

Europe for us



News for self-advocates

Number 1 / 2018

Hear our voices!

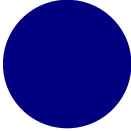


From left to right, the cover photo shows Andreea-Raluca Herbei, Zoltán Szövérdfi-Szép and Elisabeta Moldovan. In the photo they are at “Hear Our Voices!”

This newsletter is available in: **English**
French
German
Hungarian
Romanian
Spanish

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to find the other language versions.

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*Hear
our
voices!*

***STRONG,
LOUD AND
CLEAR!***

Hear our voices!

Self-advocates in Brussels

“We don’t need help, we need support.”
This is what self-advocates said
during Inclusion Europe’s “Hear our voices” conference.



The “Hear our voices” conference
was in early December 2017.
It took place in Brussels in Belgium.

There were more than 70 self-advocates
and their supporters at the conference.
They came from nearly 20 countries.

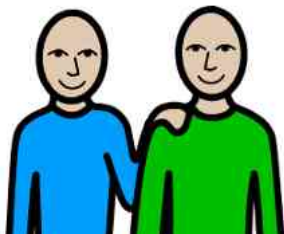
During the conference there were workshops
led by self-advocates.



Elisabeta Moldovan did a workshop
called “Building my net”.

Elisabeta works at Inclusion Europe’s
Romanian member Ceva de Spus.

Elisabeta said that many people with disabilities
find it hard to make friends.
She said that until a few years ago
she was one of those people.



Elisabeta then shared tips on how you can get to know people you can trust with similar interests.



People at “Hear Our Voices”



László Bercse did a workshop called “My home, my city, my country: being included”.

László is a self-advocate at Inclusion Europe’s Hungarian member, ÉFOÉSZ.

László talked about how his work as an activist helps him be included.



László also talked about how people with intellectual disabilities can be supported so they do not have to live in **institutions** (definition page 23).



Andreas Zehetner did a workshop called “Leading from the top: self-advocates on the board”.

Andreas is on the board of Inclusion Europe’s member, Lebenshilfe Austria.

Andreas talked about how self-advocates can be involved in the board of an organisation.



Senada Halilčević did a workshop called: “Find your voice”.

Senada is a self-advocate at Inclusion Europe’s Croatian member, ASA.

Senada is also the Vice-President of Inclusion Europe.

Senada said that meeting with other self-advocates is the only way to talk about common problems. It also helps to find out how other people have dealt with these problems.

Senada also told participants to stand up for their rights.



Harry Roche did a workshop called: “I have a say in politics”.

Harry works at Inclusion Europe’s member in the United Kingdom, Mencap.

He is also an Inclusion Europe board member.



Harry's workshop was about voting rights. Harry also talked about voting rights at the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities. You can read about his speech in the next article.

All the Hear our Voices participants also attended the Parliament.



Sara Pickard led the session on the last day.

Sara Pickard is a self-advocate from the United Kingdom.

She works with **Inclusion International (definition page 23)** as a self-advocate representing Europe.

During the last session the self-advocates made some important statements.

One of the statements was that we need to fight to make sure everyone can enjoy the same rights everywhere. For example, the right to vote.

Another statement made was that people with intellectual disabilities do not need help, they need support.



At the end of the conference Sara Pickard said: We must make sure that our voices are being heard stronger, louder, and clearer!

**People with intellectual disabilities
do not need help,
they need support.**

This is an important statement that was said
at the “Hear Our Voices” conference.



Harry Roche speaks at the European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities



Harry Roche spoke at the 4th European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities.

Harry Roche is a board member of Inclusion Europe.

The European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities took place in December 2017.



It was organised by the European Disability Forum and the **European Parliament (definition page 21)**.

800 people came to the event.
There were 200 people with intellectual disabilities.
This is a record number.

There were also some important people from the **European Union (definition page 22)**.



Harry spoke about voting rights for people with intellectual disabilities.

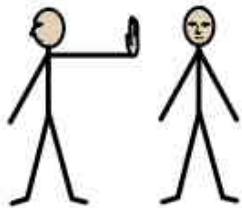
He said: Imagine everyone would need to take a test to see if they can vote. How many people would pass that test?



Harry Roche at the European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities



A Spanish woman with an intellectual disability was asked to take such a test. In the end, she was not allowed to vote. The law will now change in Spain. (You can read about this on page 19.)



Harry said that there are still 10 countries in the European Union where some people with intellectual disabilities are not allowed to vote. This is **discrimination (definition page 20)**.



Harry explained what the **European Union (definition page 22)** can do to help stop discrimination. For example, set standards for how **elections (definition page 20)** should include people with intellectual disabilities.



Harry also said he is confident that the **European Parliament (definition page 21)** will make sure people with intellectual disabilities can fully exercise their rights.

Self-advocate Oswald Föllerer from our Austrian member Selbstvertretungszentrum Wien also spoke.



Self-advocate Victorio Latasa from our Spanish member Plena inclusión also spoke.

The topic of elections and the right to vote is very important in Europe.

