both instances as prerequisite to success in the realm of serious competitive sport. A basketball player who is 1.60 m tall does not represent the ideal basketball player but no-one can stop him/her from playing basketball. Just for fun – not in serious, competitive sport.

Similarly, in the area of disability sport, I must consider the extent to which my disability permits performance of a specific sport, particularly if I am to achieve international success.

On the other hand is it legitimate that those responsible for disability sports exert their influence over the sporting activity of disabled, high-performance athletes? I believe it is, in those areas where sport can worsen an existing disability. I will give only one example here: the athlete with spinal damage and an amputation, who feels compelled to compete in the high jump although his spine is further damaged with every jump.

The parallel goes further: Specific sports, e.g., alpine or Nordic skiing, bobsleigh or toboggan racing, cycling or athletics can only be carried out “with the appropriate material”. I don't like to use the phrase “the battle of material”. It is the individual's personal will and aspiration to apply the combination of physical ability and optimally geared material in pursuit of success.

In disability sport, we find ourselves in the same situation. Around the time of the 1988 Paralympics in Seoul, a lively discussion raised the issue that the so-called “wealthy nations” could equip their athletes with high-tech prostheses while athletes with equal athletic potential, from poor countries, fell into obscurity simply because it is not possible for them to be equipped with the material – that guarantees success? Fortunately, this premise proved to be unfounded, so that today we see the familiar images of runners with above or below the knee amputations fitted with carbon-spring feet and athletes with similar prostheses, for example in athletics and spear or discus throwing, or athletes equipped with racing wheel-chairs.

There is a further parallel to able-bodied sport: in disabled sport – and one must admit that there is no exception here – doping is not a foreign word. Why should the disabled athlete differ from one who is not disabled in this respect? Although so called “bio-doping” where health risks are taken to extreme limits, is a dimension of able-bodied sport that is not so widely practiced in disability sport.

The DBS has always been subject to the national and international anti-doping regulations. However, in the instance of a specific illness that necessitates the consumption of medication containing doping substances, an exception can be made following prior declaration of the medication. IPC has implemented its own anti-doping code since 2002.

I would now like to mention a further problem which regularly gives rise to heated discussion – the allocation of the individual, disabled athletes to starting categories: How can I make the performance of athletes with different disabilities comparable and so avoid having a multitude of lone winners, and at the same time increase transparency for the non-disabled spectators and so make the competition more interesting? We are bound to differentiate between “standing”, “sitting” or “sighted” and “unsighted” athletes. This is an important issue that can only be resolved with much understanding on behalf of the disabled athletes. A good basis has been achieved in winter sport for example, where severity of the disability, previous performance and the course profile are brought into relationship. This allows the calculation of different starting times, which – as I mentioned – take the particular disability into account. For example, in Nordic skiing those with the greatest disability start first and those that are least disabled start last. The winner is the first athlete to cross the finish line.

This is not possible in downhill skiing. And it's obviously not possible in a hundred meter race. So, in the near future, we will continue to have many winners, for example, in the hundred-meter

race. On the other hand it is astonishing that the public – which is exposed to at least the most important events such as the Paralympics and the World Championships via the mass media – accepts this with understanding.

At this point I would like to express thanks to the media for its coverage rather than join the general lament about lack of coverage. I believe that coverage of sporting events for the disabled have risen from having an absolute fringe role, to a place in the upper third of media reporting. Admittedly, this is no reason not to constantly strive for greater presence in the media.

You are aware that the intellectually disabled also represents one of the groups served by disability sport. Two conflicting philosophies meet in this area – as far as I can take the liberty to comment – this confrontation will not be resolved in the near future.

A prerequisite for an intellectually disabled person's participation in sport is, as for other persons, the ability to understand and implement the rules of the respective sport. When this ability is not present, one cannot speak of sporting competition.

