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Neuauflage

**Disablement as a Structural Crisis
of the Human Being,
the Business Enterprise
and the State**

**methodical considerations
on possibilities
of overcoming it**

Initiated by
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European Year of People with Disabilities EYPD

A timeless text for thought and action
by Peter Perutz

Vienna, 2004

Der Bundespräsident

If politics is to hinge on convictions, and only in this way can it be truly convincing, then it must be based on proven skills and well-grounded knowledge.

Thus, in our sympathy towards others as a prerequisite for more effective political measures for society, we need to improve our understanding of the internal and external living conditions of disabled people when it comes to their recognition and protection.



It is in this light that I should like to express my appreciation for the activities of the “Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation (ÖAR)” which has long been directing its efforts to the achievement of this very understanding in our society. I consider that it is particularly important to give pride of place to psychological and social recognition in any approach or planning in this area. It is only once we have embraced the profound belief that there are no “perfect human beings,” nor should there be any, that we will be able to adequately attend to and care for all those who have to cope with a physical or mental challenge.

Peter Perutz’ timeless fundamental idea conveys a dual message: Only those who really know about physical or mental challenges with all their attendant consequences on life, education and training, work, as well as everyday life, will be motivated to provide the individual with the necessary help and social protection.

A great deal of progress has already been achieved in raising awareness, but our society’s efforts must continue.

In view of the global trend towards perfection, we must be increasingly prepared to address peoples’ weaknesses and various needs for support. Political maturity consists among other things in observing and determining where and how we can assist, all the while being guided by our unswerving convictions.

It is in this spirit that I wish the “Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation“ the best of success and may your publication “Die Behinderung als Strukturkrise” (Disablement as a Structural Crisis) receive the recognition that it deserves!

Alexander Van der Bellen

DISABLEMENT AS A STRUCTURAL CRISIS OF THE HUMAN BEING, THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISE AND THE STATE

METHODICAL CONSIDERATIONS
ON POSSIBILITIES OF OVERCOMING IT

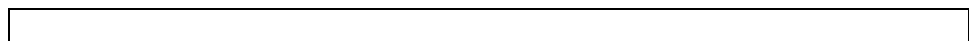
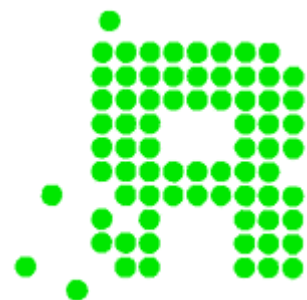
by Peter Perutz

On the occasion of the 2nd Delegates' Meeting of the Österreichische
Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation (Austrian Association of
Rehabilitation)

Organized by:

Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation
(Austrian Association of Rehabilitation)

1010 Wien, Stubenring 2/1/4
Tel.: 0043 (1) 513 15 33 Fax: -150 DW
Web: www.oeaar.or.at
E-Mail: dachverband@oeaar.or.at



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DISABLEMENT AS A STRUCTURAL CRISES OF THE HUMAN BEING, THE BUSINESS AND THE STATE

Mr. President of the Austrian Parliament, Messrs. members of the government, Mr. President of the Association for Rehabilitation, Ladies and Gentlemen:

You will certainly ask, or probably have already asked: "Why deal with such a subject in a delegates' meeting, why mention the Business Enterprise and the State and, finally, why discuss disablement instead of the disabled?" As an introduction I would like to answer these questions.

Like every association, you have made an issue of central interest a common objective. As I can see from the programme, you will hold your new elections within a few hours. Discussions before new elections frequently lead to heated arguments between different groups of members about purposeful ways and means to achieve certain objectives. You certainly would not be the first association to have differing opinions on the definition of your own objectives, and I assume you have had sufficient time and opportunity to discuss these problems during the past weeks and days. Even if you have reached an agreement, it does not necessarily mean that you have found the optimum future course of action for your Association and, above all, for its members, the disabled.

