



Europe for us

**Siblings issue:
stories of love and support**



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 36 to 44.

“Europe for us” is available in:

- English
- French
- German
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Netherlands
- Romanian
- Spanish

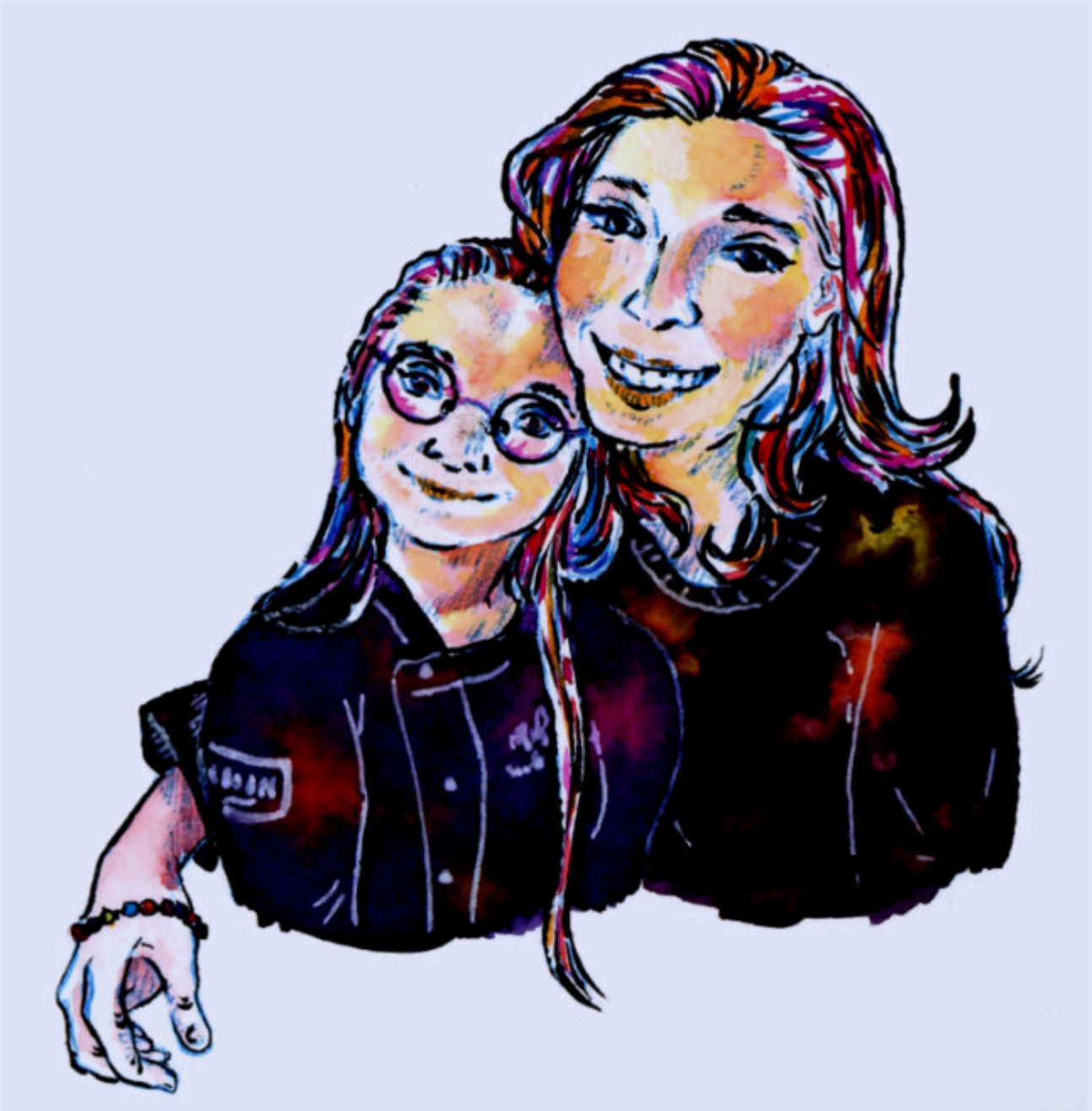
Go to www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us to find the other language versions.