Allow me to describe a key experience: following the Paralympics in Barcelona in 1992, the first world championships for intellectually disabled competitors was held under patronage of the INAS-FID in Madrid. While the stadium in Barcelona was overfilled and the hour long wait for entry to the indoor pool was accepted as a matter of course, and although the Paralympics experienced an explosion in performance and an explosion in public interest that was previously unknown, the world championships for intellectually disabled athletes took place in Madrid with the total exclusion of the public. No spectators, no media coverage – and I add – no interest? And no interest on behalf of disabled sport to integrate sportspersons with intellectual disability? Integration is a wonderful catchword. Shouldn't we, from disabled sport set a positive example and integrate this group – intellectually disabled persons who participate in sport – into our sporting activities. I think that this would be possible in many cases. Naturally, not in high performance, competition sport. The joy and unconcern with which persons with intellectual disability play sport, reminds me of the beginning of disabled sport. At that time the catch phrase was "participation is more important than victory". Sometimes we should remind ourselves of this, especially in the area of general sports.

When we speak about integration, we must make reference to the way in which disabled sport is integrated into mainstream sport. Here integration can take place in many ways; in the area of wheelchair sports, persons in wheelchairs can dance with others who are not confined to wheelchairs; in wheelchair basketball, by allowing a number of team members without disability to participate in competitions. In the area of Le sautré – persons with minimal or borderline disability – by allowing free participation in

groups for athletes without disability, and to go a step further in the area of competitive sport, by athletes with and without disabilities training together. The times in which competitive disabled sport could be played as a spontaneous performance are long past. Hard training sessions are necessary if an athlete is to successfully participate, especially at the forefront of high performance competition.

It is not surprising that our top-performing, disabled athletes train in associations alongside athletes without disabilities. This is almost standard, not only in light athletics and swimming, but also in the disciplines of alpine and Nordic skiing. Athletes with and without disabilities train together in many Olympic training bases and this generates a great deal of respect for the performance of the disabled athletes. Günther Belitz – an above the knee amputee – described it this way: "High jumpers without disabilities know how difficult it is to jump with one leg because they do one legged jumps during training."

Disability and Sport and Sponsors

It would be good if there was also a measure of understanding for disabled sport in the business sector – that means, among the potential sponsors. In times of economic decline such as we are currently experiencing, the number of sponsors has reduced to almost zero. The cost-benefit factor is not attractive enough for business; social engagement is not affordable and so the exodus of sponsors is pre-programmed. Disability sport itself, is not in the position to break this vicious circle – no spectators, no media, no sponsors. Here it must be said that disability disables the development of disability sport.

This is a pity, but I am not saying: impossible to change. The change required must take place in peoples heads – a change of perspective – however, the sentence "You could be disabled tomorrow", allow me to say casually – won't entice any cat out from behind the stove. Federal President von Weizsäcker's often quoted statement "not to be disabled is not a right but a mercy" doesn't bring us any closer to a solution either. I don't want to judge the extent to which the current social and economic situation in Germany is conducive to the development of – a "we" feeling – a sense of solidarity. However, I believe that changes must follow in this direction. Because the greatest reward for the artist (the sportsperson) is the applause. This is missing when sport events involving physically challenged people take place, almost exclusively – with the exception of the Paralympics – without public.

Approximately eight million disabled persons live in Germany. Almost four hundred thousand of these are organised within the DBS and approximately 800 are involved in serious competition sport. Diminishingly few disabled persons participate in sport, even though sport has a tremendous capacity for the famous catalyser function of "help to self-help".

The best thing that could have happened in my life was my amputation.

“The best thing that could have happened in my life was my amputation”. This initially disconcerting statement was made by Dennis Oehler, one of the top athletes of previous Paralympics. It may have saved my life. My amputation gave my life an entirely new direction. Sport, which had previously not occupied a very important role, suddenly became the focus, not only in terms of participation, no – also in the area of voluntary service. The problems associated with voluntary service are not specific to disabled sport and for that reason I don’t wish to go into details here. Except to say that that disabled sport – like so many other social and religious organisations – couldn’t survive without the contribution made by volunteers. Independent of my profession as Vice President of the Social Court Bayreuth, my voluntary involvement in sport has carried me through the highest offices to become the first Vice President of the Paralympic Committee. Disability and sport and voluntary work.