Therefore, as an outsider invited to address your 1982 assembly, I feel it my task to discuss a subject which I hope will help you to discover stimulating new goals. You will see that these objectives reach beyond your Association, concern all disabled individuals and will encourage you to integrate your thinking and acting for the benefit of other minority groups, as well as for all of us. Strange as this may sound, this attitude is certainly in the future interests of all members.

Why talk about the Business Enterprise and the State?

Disabled individuals frequently believe they are the only individuals in the state who are disabled. In this introductory paper I shall ignore the regulations of the various insurances and other institutional provisions. After all, the institutionalisation of matters and circumstances will serve for their stabilisation. As a future-orientated outsider I much rather ask myself, which matters and circumstances could it be worthwhile institutionalising in the future? If you will permit me to cast off traditional intellectual bonds, I would like to look upon the disabled not just as social-welfare cases, but as the personification of a structural crisis. Many disabled individuals have lived through this: practically from one second to the next all factors constituting their normal lives are changed. What remains is the person's bare life. Everything else is completely different. The human being is suddenly described by an adjective, even the word human being is often only mentioned indirectly: Disabled. Some disabled persons are seized gradually by this structural crisis, until they are finally more and more restricted in their margin of manoeuvre. Others even cause the structural crisis themselves. They are irresponsible or reckless. Some have simply been unlucky. Fate has pushed them into a structural crisis, sometimes even before they were born and, probably more often than is believed, before their conception.

Individually and collectively, thousands and thousands of disabled persons in Austria as well as all over the world have to live with a structural crisis, accept it, shape it, alter its outlines, revalue its contents and develop it into platform. Some have even managed to free themselves from it. These individuals have succeeded in casting of the adjective generally characterising them.

They no longer need to be integrated - they are simply human beings.

Business enterprises or States also may slowly stumble or suddenly fall into structural crises or are pushed into them from outside. What they are missing is the long experience of the "world of the disabled". Unfortunately this experience is still widely dispersed, often hidden away and not yet available to the general public.

Why talk about disablement instead of the disabled?

The "world of the disabled" has in the past decades gained more importance than any other minority group in the State requiring special expenditure and attention. This actually encouraging circumstance is not only due to their own initiative, however Austrian disabled persons are lucky to live in a country with high social welfare standards. And I especially want to point out this fact for it could be taken for granted by some people.

This social welfare state first had to be built up by strenuous effort, had to be restored and recreated. Some present in this hall probably suffered personally for their involvement with disabled individuals, participated actively in the reconstruction of Austria after the Second World War and then created the basic conditions which permit us today to have a delegates meeting honoured by the presence of high officials of the Federal Republic of Austria. A social minority has established and consolidated itself a minority which is recognized in the country and also on an international level. To be able to live in a social welfare state should never be taken for granted, not even in the future. Social subsidies cost a lot of money which has to be earned first by someone before it is spent on those in need. The "world of the disabled" will, in spite of all kinds of cost-reducing initiatives, always have to be subsidized. The overall unstable economic situation will require a high degree of insistence and determination by those responsible for this country to be able to maintain the volume of subsidies.

In my opinion every single citizen, every single business enterprise and every single state Institution, including those belonging to the diversified "world of the disabled", have to be held responsible for their own future development. Every individual in a country is his own general manager, an independent entrepreneur with regard to his own margin of manoeuvre, no matter how big or small it may be. May I further illustrate this train of thought: Even a convict in the corner of his cell is a general manager, better still the independent entrepreneur of his own margin of manoeuvre. His scope of action may be small for the moment, but with the above principle in mind he will be able to intellectually free himself. He will be able to shake off, the adjective "imprisoned" dominating him, even while still in jail. The rich diversity of human development is open to anyone conscious of his responsibility for his own entrepreneurial margin of manoeuvre.