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Inge and Esther





Inge is Researcher at Inclusion Europe
and Coordinator at EEG.



This story is about Inge's
relationship with her sister.



Esther has down syndrome.
Esther is 21 years old.



Sister's relationship

Inge was 3 years old
when Esther was born.



Inge and Esther had a lot of
fun when they were kids.

Inge and Esther made up
games to play together.

Inge always thought
that her sister was like her.



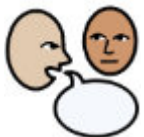
But people said that Esther
was not like other people.



Inge was confused to why
Esther was different from her.

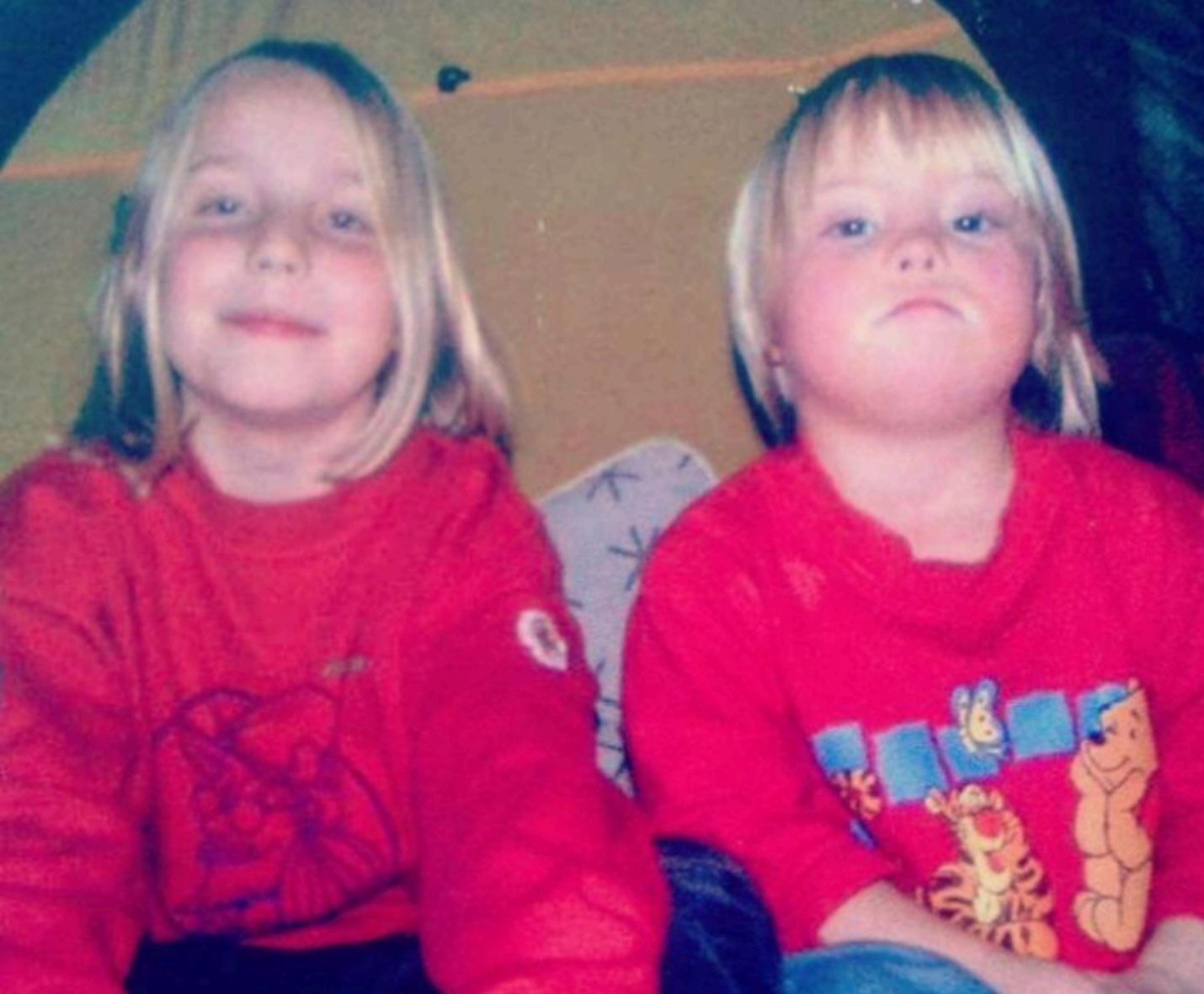


Inge and Esther always
understood each other well.



Inge was Esther's translator, because
it was difficult for Esther to talk before.

Esther easily understood what Inge was feeling.



As Inge and Esther grew up, it was a bit more difficult to understand each other.



It was also difficult for Inge to help Esther.



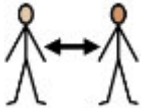
When Inge was at university, Esther didn't understand what it was like.



Inge was Esther carer when Inge was only 12 years old.



Inge and Esther were very close and lived together.



But when Inge moved out for university, Inge and Esther became more distant. Because Inge lived far away from Esther.



And Esther was sad, because she missed Inge.

Esther sometimes wished that she didn't have down syndrome.



Esther wanted to be like Inge and go to parties.

Inge and Esther always adapted to each other.



Inge created stories for Esther when they visited museums.

Esther always thinks about what Inge likes to eat when Esther cooks.

But now, Inge lives closer to Esther.



Esther and Inge have jobs and boyfriends.



Inge and Esther talk on the phone to catch up with each other.



Inge and Esther also understand each other very well.



Inge visits Esther and they hang out.

Inge and Esther are sisters and best friends.

The future



Inge and Esther want to live nearby.

Inge and Esther want to still have lots of fun together.



Esther wants to get married and to buy a house.



Esther wants to visit Inge alone by train.

Sister love



Inge says that Esther is a happy and strong woman.