One task that we have pursued for decades is the provision of sport for children and youth. Unfortunately development in this area – at least in Bavaria – is stagnant. When investigating the reasons for this we could say: Hooray – so much is being done in the area of accident prevention, with and for children, that there are almost no disabled accident victims. Medical care has achieved such advances that injuries that lead to possible disability can often be treated successfully. Somewhat more problematic – due to possibility of prenatal identification of disabilities and the option of abortion, disabled children are no longer brought into the world. In the worst case – in the distant future, genetically-manipulated artificial insemination will make it possible to have custom made children, who will naturally be healthy. Politics has responded with opposition and is up in arms against this prospect. Christa Stewens, Bavaria’s Social and Family Minister, described the first cloning of a human embryo by a South Korean scientist as “disrespect for our creator”.

Quote: “So is the uniqueness and distinctiveness of human life no longer protected – with unforeseeable consequences for the foundation of our image of humankind.”

I hope and wish for all of us, and above all for our children and grandchildren that science does not presume to take over the role of our creator.

Disability and Sport and the Future

Spurred by various forms of motivation, perform more and more people in Germany actively sport in their spare time – the catchword is “fitness centres”. Admittedly this development is primarily limited to the members of the middle class. This change in health consciousness is displayed to a much lesser degree in the lower classes. Awareness of the negative influence that factors such as smoking and incorrect diet have on health identifies the high-risk lifestyles of large sectors of the population. This gives rise to the following predictable developments: I quote from a speech by

Horst Mareès on the subject of “Sport and Health” on the occasion of the DSB Congress “Persons in Sport 2000”

- Further deterioration in performance, the skeletal muscles and the heart/lung circulatory systems
- Increasing risk of deterioration of the passive skeletal system as a result of excess weight and reduced load capacity of the static muscular support system
- Increased strain at the level of critical limits in day to day situations resulting in increasing potential for damage to health
- Increasing psychological stress in professional and recreational areas with consequent psychological conflicts.

Bring your attention back to the eight million disabled, of whom 400,000 participate in organised sport. Include these numbers in Horst Mareès predicted developments, because there will be even more disabled in the future, which leads me to the somewhat sarcastic forecast: Under these conditions, I am afraid that the subject “disability and sport” will remain on the agenda and will probably become increasingly significant in the future.



Lucy Faulkner
*Ethics and Sports Equity Manager,
The English Football Association*

Building a better future – The FAs' vision

I am delighted to be speaking to you today and to address the question – can sport serve as a way to integrate LGBTs and people with disabilities into society?

Well that's an interesting question and I'd just like to start with a statistic and a quote

- 59% of European citizens feel that sport is a way of countering all forms of discrimination (Source: Eurobarometer)
- And to quote Nelson Mandela:
"Sport, and football in particular, has an important role to play in the lives of people: Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can. It speaks to people in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where there was once only despair. It breaks down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all kinds of discrimination ... spreading hope to the world."

What I'll try to do today is show you what The Football Association in England is doing that might support the integration of members of the LGBT community and people with disabilities into society.

As the governing body of the game The Football Association is responsible for a huge range of activities – from organising the England international team to training the next generation of coaches to providing opportunities for young people to participate at grassroots.

Because of the huge numbers of people involved in football in England it might be said that in many ways football is just a reflection of society. If so it's likely that the same attitudes, prejudice and discrimination that exist in society will exist in football. We believe it does reflect society and also believe very strongly that we have a duty to use the power of football to build a better future. Changing attitudes in society is not our responsibility but because we reflect society and are involved in a sport that has considerable influence on people, and also involves many millions of participants we have a moral duty to contribute to changing attitudes and supporting the tackling of some of society's problems. I'll try and explain how we believe we do that through my presentation today.

Our vision is to use the power of football to build a better future and we are unequivocal about our commitment to tackling any form of discrimination or harassment and to ensuring equality for all people in football. My role at The Football Association as Ethics and Sports Equity Manager deals with tackling all forms of discrimination and harassment and promoting equality.

For The FA it is all about

- Fairness and respect for all people
- Equality of access and opportunity
- Recognising that inequalities exist and taking steps to address them

And is summed up by the phrase 'Football for all'.

So what specific groups does it cover?