Those who rely on rising subsidies in the future will be imprisoned by themselves. I think it will be possible to still reduce costs and at the same time enhance the joy of living of disabled persons and their environment, by means of a joint feeling of success and by increasing the autonomy of disabled persons. For this purpose I have written the Swiss contribution to the International Year of Disabled Persons for the OECD, Paris, which has been published by the Swiss Federal Authority for Education and Science in Bern and has been distributed for discussion to those concerned with social development. The numerous graphic illustrations are structured in a way so as to stimulate further interest in the matter. Especially presented in this paper are points of departure and ideas for evaluating subsidies and their respective basic effectiveness in this sector. In spite of these and other efforts to reduce costs, the Social Welfare State, that is the frame of the "world of the disabled" will also in future require for its maintenance much care, understanding, strenuous effort and even sacrifice.

Altogether, I believe that, from a general point of view, rather too much than too little has been said about disabled persons in the past months. Recently a student of Geneva University, confined to a wheelchair, was pursued by his fellow-students on his way home by car. They caught up with him and beat him up, with the comment that they had enough of the Year of the Disabled. The wheelchair-user was taken to hospital, his colleagues (if I still dare to use the word) to jail. Public indignation was considerable. But that's not enough. It's action we need!

This in mind, as well as the basic ideas of my introductory paper for your congress at Strebersdorf in 1981 entitled "TO BE a minority - TO BECOME a source of renewal", I would like to direct your attention from disabled individuals to disablement as such. Such individuals are not only specialists in surviving from day to day, they are also specialists in rethinking, learning afresh, patience, perseverance and deep feeling. Actually, unwillingly they are, at the same time, specialists concerning structural crises. They have particularly learned to cope with a lasting disability the outlines of which consolidate instead of disappear. The details of it may sometimes change but it continues - in short: disablement as a structural crisis.

This situation will have to be faced by more and more people, business enterprises and states. Just like most of today's disabled individuals, business enterprises and countries were hardly able to recognize the beginning of structural crises. At school at any rate I

never heard of this subject and was never presented with any methods preparing me for such situations in life or for coping with them. Now we all have to make up for this and seek experience where available, in the "world of the disabled" for instance.

Dispersed elements are found more easily, judged more objectively and put together into a purposeful unit more effectively if there is some conceptual work already available to refer to.

I have tried on several occasions to bring some thought-processes from the background to the fore, hoping that someone else would take them off my hands, improve them and use these instruments to cope with structural crises. Any day now the University of Neuchâtel will publish the first part of my papers presented in the Canton of Neuchâtel during 1981, the Year of Disabled Persons. Five different ways to overcome a structural crisis are presented and described in this contribution. Today, on the occasion of your 1982 Delegates' Meeting, I would like to describe three more ways to overcome structural crises:

1. To develop external objectives, directed towards others.
2. First BE - then HAVE.
3. The small word AS - looked at as an instrument.

Of course I will try to illustrate each subject matter with examples taken from life, from the business enterprise and from the state.

1. DEVELOP OBJECTIVES, DIRECTED OUTWARDS, TOWARDS OTHERS

Any objectives which a human being, a business enterprise or a state want to achieve for themselves are self-restrictive as such: An association for rehabilitation with disabled persons as members will have rehabilitation as an objective. When this objective has been achieved, if it can be achieved at all, you have only reached the zero-level from which the majority usually start. Business enterprise aiming at constantly producing high quality in international competition is also aiming merely at a zero-level, for if this aim is not achieved, it's a failure, and if it is achieved, the market will only take it for granted, i.e. no extra profit can be expected. A nation or its institutions, aiming at having no unemployment also corresponds to an objective which is directed towards itself preventing undesirable conditions.

Such objectives are of course justified for all kinds of reasons. But often it is overlooked that these objectives cause or intensify behaviour patterns which can completely unbalance an individual, a family, a business enterprise or a nation. Lists of demands are compiled, exceeding the necessary minimum, as they are competing with catalogues of demands of other groups. Lists of demands are usually based on the assumption that there will always be enough to be distributed. Disagreements within organisations occur. The winners gain internal victories that is, victories within their respective organisations. Such victories are, however, frequently of minor importance for the position and the future of an organisation, within its respective social or economic environment, whether it is an association, a business enterprise or a national institution.