Esther lives her life to the fullest.



Esther says that Inge is an amazing sister and that Inge always helps her.

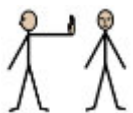


Inge and Esther are each other's everything.

Inge and Esther love each other so much.

Esther's impact on Inge's life

Inge always thought that Esther was like her.



But, people always treated Inge and Esther differently.



Because Esther has down syndrome and not Inge.



Inge was called the “smart one”.



People discriminated against Esther and Inge.



During high school, Inge realized that she was a carer.

Inge didn't have the same teenage years as her friends.



For example, Inge couldn't go out with her friends when she wanted to.

Inge always had to ask her parents first, because Esther can't stay home alone. Inge needed to stay with Esther.



Inge also didn't go to concerts with Esther like Inge's friends do with their siblings.



Inge moved out for university far from home.



Inge didn't know who she was, and wanted to know herself better.



Inge went to study in Amsterdam. Amsterdam is a city in the Netherlands.



Inge didn't think to work in disability rights.
But, Inge saw that people with disabilities
didn't have many rights.



Inge thought of Esther.
Inge decided to work in disability
rights, thanks to Esther.



Inge will always stay close to Esther.
Inge will continue to help Esther in the future.

Esther and her independence



Inge is hopeful that Esther
can be independent.

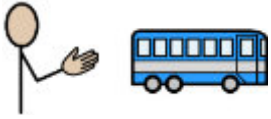


Esther can get married and
have a good marriage.



Esther is training to be
a hostess and a barista.

Esther knows how to go alone
from home to her workplace.



Esther still needs help with some things.
For example, Esther can't travel alone.

But Esther can be as independent as she can be.

Advice from Inge



Siblings should accept each other.

Siblings shouldn't compare to each other.

Siblings should think of each other's strengths.

Esther and her job



Esther works in a restaurant.



Esther cleans tables and polish cutlery.

Esther can work as a barista, server or cook.

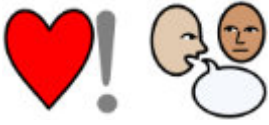


Esther likes to be a barista because
she can make different kinds of coffee.
For example, lattes or cappuccinos.