- Women and girls
- Disabled people
- Ethnic minorities
- LGBT communities

But also the broader social inclusion agenda:

- People living in rural areas
- Low income
- Single parents
- Inner city areas
- Areas of deprivation
- Combinations of excluding factors

It tackles all forms of discrimination:

- Age
- Gender
- Ability
- Race
- Colour
- Sexual orientation

As well as the integrity of the game – how do we operate, can we match European quality standards, what are the principles and moral standards against which we work, as you can see it has a very wide brief.

For a number of years we have been working to integrate people from all communities and have had considerable success with the development of football for groups that have not been traditionally represented in the football structures. We have had great success with the work we have done on women and girls football – it's now the largest female team sport in England, and also great success in the work we have done for mainstreaming of disabled players and for impairment specific developments, our learning disability squad are world champions, for example.

But we are not complacent – we know there is still lots to be done – for example the lack of representation on our boards, councils and committees – the majority of which are made up of white, middle aged men and the lack of Asian players making it to the very top level of the sport. And our continuing work to ensure that

we have put in place the necessary policies and practices to ensure that all disabled people have the opportunity to participate safely in football activities and are able to reach their potential within the area of activity they choose. And the issue of why there are no openly gay men in the professional game in England? Maybe there aren't any?

To take you back a bit ... what the FA decided in 2002 was that we needed a holistic strategy to really consider the needs of all member of the community, as I mentioned we had achieved a lot but it was piecemeal, lacked co-ordination and was wasteful in terms of resources. In addition we had no clear vision of where we wanted to be and, with the number of partners involved in football – from the professional game right down to grassroots football we needed something to pull it all together. Having a holistic strategy rather than picking off women and girls or disability meant we had a real opportunity to ensure that members of the LGBT community would be included in the strategy, not quite as explicitly as we would like, but still there in the gender section which has now given us chance to consider this community's needs in more detail. A large consultation exercise was undertaken which was painful – we had to listen to groups of people who felt that football excluded them, had done nothing for them and was never prepared to listen. Slowly we are starting to build the trust of those communities and helping support groups who were excluded or marginalised to be fully involved.

The framework for our football for all work can be summed up into some key areas:

- Raising awareness
- Opportunities to participate and progress
- Education and training
- Rules and regulation fully rubs off on society as well.

Raising awareness

- Communications
- Leaflets
- Ambassadors
- TheFA.com stories
- Conferences
- LGBT Summit meeting
- Presentations to board and councils
- Press and publicity campaign
- Website review
- Accessible publications

Opportunities to participate and progress

- Co-options
- Grassroots development
- Appointment of development officers
- Six national disability squads
- Regional and local centres of excellence for disabled people

Education and training

- Football for all workshop
- Training for coaches, managers and referees
- Embedded in other training, e.g., child protection
- Cross football authority plan
- Disability specific training

Rules and regulations

- Review against football for all principles
- Reporting abuse and discrimination
- Freephone number
- Email reporting
- Review of procedures

Evaluation and monitoring

- Annual monitoring
- Target setting
- Qualitative review

Key lessons learned from our work in ethics and sports equity?

Consultation – the need for this is paramount and identifying what organisations and which individuals we need to consult with is critical as well as the need to constantly review this to ensure representations and views from as wide a range of people as possible.

Leadership – demonstrating our commitment to this area of work through our own initiatives as well as ensuring that our County FAs are also delivering against the national strategy.

Ownership – rather than leaving it to a plethora of external organisations The FA believed it should take responsibility for mainstreaming all members of the community into football we have done so and will continue to do so.

Be patient – take time over the planning, its better to get it right than try to do too much too quickly.

We don't claim to have done everything and to have got everything that we have done completely right. No large organisation could say that and be certain it was telling the truth.

But what we do believe is that we take our duties as the guardians of the game seriously and that if these duties also contribute to supporting people in society then that's even better. The FA is committed to the highest standards when governing football. And we strive for best practice in developing the game.

We have underpinned everything that we do with a cohesive strategy. Ethics and sports equity is not something we have pulled together so it can gather dust on the shelf. It is something we believe in and something we are proud to carry forward.