Renewal is slowed down. Renewal however will require all available intellectual and material resources and frequently, to be really successful, even unforeseen additional energies. Experience shows that these will more easily develop in the case of objectives directed outwards, towards others,

The best chances exist if self-defined, and self-developed objectives are derived from one's own vision of how things should be and thus become the source of problems worth solving, and better still a solution to which you can contribute yourself, as an individual or jointly within a business enterprise or a nation.

Just think of the enormous energy a mother sometimes expends to prepare her children for adult life. Think of the overtime that is often worked voluntarily to finish a company's stand at a fair in time, or think of the outstanding courage of soldiers who help in cases of natural disasters.

Self-restrictive objectives directed towards oneself often become predominant in already successful, established organisations. Your Association, like many others in this nation, just like the nation itself, has been very successful during the past decades, whichever criteria you may consider. The big question is: How do you renew success?

How many people or business enterprises have an intact shell, but already sick contents and thus, seen from a structural point of view, poor future prospects. The formerly successful ones especially often use their resources to take care of their shell instead of renewing its contents and making them valuable in the eyes of others. For worthwhile contents it will be comparatively easy to find new shells.

Success, not based on structural renewal right from the beginning, will be a cradle for structural crises. These may occur at a later date or be played down in their effects in the hope that they will again disappear, be absorbed by others or that something unexpected may happen which solves the crises with one single stroke. Usually structural crises continue, however, until structural rethinking sets in or is forced in from outside. Therefore, it is not processes which are concerned, characterized by "a little more or a little less", but the seeking and finding of essentially new approaches by means of different ways of thinking and acting, based on what you are and what you have.

A first methodical beginning can be found in an objective turned outwards, the putting into operation of which will be considered a contribution by others. This is based on the assumption that later positive reactions will result concerning the source of these contributions. Such solutions were formerly reserved for brilliant and at the same time humane individuals. Today they can be found by means of a methodologically conceived approach. In other words: a kind of democratisation of becoming a genius has developed in the field of defining objectives.

I would like to summarize this issue once more from a different angle. It is certainly more promising to put into operation structural renewal with people or organisations who are proud of their work's effect on others instead of just being proud of the work as such or the efforts

which they have deployed and the hardships they have gone through.

This insight has helped me to deal for nearly two decades with new products, new markets, new activities, new jobs, new development projects, in short with "renewal". The impact achieved makes me optimistic in spite of all the contradictions and obstacles. Structural crises can be overcome!

Another way out of structural crises may be based on the following thought process:

2. First BE, then HAVE

After the Second World War, and the birth of a new Federal Republic of Austria, many disabled persons, especially the mentally handicapped and those who had heroically taken care of them, could breathe a sigh of relief. They had escaped those of their fellow-citizens ready to judge their productivity by social criteria which included the liquidation of entire groups of people. TO BE should not be taken for granted.

The diverse, often cruel possibilities of being reduced to the state of not-being were moved to the background after the Second World War. Accidents at work seldom constitute interesting news and car accidents, whether you are the victim and the cause of them, seem too isolated and uncoordinated to change any behaviour pattern. Terrorist activities are more likely to shake the complacency of people living in prosperity. The concept "TO BE" once more gains importance. From my methodical point of view reflections concerning the term "TO BE" are instrumental in coping with structural crises.

But first a few comments concerning the term "TO HAVE".

Once "TO BE" is taken more or less for granted, people tend to concentrate on "TO HAVE".