Esther completed two training
courses at her workplace.

Esther is preparing more training this year.



Esther loves to talk to people.



Esther also likes to learn new ways to make coffee and be challenged.

Esther wants to continue to work in a restaurant.



Esther likes her colleagues.



Esther's dream job is to be a barista at a restaurant.



When Esther was younger, her dream was to be a cashier at a grocery shop.

Esther and her love life



Esther has a boyfriend.

Esther says that her boyfriend is cute, sweet and handsome.

Esther met her boyfriend at high school.

Esther and her boyfriend work
at the same restaurant.



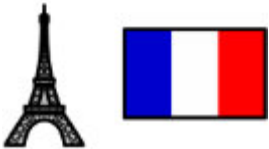
Esther's boyfriend
asked her for marriage.



Esther said yes and
they are engaged now.



After marriage, Esther and her
boyfriend want to buy a house.



Esther and her boyfriend want
to go to Paris together for their honeymoon.

Esther and her life experience

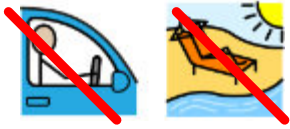


Esther knows that she
has down syndrome.

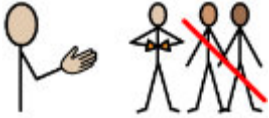
Esther is sad that she
can't do things like Inge.



She wants to be freer like Inge is.



For example, Esther can't drive a car,
or she can't go on holidays alone.



Inge helps her to be more independent.



Inge and Esther go on trips together.
Esther chooses the place of the trip.



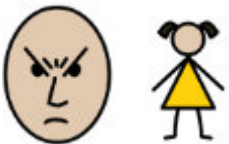
Years ago, Inge and Esther went to London



This year, Inge and Esther are
going to Disneyland Paris.



Esther is also planning to move
out soon to be independent.



Esther was bullied at primary school.
Her classmates were mean to her.

Esther told her teacher about the bullying.
But it didn't help much.

When Esther was 7 years old,
she changed primary schools.



Esther's new school was better.
Esther's classmates were kinder.



Esther doesn't think about the bullying anymore.

Esther and high school



Esther liked her high school.



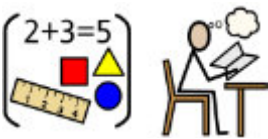
Esther studied many subjects, but her favorite subject was history.



Esther was part of a choir in high school.
And Esther played the piano.

But her high school stopped teaching a lot of subjects.

It is a shame!



Esther wanted to learn more about reading comprehension and math.



Esther wanted to know more about how to deal with money.

Advice from Esther



Siblings should spend time together and have fun.



