

New Audio Technology for Blind People

editors

J M Gill and G Butcher

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Technical Development Department

Royal National Institute for the Blind

224 Great Portland Street

London W1N 6AA

England

Concerted Action on Technology and Blindness

BME Secretary

Dr V Thevenin, CEE, DG XII, 200 Rue de la Loi, B-1049 Bruxelles, Belgium. Tel: + 32-2-235 0034; Telex 21877 Comeu B;
Fax + 32-2-235 0145.

BME Responsible

Dr A Sargentini Daniele, Laboratorio Tecnologie Biomediche, Istituto Superiore Sanita, Viale Regina Elena 299, 00161
Roma, Italy. Tel: + 39-6-495 5763; Telex 610071 Istisan; Fax + 39-6-495 7621.

Dr B van Eijnsbergen, TNO Corporate Planning Department, PO Box 297, Juliana van Stolberglaan 148, 2501 BD The Hague,
The Netherlands. Tel: + 31-70-496442; Telex 31660 Tnogy NL; Fax + 31-70-855700.

PMG Members

Project Leader: Dr P L Emiliani, IROE-CNR, Via Panciatichi 64, 50127 Firenze, Italy. Tel: + 39-55-4378512; Telex 570231
Iroe; Fax + 39-55-410893.

Dr J M Gill, Royal National Institute for the Blind, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA, England. Tel: + 44-1-
388 1266 ext 2371; Fax + 44-1-388 2034.

Dr P Graziani, IROE-CNR, Via Panciatichi 64, 50127 Firenze, Italy. Tel: + 39-55-4378512; Telex 570231 Iroe; Fax + 39-55-
410893.

Miss J Silver, Moorfields Eye Hospital, City Road, London EC1V 2PD, England. Tel: + 44-1-253 3411 ext 2100; Telex 266129
Mehcr G; Fax + 44-1-250 3207.

Dr M Soede, Institute for Rehabilitation Research, Zandbergweg 111, 6432 CC Hoensbroek, The Netherlands. Tel: + 31-
45-224300; Fax + 31-45-226370.

Dr J A Soerensen, Electronics Laboratory, Technical University of Denmark, Building 344, DK-2800 Lyngby, Denmark.
Tel: + 45-2-881566; Telex 37529 Dthdia.

Dr M Truquet, Centre Tobia, Universite Paul Sabatier, 118 Route de Narbonne, F-31062 Toulouse Cedex, France. Tel:
+ 33-61-556944; Telex 512880; Fax + 33-61-556470.

Mr R F V Witte, Deutsche Blindenstudienanstalt, Am Schlag 8-10, D-3550 Marburg/Lahn, German Federal Republic. Tel:
+ 49-6421-606100; Telex 4821106; Fax + 49-6421-606229.

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Medical and Health Research Programme of the EC

Biomedical Engineering in the European Community

The involvement of the European Community (EC) in the field of Medical and Health Research started in 1978 with the first Programme which contained three projects. Since then, it has steadily expanded and it will include about 120 projects by the end of the fourth Programme (1987-1991).

The general goal of the programme is clearly to contribute to a better quality of life by improving health, and its distinctive feature is to strengthen European collaboration in order to achieve this goal.

The main objectives of this collaboration are:

1. Increase the scientific efficiency of the relevant research and development efforts in the Member States through their gradual coordination at Community level following the mobilization of the available research potential of national programmes, and also their economic efficiency through sharing of tasks and strengthening the joint use of available health research resources,
2. Improve scientific and technical knowledge in the research and development areas selected for their importance to all Member States, and promote its efficient transfer into practical applications, taking particular account of potential industrial and economic developments in the areas concerned,
3. Optimize the capacity and economic efficiency of health care efforts throughout the countries and regions of the Community.

The current programme consists of six research targets. Four are related to major health problems: cancer, AIDS, age-related problems, and personal environment and life-style related problems: two are related to health resources: medical technology development and health services research.

Funds are provided by the Community for relevant "concerted action" activities which consist of research collaboration and coordination in EC Member States and/or in other European participant countries. Networks of research institutes can be set up and supported by means of meetings, workshops, short-term staff exchanges/visits to other countries, information dissemination and so on: centralized facilities such as data banks, computing, and preparation and distribution of reference materials can also be funded. The funds are not direct research grants; the institutes concerned must fund the research activities carried out within their own countries - it is the international coordination activities which are eligible for Community support. Each such research network is placed under the responsibility of a project leader chosen from among the leading scientists in the network, with the assistance of a project management group representing the teams participating in the network.

The Commission of the European Communities is assisted in the execution of this Programme by a Management and Coordination Advisory Committee (CGC - Medical and Health Research), and by