Interview with Gerd Schönfelder

Four times Paralympic Champion in Alpine Skiing

Gerd, with four gold medals at the Paralympics 2002 in Salt Lake City, you are one of the most successful men in German handicapped sports. Could you tell us how you got to where you stand right now?

I used to ski for the Bavarian junior ski team before my accident happened. In a train accident I lost one arm and after countless heavy operations and thanks to the aid of my family and friends I returned to skiing. Soon afterwards the head coach of the German disabled ski team invited me to a training camp and due to hard work and lots of training I was able to win all four goldmedals in the Salt Lake City Paralympics!

BVS Bayern's Honorary President, Mr. Krippner just talked about the battle of material between handicapped top athletes – how do you see this, being one of the top athletes yourself?

Yes of course – you cannot be really successful without good material. I absolutely agree on that. Luckily my sponsors provide this high tech material for me. But I think, that this is a lot worse in other disciplines – take for example my team colleagues, who compete in their monoskis – this is really extremely high tech equipment, that needs to be custom fitted for every person.

That means, that the sponsors, who provide state of the art material, are an absolute “must“ in order to be successful?

Well, unless you are very rich yourself you need someone to provide the equipment. For me this situation is solved very satisfying. I have a few sponsors who provide the equipment and some others who provide monetary backup.

Since you travel to competitions during the winter and spent most of your summertime in training camps, do you have the chance to get in contact with non handicapped athletes?

Yes, I meet non handicapped athletes very often in training camps as well as during competitions. We spend a lot of time in the same training camps and sometimes, we even do the training together. We can learn a lot from each other and our trainers discuss different training methods. I've made very good friends with a few people from various teams.

Would you prefer the Olympic and the Paralympic Games to take place at the same time and place?

Well, I think that would not be possible, because there would be too many people at the same place. It would be very difficult to organise such an immensely huge event. And in the end most possibly some competitions would get a lot of attention and spectators and others would compete with no spectators at all. I don't know, I think it's good the way it is.

Do you think, that the integration of athletes with a handicap into the EuroGames is correct and makes sense?

Yes of course! In my eyes absolutely nobody should be banned from whatever event there is. It's a very good thing, to arrange competitions for athletes with a disability. I hope, that in the future more handicapped people will participate in this event.

How do you explain, that – despite the huge amount of advertising and communication – only 1% of the participants are athletes with a handicap?

Well, you know, if you look at the statistics, only 10% of the European population is handicapped. Out of these only a few – let's say 10% again – are active sportspeople. And the EuroGames are taking place right in the middle of the competition period for the summer athletes – so most of them will have to attend their own events and might not have a lot of sparetime.

Is homosexuality in sports nowadays a real problem or are the prejudices mostly smoothed out? Or maybe the world is simply not ready yet, to enjoy sports together without any barriers?

Actually I do not know exactly. And as I train together mostly with men I do not know the situation of women at all. I do not know any sportsman who is gay but I would not have a problem with it.

What would you see as the next step in the future? Are we going to have huge, colourful and completely integrative sports competitions or does every group need their own and exclusive event?

As I said earlier – I think this would be a nice idea, but in reality especially in competition sports will not be possible because of the logistics.

EGLSF – European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation

The EGLSF was founded in 1989 by a number of European LGBT sport clubs. Its main aims are to fight against discrimination in sport on grounds of sexual preference, stimulate integration in sport and emancipation of LGBT people, enable and support their coming-out, exchange information and promote the co-ordination between European sport groups and tournaments and support the founding of new LGBT and mixed sport groups.

The EGLSF is open to LGBT, straight and mixed sport groups and organizations. Now this network has more than 10,000 members within over 100 organizations and sport groups. In the EGLSF, all member organizations are autonomous; its way of operating is as a servicing and co-ordinating body.

If one of its tasks must be highlighted, it would be, the promotion and organisation, in close cooperation with the host city, of EuroGames®, the European LGBT championships. In 2005, after The Hague (1992 and 1993), Frankfurt (1995), Berlin (1996) Paris (1997), Zurich (2000), Hanover (2001), Copenhagen (2003) and Munich (2004), the 10th edition of these championships will be celebrated from 16th to 19th of June 2005 in Utrecht.