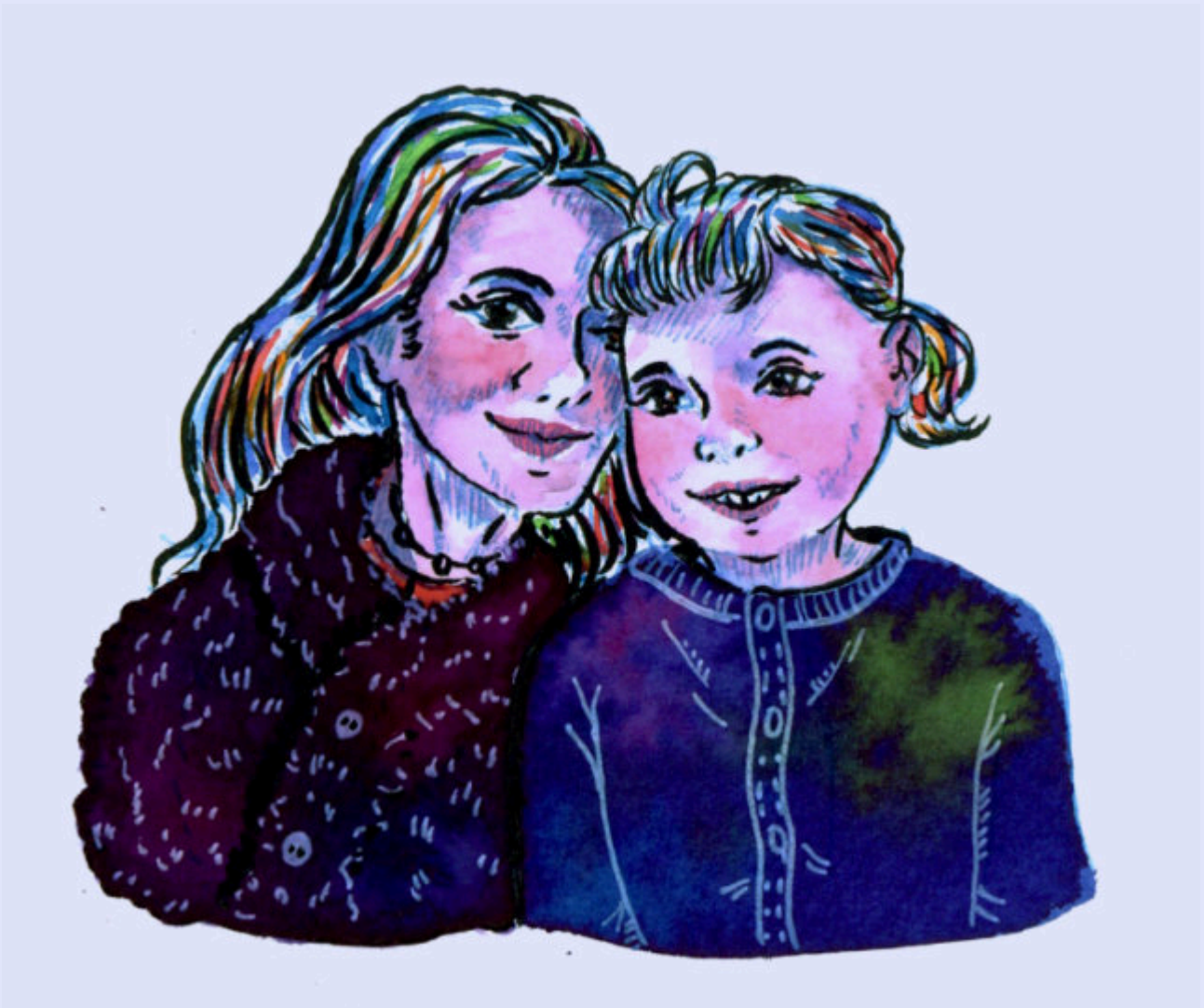
It makes everyone happy and free.

Edit since time of writing:

Esther moved out of her parent's house.
She now lives in her own place.
This allows her to be more independent.
Esther really likes her new place.



Aoife and Róisín





Aoife was working
at Inclusion Europe.



This story is about Aoife's
relationship with her sister.



Sister's relationship

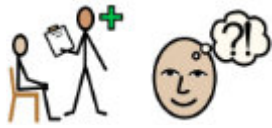


Aoife is the oldest of three siblings.

Aoife has a younger brother called Conor.

And a younger sister called Róisín.

Róisín is 12 years old.



Róisín was diagnosed at 3 years old with autism, intellectual disability and other problems like attention trouble.

Róisín was also diagnosed with diabetes.



Róisín, Conor and Aoife have lots of fun together.

Róisín says that Conor is stricter than Aoife.



Aoife and Róisín have their own way of communicating.

Aoife and Róisín understand each other very well now.
But it was difficult before.



Aoife couldn't understand what Róisín wanted when Róisín was a toddler.

Aoife and Róisín have always had a good relationship since the beginning.



Aoife was excited to have a sister.

Aoife and Conor are Róisín's best friends.



Aoife is much older than Róisín.
Róisín was only 6 when Aoife
moved out for university.



It was hard for Róisín to understand
that Aoife wasn't leaving her.



But now Róisín knows that Aoife
will always come back.



It was difficult for Aoife handle
Róisín's behaviour.