Since World War Two rising figures have increasingly raised enthusiasm. This is quite justified since truly great things have been achieved and incredible progress has been made. With quantitative dimensions we can, however, only seize fractions. By means of analyses it has become possible to quantify more precisely and the better these analyses are, the more they stimulate curiosity and a readiness to contribute. But in spite of all these figures, a part has remained uncovered. This part has kept growing, has become

increasingly important, yet still has not been sufficiently considered. First a state of imbalance developed and only later the feeling for it. Intellectual lines of communication have been neglected or stretched thin. Consequently, the effects of seemingly brilliant solutions will be reduced, the defensive part of the margin of manoeuvre will fall away. Stress appears in order to obtain success often causing an excessive move forward due to a quite unnecessary fear of lack of time. People organize, rationalize, mechanize, professionalize and specialize until, step by step, hardly noticeable, the intellectual mobility becomes lost. The offensive part of the margin of manoeuvre will simultaneously start to disintegrate. This process will often be aggravated by the fact that success frequently leads to a material expansion, thus increasing inertia.

Enthusiasm for figures will sometimes even result in a kind of competition between the different national delegates in international meetings as to who most represents disabled persons. The biggest success, however, would be if the delegates' meeting did not have to be held at all - due to a lack of disabled persons. I keep asking myself: Who will authentically, i.e. truly and to his own advantage, be interested within the institutionalised "world of the disabled", in the fact that prevention is better than cure?

"TO HAVE" has overtaken "TO BE". Seen from a philosophical point of view, this implies a real danger for the development of modern society. The philosopher Erich Fromm has published reflections of great practical importance for all of us in his book "Haben und Sein" ("To Have and To Be") which appeared in 1976. I have specifically been using these two terms as instruments to elaborate several kinds of industrial concentration and diversification strategies since 1970. In 1974 I presented a paper to a European meeting of industrialists and management consultants in Zurich about solutions which had been found and put into operation, attributing principal importance to the difference between the concepts "TO BE" and "TO HAVE". This paper was later published and translated into several languages.

Reflections upon the term "TO BE" could, if well systemised, provide a basis for alternatives the favourable implications of which can hardly be judged at present. Three examples illustrate this fact. Don't let yourself be deceived by the simplicity of my examples and don't believe that such solutions can be found easily.

The first example is that of a human being. These grossly simplified, but true examples are meant purely for illustration purposes.

A Vietnamese economist who had studied in Switzerland wanted a job involving travel on an international scale. Potential local employers did not want an employee with such exotic looks, however. So we jointly changed the direction of his efforts. Until then he had been looking for a job suited to what he HAD - a diploma in economics. From the moment he started looking for a job suited to what he is - i.e. Vietnamese, he was, so to say, lucky. Since then he has been travelling all over the world to coordinate aid programmes, first for Vietnam and then also for other East Asian countries. There is much less competition if you proceed on the basis of what you are - every individual is unique! But many have the same or similar diplomas!

An example concerning a business enterprise: A printing company decides to buy a newspaper to make better use of its production capacity. It purchases yet another newspaper to make use of further rationalisation reserves. After the purchase of a third newspaper the question arises whether this enterprise IS still a printing company HAVING three papers or is now a publishing firm, HAVING printing works. The targets, investments, desirable partners, promising technologies and many other business elements, decisive for the future of such a company, will therefore differ fundamentally. An Awareness of such structurally different alternatives will be necessary to prevent the business enterprise from stumbling into a structural crisis. How many of these alternatives having structural implications will be recognized in time, as long as attention is mainly concentrated on the term "TO HAVE"?

An example which concerns a state. The Swiss discovered a long time ago that they HAD nothing: no mineral resources, no oil, very limited arable land, no big river. A glance at the world map will show you that Switzerland is hardly more than a dot. This fact has, however, been put to good use: for instance as the hub of the financial, diplomatic and scientific world. HAVING nothing led to BEING a lot, and, as you all know, finally led to HAVING. What the Swiss did then by intuition has since been done systematically. Another example: Switzerland is an international place of learning and training. From all over the world students came and attend Swiss schools. I would like to remind you in this context that the founder of the worldwide reputation of Swiss educational methods, Pestalozzi, derived many fundamental insights from his work with mentally handicapped children.

