

Farewell message from your Chairperson

Dear friends,

This issue of the newsletter reaches you just before we will meet for our 4th ICEVI European Conference to be held in Chemnitz, Germany, 14 – 18 august 2005. This conference will be an historic one. It will be the first European meeting where Europe, as the first ICEVI region to have introduced memberships, will report about the success or failure of this new constitutional duty. It will also be the first European meeting where elections for the European Committee will be held, instead of this procedure taking place during the World Conference, as happened in the past.

Because of this change in the rules, the term between elections of ICEVI Europe committee members has been necessarily shortened to 3 years. According to ICEVI rules some very experienced colleagues in the committee will not be standing for reappointment because they have already served two terms. You will find their names in the following pages as well as the names of the proposed successors for the different subregions. On behalf of ICEVI Europe, and also on my own behalf, I would like to thank all these volunteers for having devoted their leisure time to help progress the work of ICEVI in the world of visual disabilities.

I followed Herman Gresnigt as the European chairperson knowing that it would mean very hard work for any successor following in his footsteps. Being from day one without any financial support was a big challenge because from that time on we had to rely on membership fees which have proved to be until now only half successful. You may remember that the financial resources from Dutch foundations stopped when Herman handed over the chairmanship. Another challenge was finding out how things could be done by a chairperson who was still in full employment considering that a large amount of honorary work has to be carried out for ICEVI. You may not be surprised by the fact that I will not be standing for election as chairperson due to the commitments of my professional work and for my institution, the Blindeninstitutsstiftung. There is no doubt that the tasks of a chairperson demand a lot of time which should not be limited by the restrictions of other duties. I came to this decision half a year ago and I am very happy to present you with a candidate who personally and institutionally is very well qualified to lead ICEVI Europe into the future: Dr Hans Welling, Director of Visio, The Netherlands, and at present, a member of the European Committee (see short CV in this newsletter).

I would like to thank you all for your support; for many signs of friendship which I have experienced; and for the confidence which you all had in me. Continuing my work in the European Committee as the immediate past chairperson I will go on developing the European way of ICEVI with all the other members to reach ICEVI's goal "Education for all".

Eberhard Fuchs

Chairperson

ICEVI Europe