Aoife was just a teenager when she
took the role of Róisín's carer.



Aoife didn't know how to deal with Róisín's meltdowns.
Aoife was sad about that.



Aoife and Róisín solved the problem
through education and therapy.

Aoife can deal better with Róisín's meltdowns.



Aoife and Róisín are very close now.



Aoife and Róisín don't live together now,
but they talk on the phone.

Róisín calls Aoife when it's her bedtime.

Róisín tells Aoife about her day,
and she reads a book to Aoife.



In 10 years, Róisín will be 23 years old.
Aoife sees herself living near Róisín to always help.

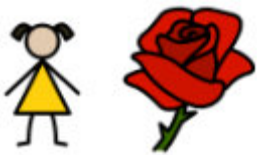
In 10 years, Aoife hopes that Róisín will be studying
or training for a job that Róisín wants for herself.

Aoife's feelings for Róisín



Róisín means the world to Aoife.

When Aoife's mom was pregnant with Róisín,
Aoife begged her mom to choose the baby's name.



And when Róisín was born, Aoife chose the name Róisín.
Róisín means little rose in Irish.

Aoife chose Róisín as a name, because Róisín
was so small and beautiful when she was born.



Róisín will always be number one to Aoife.

Róisín's impact on Aoife's life



Aoife was excited to have Róisín.

Aoife fell in love with Róisín.

Róisín was diagnosed with autism
when Aoife was 16 years old.

Aoife knew about autism.



Aoife knew Róisín having autism
would be a big change in her life.



Aoife didn't have a common teenage years.
Aoife had to be responsible quickly.



Aoife had to care for Róisín with
her mom and brother Conor.

Róisín needs a lot of care.

Aoife and her family didn't have
anyone else to help them care for Róisín.



Aoife knew that she and her family would
be discriminated against everyone.

Because people didn't feel comfortable around Róisín.



It made her feel sad.

But she doesn't care anymore.

Aoife is worried that Róisín will feel discriminated as she grows up.



Aoife wants to protect Róisín.

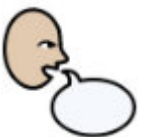
Aoife took a different career path thanks to Róisín.



Aoife wants to fight for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.

Róisín and her independence

The doctors didn't know if Róisín would be able to speak.



But Róisín started to speak at 6 years old and now she can fully speak.



Aoife wants Róisín to be independent and have a career.

Lack of support



The government doesn't give enough money to families of people with intellectual disabilities.

Carers and people with intellectual disabilities can only work for a certain number of hours.



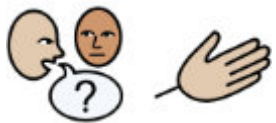
There aren't enough inclusive schools for students with disabilities.

It was difficult to get a place for Róisín in an inclusive school.



Róisín's school is far from her house, but she is happy in her school.

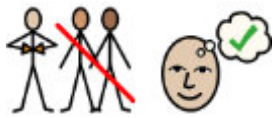
Advice from Aoife



Aoife says that siblings of people with intellectual disabilities should seek help.



Support groups, therapy or someone trustful can help siblings of people with intellectual disabilities.



Aoife was worried about Róisín would live her life.
But now she has hopes that Róisín can be independent.

More about Róisín



Róisín is bossy, fun and careless.
Róisín loves her service dog Hally.

Róisín and school



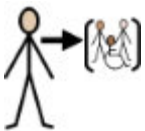
Róisín goes to an inclusive school.
In school, Róisín learns how to write, read and count.
Róisín also studies with students with no disabilities.



Róisín loves her school.
Her teacher called Mrs. Moran and
everyone in her class are friends with her.



Róisín's favorite subject is reading.



Róisín feels included because she has
lunch with everyone and play games.

Róisín has teacher-time when
she needs help or a break.

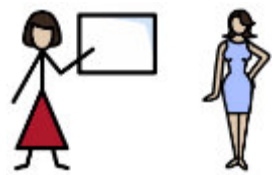


In September, Róisín is going to a new school.
This school is not inclusive.

Róisín doesn't know if she will like her new school.