Once a year, the first weekend of March, the EGLSF members gather to hold their Annual General Assembly, the sovereign body that takes the basic decision and orient the EGLSF policies. This year, Barcelona will host this meeting in March. The EGLSF governing body is its Board that, in number from three to eight, is elected for two years by the General Assembly.

The EGLSF has the status of consulting body of the Council of Europe and cooperate with many other organisation at regional, national, European and global levels, developing the networking and synergy required to obtain its goals.



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Workshop Results



A discussion during the lunch break made it obvious, that all participants were eager to talk about both topics. It was agreed on joining together both workshops to give everybody the possibility to do so. Since most participants wanted to learn about the study on gay and lesbian youth, workshop I was focused on that topic and filled with the content of workshop II.

The focus of the workshop was based on a study about the situation of young lesbians, gays and bisexuals with disabilities. The study was conducted between 1999 and 2002 in Berlin by Silke Rudolph. Dorothee Karle presented the results and Verena Löhner (TU Munich) led the discussion. The results of the study were discussed and completed by the other participants of the workshop.

One result was, that the matters of physically challenged people are quite similar to those of LGBTs. Both groups experience the problem of not being seen and not being admitted or welcomed to certain events. Both experience situations, where people from other groups do not know how to act in their presence. The need to open up to the world and inform the “rest of the world” about their presence is a common topic.

It became very obvious that there is a need to exchange experiences, bundle energies and simply talk to each other. Networks between the different groups are still missing. This conference is a first step of connection and building bridges. The representative of the DBS (German Sports Federation for people with a disability) informed about his attempt to install special sports groups for glbt people with a disability. Due to the lack of information this attempt failed but another try will be made in the future.

It became obvious, that LGBTs without disabilities are not aware of the needs of physically challenged people and organisations for disabled people lack information on homosexuality. Therefore the different groups are not aware of facing similar challenges in society.

The vision of this first conference on homosexuality and disability in sports, “building bridges” came to life during this afternoon session. Experiences were shared, contacts were made and future cooperations were initiated. In the end the participants agreed on two main statements to describe their results:

Mobility is most vital for **disabled people**, **visibility** is most vital for **LGBT people**.

“Doppelt anders? Zur Lebenssituation junger Lesben, Schwuler und Bisexueller mit Behinderung”

Twice different? About the life conditions of young lesbians, gays and bisexuals with disabilities. A qualitative study based on twelve in-depth interviews carried out by Silke Rudolph.

Results

Process of coming-out

- The coming-out is usually delayed by some years.
- Most participants suffered from negative reactions of the close social surroundings. Discrimination by own parents was experienced as most hurting.
- Boys experienced less support, both, boys and girls consulted advice centres and made contacts to other LGBTs.
- All participants desired support in the process of coming-out. Advice is as necessary as contacts to the LGBT community to find out about the own identity as well as developing a group identity.
- The influence of the disability on the coming-out process was negative in most cases because all feared a further burdening.
- The influence of the coming-out process on the disability was judged to be rather unimportant.

Experiences on discrimination, social exclusion and acceptance

- Overall all participants describe experiences of discrimination and social exclusion due to their disability.
- Most of the participants experienced discrimination regarding their homo- or bisexuality.
- Discrimination is experienced at work but also from physically challenged friends. “Being a lesbian creates a new difference, now she is no longer equal among equals”.
- In the gay community most young men experienced disrespect and scorn from gay men without a disability. Young women experienced both acceptance and disrespect from lesbian women without a disability.
- All participants were confronted with various prejudices of people without disabilities. Physically challenged are often regarded as mentally challenged.

Psychosocial situation

- Most boys and girls were unhappy about their social contacts.
- Enduring partnerships seemed impossible to most of the participants due to the disability. One-night-stands seem to be possible to young men but not to young women.
- Lesbian women without disability seem to be more interested in friendship than in a relationship.
- The participants’ experiences in partnerships were rather negative in terms of not being accepted and trusted.
- Almost all girls and boys experienced severe disappointments and conflicts. These led to great emotional pressure, frustration and suicidal tendencies.