The fact: To BE a place of learning, up to now was regarded as only indirectly useful by industry and business. Persons educated in

Switzerland would hopefully buy Swiss products and services, having known and used them during their training. Systematic thinking has also brought about the following additional outlook: the specialist returning from Switzerland to his home country will frequently find a level of technological development which does not allow him to make full use of the knowledge acquired in highly industrialised Switzerland. He therefore needs a suitable mini-equipment. Since then, for instance, many dentists from far away countries take home with them after their studies a small suitcase containing a complete dentistry equipment. At home, this Swiss product, one of many examples, is set up and ready for use - TO BE a place of training leads to rewards linked to the term "TO HAVE".

Within the scope of this address to your 1982 meeting, I would also like to direct your attention to another, third thought process which can lead one out of structural crises. Of course, I will again try to use examples to show that the same way of thinking can be applied to an individual, business enterprise or a state. This is, I think, of paramount importance. In our complicated world you would assume that the individual, the business enterprise and the state inevitably develop along separate lines, moving further and further apart and being less and less transparent to each other. To exaggerate, there is a danger that in prosperous times mutual requests expressed in terms of money will constitute the main bridges, whilst in bad times it will be common fear. I hope to be able to prove to you that there are thought-processes useful for the above three - let's call them "special worlds" - which will link their respective development to the advantage of each of them.

3. THE SMALL WORD AS – CONSIDERED AS AN INSTRUMENT

In a discussion, if you listen carefully, certain prejudices colouring the statements of the talkers will quickly come to the surface: e.g. a human being is discussed and, explicitly or implicitly, it becomes clear that this person is regarded AS a disabled person, whatever you say about him. This is a prejudice, as this same human being can also be regarded AS a sportsman, AS a father or a mother, AS a citizen and AS being engaged in several other activities - a human being in his multiple roles typical yet unique.

If you are looking for a job as a disabled person this may be more difficult than if you are looking for a job as an individual who is disabled. A versatile human being rich in resources to be detected, stands before you. It is not only his physical or intellectual constitution that counts. This fact becomes one of many. Just think of a human being living in a country AS a foreign worker. The facts: geographic origin or nationality influence the rest. In fact, every human being is the centre of a star with numerous beams. Those who see a human being as concentrated in only one beam could lose their foresight into the future due to their lack of realism. They are full of prejudices and block themselves.

The small word AS, connected with a noun, can also play an important part if a business enterprise is reoriented, moved from a traditional but stagnating economic sector to a promising new one. To illustrate this, I shall give another extremely simplified example which I have lived through from the start to its successful end: A producer of explosives used to work for a saturated market. A systematic examination of the circumstances provided an amazingly simple solution. In other words: that the factory building is still there and that the customers are still alive prove that this producer of explosives is a specialist in the solution of safety problems: safety at the place of work, safety of storing dangerous materials, safety of transporting explosives, protection from theft, safety in the use of the products and many others. A quasi natural transition has been achieved with in the same business: starting from a manufacturer of explosives it developed into a manufacturing and service business enterprise AS a specialist in safety matters. The original production of explosives continued nonetheless.

Institutions should also from time to time, pay more attention to the small word AS.

1976 I was invited by the Standing Conference of the Rectors' and Vice-Chancellors of European Universities in Geneva to present a paper on my personal reflections regarding the future social impact of universities in Europe.

The identity of a university used to be a clear matter: a place of national, intellectual renewal with international influence. Today, if I may use another gross simplification to illustrate my train of thought, you can regard a university AS a place of education, AS a research centre, AS a focus of revolution, AS a factory for diplomas and many other things. To each single AS corresponds a different given structure, other points of emphasis and above all different effects on the environment. An identity crisis will develop if it has not been decided which AS will and can be individually or collectively fulfilled. As long as an organisation does not realise that it is undergoing an identity crisis or is unable to solve it, it goes through a structural crisis. In the case of several universities, this has led to a devaluation of their diplomas. More and more subject matters, originally regarded AS university tasks, were taken over by other independent organisations. The Standing Conference of Rectors and Vice-Chancellor recognized the importance of this identity crisis and started to think about it systematically.