Aoife is worried that her new school
won't help her be independent.



Róisín wants to be a teacher and
a model when she grows up.

Róisín and sports



Róisín loves sports.



Róisín likes to run around and
to be with her friends while playing sports.



Her favourite sport is horse riding.



Róisín trains to be in the Special Olympics.



Róisín trains in a big hall and plays different sports.
Róisín plays basketball a lot.

Helen and Caroline





Helen was 2 years old when her sister was born.
Caroline was diagnosed with autism.
The doctors had no expectations
for Caroline to be independent.



Caroline and Helen played together.
Helen was a bit of Caroline's translator.



Caroline loves to read, to learn about history,
online games and drawing.
She started drawing at a very young age
to relax and escape.



Caroline had a long-term support person in school.



In high school, Caroline was treated differently.
She got anxiety and depression.
She was pressured at school.
She had a hard time getting organised and
adapting to a schedule.



Caroline is studying art.
Art is a way for Caroline to be independent and to raise
awareness about disability.
Caroline is very curious.
She asks all types of questions.
She is very direct and open.



Helen is worried about Caroline's future.

It was sometimes difficult to grow up with Caroline, but it was also fun, and it's very fulfilling now.

From Helen's perspective

Growing up



Helen is 2 years older.

Helen doesn't remember life without her sister.

If she tries to she can only picture
a very dull and boring life.



Helen says it has not always been easy.

It was certainly difficult.

But Helen is glad her family went through difficulties.

Helen says it made them the people they are today.

Teenage years



Teenage years were probably the most difficult.



Helen started realizing all the difference
and worrying a lot about the future.

Helen felt life was unfair.
But probably like many other teenagers.

University



Higher education was great.
Helen went far away from our family
to study in a sunny city.
Helen started to live for and by herself.
Helen felt bad to feel this relief.

Helen thinks it is just part of the
normal development process of a person.

Caroline's independence



Caroline could not speak as a child until she was 7.
Helen was often Caroline's translator.



Helen started to wonder about
possibility for Caroline to be independent in life.

Helen wondered what would happen
if their parents were not there anymore.



When Helen started to daydream and picture herself as an adult:

- what job I'd like to do,
- where would I like to live,
- would I like to have children...

That is when Helen realised her sister Caroline may not be able to have those dreams.



Helen wished many times that she would one day be 'normal'.

Support for Caroline



Caroline had someone to support her in school. At first it was full time and then gradually only for some hours.

Support is there for Caroline to:

- feel safe,
- help with anxiety,

- translate when needed,
- explain new and unknown things.

Career and interests



Caroline is very talented.

Caroline received awards and prizes for her art.

Helen can understand Caroline's feelings through her art.

Caroline makes art about:

- her solitude,
- struggling with disability,
- feelings,
- difficulties in expressing things.



Helen mentioned pieces of work Caroline did with her school that really moved her.

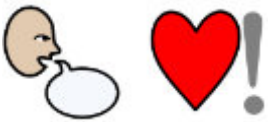


A comic book where she drew a miniature self going on a journey.

The miniature Caroline went into her ears,
through her brains and her heart.

A sculpture of herself fighting with the autistic part of her.

Big sister



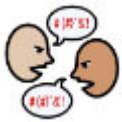
Helen shared advice for people with siblings
who have a disability:

- Love them,
- play with them,
- speak with them.

Helen thinks there is no need to hide anything
from them to try to protect them from the harsh truth.



It may lead to painful discussions,
but Helen thinks it is also reassuring for them
to know that we also have problems
and trouble without a disability.



Fighting with a friend,
breaking up,
feeling sad
are things happening to everyone.



As a sibling,
you can be one of the closest person they have
in their circle of people they can trust.

And teasing, we stay siblings after all!

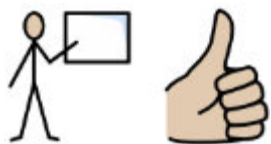
From Caroline's perspective



Caroline is studying at the
Emile Cohl Drawing School in Lyon, France.