Sexuality

- Sexual education is focused on heterosexuality and does not even mention homo- or bisexuality. Sexual education in schools is too late and too theoretical.
- The outer perception of sexuality is dominated by the idea, that people with a disability do not have any sexuality and do not have sexual desires.
- Asked about their own sexuality, almost all participants stated to be pleased and to act openly and self-confident about it.

Conclusions and consequences

Institutions for people with disabilities as well as youth work and handicapped work as well as gays, lesbians and bisexuals without disabilities need to realise that they have a great reliability towards these young people. They need to establish a respectful and accepting behaviour and offer help and advice to those who need it. The lack of advice might result in a high psychological strain. Sensitivity and commitment is needed in dealing with physically challenged LGBTs, not all of them need automatically help. It is necessary to be careful about stigmatising people, because like other individuals physically challenged LGBTs need help maybe only temporarily.

Integration of Physically Challenged People in the EuroGames 2004

1. Introduction

The EuroGames are a European sports event for a broad, predominantly gay and lesbian, public. The event has been in existence since 1992 and takes place nearly every year in various cities in Europe. The games in Munich in July 2004 were, with 5,000 participants in 26 different sports, the biggest which have yet taken place. For the first time in the history of the games, there was active publicity aimed at athletes with special needs, and support for their integration.

In addition to sporting objectives, the EuroGames always have a political dimension. They intentionally work against the discrimination and marginalization in sports of minority groups in society. By means of the integration of people with disabilities at the EuroGames in Munich, not only discrimination against gays and lesbians in sports, but also the whole field of (homo)sexuality, disability and sports became a subject for discussion.

1.1. Coordination of Activities concerning Disability within the Organization of the EuroGames in Munich

In order to coordinate the individual activities, two specialists were recruited into the organization team of the EuroGames, quite specifically for the integration of physically challenged people at the EuroGames. They were responsible for the coordination of the individual activities and for advising the organizers on specialized topics concerning disabilities. To deal with enquiries on the subject of disability a dedicated email address was set up. All the enquiries, requests and questions on matters concerning disability were concentrated here, the email address being used both by the participants and by the organizers of the EuroGames.

1.2. Publicizing the EuroGames among Physically Challenged Athletes (Marketing)

The EuroGames are aimed principally at gays, lesbians bisexual and transgenders, but participation is open to everyone. Therefore we also wanted within the field of disabilities to encourage gays and lesbians with disabilities to take part in a gay/lesbian event, and at the same time, by means of our marketing actions, to reach heterosexuals with disabilities. For this reason our marketing measures in the area of disability were directed at all athletes with disabilities.

Athletes with disabilities are to a great extent organized in the sports associations for the physically challenged. In cooperation with the Bavarian association (Bayerischer Versehrtensportverband, BVS) it was possible to include informational material on the EuroGames with the BVS postal distribution, and thus make sportswomen and sportsmen with disabilities aware of the Euro-

Games. Additionally, advertisements were placed and articles published in the magazines of the BVS to draw readers' attention to the EuroGames.

In all the marketing actions attention was drawn to the possible participation of physically challenged athletes, in the registration brochure sportswomen and sportsmen with special needs were explicitly invited to take part in the games, and in the descriptions of all the sports the possibility of taking part was also explicitly included.

1.3. Internal Education on the Integration of the Physically Challenged

It was the aim of the EuroGames to integrate athletes with disabilities into the sporting and cultural program. Particularly in the area of sports, it was necessary to explain to the organizers of the various individual sports how this integration could work. A number of sessions were arranged to deal with the topic in depth. The responsibility for the content and structure of these evenings was in the hands of our coordinators for disabilities and of the BVS.

2. Activities involving the Physically Challenged during EuroGames

2.1. Culture

It was intended to make disabilities and the people living with them visible during the EuroGames, and thus to open this subject for discussion. One aspect was the integration of artists with disabilities into the cultural program of the EuroGames. The dancers in wheelchairs from USC Munich were part of the program of the opening ceremony in the Olympic Hall. The group "Höllensblitz und Stöckelschuh", a group of people with mental disabilities, was included in the stage program of the Rainbow Village, and the group "Tonsatz", a physically challenged group, in one of the cultural events at the Literaturhaus.