The small word AS, pronounced or not, provides hints and ultimately, if systematically thought about, also ways out of a seemingly blocked situation.

To be disabled is a situation which does not only concern disabled persons but all of us. Since 1976 I have been trying to present subjects from a methodical point of view, showing how the "world of the disabled", i.e. the world of disabled human beings, is or should be practically connected with the rest of the population. The first subject matter discussed was the "world of the disabled" and its connections with industrial and service business enterprises in 1977. The increasing autonomy of disabled persons with regard to costs and the joy of living became another subject matter which I dealt with first in 1980. In the International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981, I examined the situation of the disabled from the angle of a minority group which could become a source of national renewal. Today, at your 1982 Delegates' Meeting, I have, by means of thought processes and examples, tried to demonstrate that all of us can make use of the experience of disabled persons to overcome structural crises.

Mr. Anton Benya, Chairman of the Nationalrat (Austrian Parliament)

standing in for Mr. Rudolf Kirchschräger, President of Austria.

Madam State-Secretary, dear Standing Committee, ladies and gentlemen. First of all I would like to thank you, Mr. Perutz, personally - even though I am positive that other delegates felt the same way I did - for your wonderful speech. I am sure there are people here who are asked to give speeches because of the office they hold - I am one of them and would therefore like to tell you how much I admired the way you spoke and the easy and straightforward way in which you managed to talk about and explain such complicated concepts. I sincerely thank you for this. I was very happy to have been able to hear your talk.

I was very glad to accept this invitation. I would like to extend to you all the regards of the federation of trade unions, whose chair I am, and of the Arbeiterkammertag, the workers' trade union. Since Mr. Neider explained at the beginning that this working group was set up thanks to retirement pension insurance, especially its employee group, and the federation of trade unions among others, I think it timely to underscore the major contribution of former Minister for Social Affairs, Mrs. Grete Rehor, whose efforts made it possible for such a working group to come into being. Her commitment to social action was already patent in her days in the trade union and in her work as Minister for Social Administration. It wasn't always easy, but she knew very well that "constant dropping wears away a stone." And this is how this working group came to exist, thanks to her - modest as she is, she will certainly add that it's not enough - but she would admit: "well... it was necessary."

This is why I would like to thank you, Madam Minister, for being tenacious. Indeed, were it not for your tenacity, this enterprise wouldn't have succeeded. As a man working in this organisation, this is something I won't deny - and we are not renowned for our openness, especially when it comes to opening our coffers. But it was successful.

It is very impressive to see that a single working group was founded in 1977, and that today, in 1982, it comprises so many small groups, organisations and bigger groups.

With approximately 60 organisations working together, the problem always boils down to a single fundamental question:

institutionalisation or individual initiative? In this particular case, initiatives have borne many more fruits than they would had there been an institutional framework.

To illustrate this, I would like to take the example of the cooperation between social and economic partners - this is something that also exists in Switzerland with the peace agreement. I think it was much better to decide to cooperate on a voluntary basis rather than setting up an institutional framework for cooperation. Indeed, institutions tend to be much more bureaucratic and they stifle initiatives.

If you consider the self-administration of social insurance, it's the same thing: these institutions have been set up on a legal basis, admittedly, but they have sufficient latitude for self-administration. The efforts within the working group are similar. Of course, this is a much more demanding process because there is a real need for discussion and each person, each sub-group tries to push its own ideas within the group.

As trade unionists, we can say that many things were achieved because, after World War II, we managed to reconstruct this country in a way that brought with it substantial improvements, a booming economy and employment. When the economy is doing well, it is also easier for disabled people to be integrated into the workplace. It is therefore important for us to sustain our efforts towards creating the necessary economic conditions, growth and profits so as to help the population on the whole and, as a consequence, make life easier for disabled people. And, unfortunately, this is not an easy thing to do: we haven't got to the point when we can speak about a real feeling of solidarity.