She learns how to draw comics,
illustrations, and paint using different materials
like acrylics and watercolors.



The teachers there have lots of experience,
which helps Caroline avoid bad deals and learn new skills.



Caroline loves art, reading, games, and history.



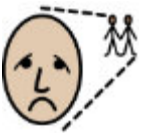
They help her forget about stress
and learn about the world.



In her art,
Caroline tells stories about people overcoming
challenges and facing tough times.



She wants to inspire others to be brave
and show how excluding people
who are different is wrong.



Growing up,
Caroline found it hard
to make friends and trust people.

Sometimes,
she didn't even know when she had a problem.



But her family and a psychologist
from an autism association help her a lot.

Caroline's relationship with
her sister Helen, is sometimes complicated.

She admires her sister's confidence
but knows they're different in their own ways.



For people with disabilities who have siblings without disabilities, Caroline advises being honest about feelings, treating others kindly, and being patient.



This helps build strong relationships based on love and understanding.



Explanations



Accessible

Something that is easy to use for people with disabilities.
Such as:

- Ramps to get into a building.
- Information in easy-to-read.
- Information in sign language.



Charter of Fundamental Rights

A paper that says what basic rights every person has.
For example, the right to freedom, the right to education.



Commissioner at the European Commission

A Commissioner is a person who is responsible
for a field of work at the European Commission
and manages a lot of people.



Community

People that belong to something.

For example, neighbourhood community.

People who live in the same neighbourhood.

Or religious community.

People who have the same religion.



Community-based services

Support given by people from the community.



Convention

An agreement between countries or

organisations which talks about many topics.



Deinstitutionalisation

Deinstitutionalisation is helping people
to move out of institutions.

It is when the people who lived in institutions get help
so they can live independently in the community.



Educate

Educate means to teach.

It means to make sure people have access to training so they can learn new skills.



European Union

The European Union (in short, EU) is a group of 27 countries.

We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together to be stronger politically and economically.

The EU makes laws on many important things for the people who live in those countries.

The EU makes laws in different areas.

Some examples are:

- Laws to protect the environment.
- Laws for farmers.
- Laws to protect consumers.

A consumer is someone who buys things.

The EU also makes laws that are important for people with disabilities.

It also made a law that gives people with disabilities more rights when they are travelling.

The EU also gives money to its member states.

Some of this money is used for people with disabilities.



Fund

To give money to someone or to an organisation which helps people or organisations.



Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe is an organisation for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

We fight for their equal rights and inclusion in Europe.
We also want to make a difference to the laws in Europe.
We started in 1988.

We have 79 members in 39 European countries.
We are based in Brussels in Belgium.



Institutions

Institutions are places where people with intellectual disabilities live with other people with intellectual disabilities.

They live apart from other people.

This is what we call “segregated”.

Sometimes this happens against their will.

People who live in institutions have to follow the rules of the institution and cannot decide for themselves.



Intellectual disability

If you have an intellectual disability, that means it is more difficult for you to understand information and learn new skills than it is for other people.

This makes some parts of life harder.

People with intellectual disabilities often need support in learning or at work.

Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult.

It affects you for your whole life.

There are things that can make life easier
for people with intellectual disabilities.

For example, information in easy-to-read language.

Some people say learning disabilities
instead of intellectual disabilities.



NGO **Non-governmental organizations**

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs are
generally defined as nonprofit and independent of
governmental influence.



Online Schooling

Online schooling is a way for students to attend
their classes using a computer or another device
to connect to the internet.

These classes happen with the help of online
applications for meetings or online classrooms.



Organisation

A group of people who work for the same thing.



Segregation

Segregation is when someone is set apart from others for an unfair reason.

For example, because of their disability.



Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is when people with intellectual disabilities speak up for themselves.

These people are called self-advocates.



Services

Support for people with disabilities.



Training

A class often given at work where people learn new things.



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



Website:

inclusion-europe.eu



Email:

secretariat@inclusion-europe.org



Telephone:

+32 2 502 28 15



Address:

Avenue des Arts 3, 1210 Brussels, Belgium



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