2.2. Sport

Altogether 46 physically challenged people were integrated in 17 different sports. Within the framework of the dance tournament in the Olympic Hall, a special tournament took place, where the participating couples danced in a competition with its own assessment. Athletes with disabilities were integrated into the regular program in all the other sports and assessed separately.

An obstacle course for wheelchairs in the Rainbow Village at the Coubertinplatz in the Olympic Park made it possible for people who do not use wheelchairs to complete the course sitting in a wheelchair, and thus acquire the experience from a wheelchair-

The dancers in wheelchairs from USC Munich at the opening ceremony of the EuroGames 2004 in Munich



perspective. Here again it was the intention to make the topic of disability visible. This obstacle course was organized by the institute for sport science of the Technical University in Munich together with their students.

2.3. Miscellaneous

In choosing the sports venues, particular attention was paid to accessibility by wheelchair. In addition, at the cultural events, at the sports events as required, at the press conference, and at the central EuroGames info-desk, sign-language interpreters were present. The presence of these interpreters demonstrated the visibility of the integration of physically challenged people as a matter of course at all the important occasions during the EuroGames. Because the subject of disability had been made public on such a broad basis, physically challenged volunteer helpers and hosts for private accommodation could also be found. Thus integration could take place on this level as well.

3. Conference on Homosexuality and Disability

“The conference on homosexuality and disability” took place on 30.07.2004 at the university sports department. The aim of the conference was to establish connections between the fields of disability, sport and discrimination. Specialist lectures by international speakers, portraits of athletes with disabilities and a workshop made it possible to illustrate all aspects of the topics from varying points of view.

The conference was publicized internationally with its own flyer. The language at the conference was English, and around 50 people took part.

4. Summary

Although 47 registered participants in the sports program of EuroGames in Munich is a very small number of people with disabilities, these 47 registrations do however represent a huge success for the EuroGames. This is the first time in the history of the games that invitations were so intensively directed at the physically challenged, and that disability was made so visible during the games. The conference also showed that disabilities and homosexuality have up to now been an area of much greater taboos than homosexuality in general, for which reason it has been more difficult for the physically challenged to participate in events such as EuroGames. It is our opinion that the activities in Munich have created a consciousness of the subject of homosexuality and disability, and have laid the foundation stone for the integration of physically challenged persons to be considered at future gay and lesbian sports events.

5. Statistics on the Registration of Physically Challenged Athletes

Frequency %			Frequency %		
Disability			Country of origin		
Blind/visually impaired	5	10.6	Austria	2	4.3
Hearing impaired	15	31.9	Belgium	1	2.1
Physical	2	4.3	Bulgaria	3	6.4
Physial/Medication	1	2.1	Denmark	4	8.5
Physical/Wheelchair	2	4.3	France	1	2.1
Medication	19	40.4	Germany	24	51.1
Wheelchair	3	6.4	Italy	1	2.1
Participation in outreach program			The Netherlands	3	6.4
Yes	3	6.4	Norway	1	2.1
No	44	93.6	Spain	1	2.1
Type of participation			Sweden	1	2.1
Active participant	41	87.2	Switzerland	4	8.5
Participant/Host	1	2.1	United Kingdom	1	2.1
Participant/Volunteer	4	8.5	Sport		
Spectator	1	2.1	Aerobic	1	
Age group			Airgun shooting	2	
up to 30	7	14.9	Badminton	4	
31 to 40	26	55.3	Basketball	4	
41 to 50	11	23.4	Bench press	2	
over 50	3	6.4	Bowling	1	
Sex			Cheerleading	1	
Female	13	27.7	Chess	1	
Male	34	72.3	Dancing	7	
Member of gay/lesbian sports club			Football	4	
Yes	22	46.8	Rowing	1	
No	25	53.2	Swimming	6	
			Tennis	5	
			Track and field	3	
			Triathlon	2	
			Volleyball	1	
			Wrestling	1	
			No sport	1	

Total: 47 participants (= 100%)

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