I still have in mind the speeches held during a special occasion for the year of the disabled at the Vienna Hofburg. What was clearly pointed out was the fact that the population is slow in confronting these matters.

One of the great tasks before the UN - even though one constantly wonders what these big international organisations are really there for - is to tackle these problems and then raise awareness about these issues in the entire world.

Since I have the great honour of standing in for our ailing President to welcome this conference, I would like to seize the opportunity to say that our President has always shown readiness to fully commit himself when people, especially disabled people, have asked him for

his help. This is the reason why we can rightfully say that efforts have always been made in our country, Austria. Mr. Perutz underlined the fact that our state has always put great efforts towards integrating social aspects into its policies and actions. The explanation to this is perhaps our experience of the period between the two world wars which made us realise that social security is essential. The result of such policies is that we may have lagged behind other countries in terms of income, but the most important measures of social security were also adopted to the benefit of all Austrians. Later, it became possible to catch up with the others in terms of income, and this, despite the burden of social security contributions - to use the expression coined in the corporate world.

In 1982, after only 5 years of activity, you have managed to bring together 60 associations to this conference. Today, the only thing I can wish is for you to find wide-reaching support in what you undertake and that you continue to progress along this track, which is most certainly very arduous.

Beyond the material support and the help which can be provided, I hope you will manage to sow the seed of humanity and solidarity within the population. It brings to my mind something our President said: there are people who prefer watching from afar so as to feel no encumbrance. I hope these people will realize they are following the wrong track. All people in this country should feel inclined towards cooperation and solidarity. In this spirit, I hope your conference will be fruitful and I wish you good luck from the bottom of my heart.

Delegates Meeting 1982 of the ÖAR,
(Österreichische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Rehabilitation)
Excerpt from the minutes

On the author, Peter Perutz

Born in Prague in 1936 he has lived through war and postwar years in Budapest and then in Vienna. His family has become Austrian Citizens in 1948.

1962 he was awarded the title of "Diplomingenieur" from Zurich's Polytechnikum of world fame. He specialized in mechanical engineering and industrial organisation.

Having acquired experience in factory management within a small outfit in Milano, Italy, he was accepted in the world headquarters of NESTLE in Vevey, Switzerland. First he helped coordinating the industrial procedures of associated companies within one given country. Then he entered a Headquarter's marketing unit responsible for a given product range on a world-wide scale.

Peter Perutz worked since 1968 for the Geneva-Laboratories of the BATTELLE-Foundation, Columbus, Ohio, USA during sixteen years. First he introduced studies on corporate objectives and strategy as an individual service to industry and governmental entities and then assisted also one or the other key development project of the Foundation.

The BATTELLE Foundation is the biggest private actor on contract-research world-wide.

Peter Perutz was named "senior research scientist" of the Geneva Laboratories (a function held by four individuals out of a staff of 730) Furthermore he was entered into the category "For the benefit of mankind" twice in accordance to the procedures of the Foundation. This honour is reserved to the very few among the more the 5000 staff members.

In 1983 Peter Perutz scaled his professional development down to a more human dimension as a masseur paid on an hourly basis. Time passing by he specialised on preparing people for public appearances. Among his clients are artists of world fame and other creative individuals.

From time to time Peter Perutz summed up his thoughts and intercultural experience in the form of texts receiving national and international attention. However they got into oblivion soon. Since 1999, twenty and more years later, one after the other is leaving the

drawers to propel action on a local, regional, national and even international scale.

Peter Perutz has won a five years long battle against cancer. He is gathering his forces and, as he says, finally becomes useful again.

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ÖSTERREICHISCHE ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT
FÜR REHABILITATION (ÖAR)

1010 Wien, Stubenring 2/1/4
Telefon: +43 1 5131533-0
Fax: +43 1 5131533-150

E-Mail: dachverband@oear.or.at
Internet: www.oear.or.at

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