There will be elections for the European Parliament in 2019. Inclusion Europe will talk a lot about how to make elections **accessible (definition page 20)** for people with intellectual disabilities.

Below is a photo of the inside of the European Parliament



Interview with Mathilde Cotman



Self-advocate Mathilde Cotman

Mathilde is a self-advocate from Belgium.



She is a part of the self-advocacy group at Inclusion ASBL.

Inclusion ASBL is Inclusion Europe's Belgian member.

Mathilde came to Inclusion Europe's leadership training in September 2017.

You can read about the training in the September/October 2017 issue of Europe for Us.

We interviewed Mathilde about her experiences.

Question 1:

Why did you decide to come to the event?



The topic of violence against women is important to me.
I also wanted to meet other self-advocates.

Question 2:

What did you learn during the event?

I learned that lots of women
have been the victims of violence in Europe.



Question 3:

How was it meeting a **Member of the
European Parliament (definition page 24)**?

It was stressful.
I was not looking forward to it, but actually the
Member of the European Parliament was very nice.

Question 4:

What was the best part of the event?

The best part was visiting
the **European Parliament (definition page 21)**.



I did not know there were so many things in the building.
There were shops, a hairdresser and more.
It was funny to see the main room where
the Members of the European Parliament vote.

Learn, Inspire, Lead at the World Congress 2018



This year, the World Congress of **Inclusion International (definition page 23)** will take place in Europe.

The title of the event is Learn, Inspire, Lead.



It will happen in Birmingham in England, from Wednesday 30 May to Friday 1 June.

Inclusion Europe is a partner of the event.

This is why you should come to the World Congress:

- The World Congress is a big event for people from all over the world.
- At the conference, Inclusion Europe will also celebrate its 30th anniversary!
- There will be presentations on how people with intellectual disabilities and their families have been empowered in Europe.



Register here: <http://www.worldcongress2018.com>

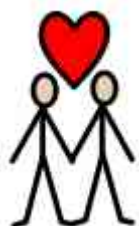
The right to love and friendship



Senada Halilčević is the Chair of the **European Platform of Self-Advocates (definition page 21)**. She is also Vice-President of Inclusion Europe.

Senada has written a text for a newsletter of the **European Disability Forum (definition page 21)**.

Here is what she wrote:



Imagine that you fall in love with another person.
And the other person falls in love with you.
You become a couple.
And then you want to get married.



But it is not that easy.
You need to come before a judge.
The judge can decide if you can get married.



And he asks you: “What is love?”
This is a very difficult question.
Many people have written about it.
But they have not found the answer.

Why do you need to find an answer only because you want to get married?

I did not invent this story.
It is happening in some countries.



Many people with intellectual disabilities in Europe do not have **legal capacity (definition page 24)**.

This means that they cannot vote,
they cannot sign contracts,
and they cannot get married.



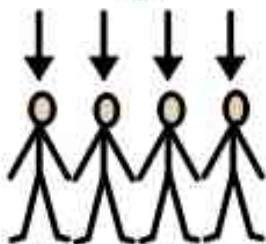
It is often very difficult for
people with intellectual disabilities in Europe to find love.
And when they do,
it is difficult for them to be with their partner.



Parents and siblings are afraid
that something might happen to them.



Many people think that people with intellectual disabilities
should not have a partner.
I think that this needs to change.

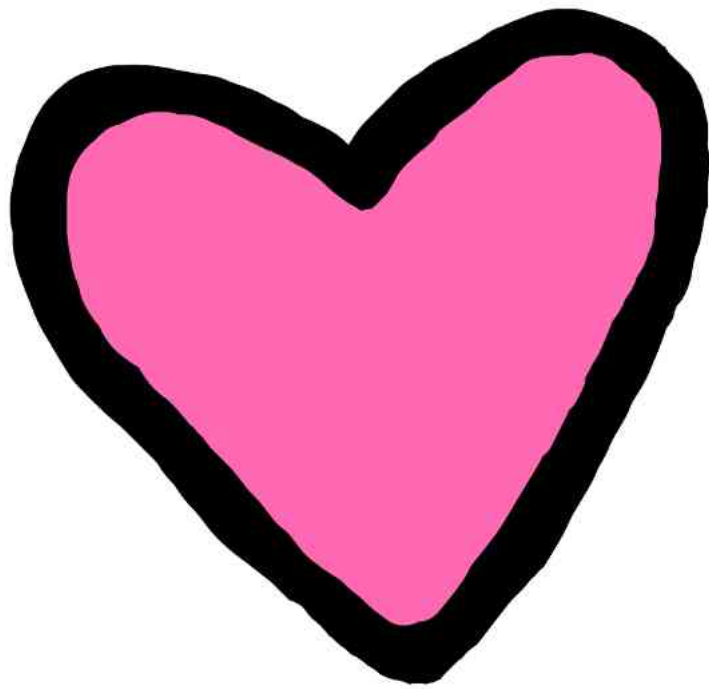


Love is for everyone.

We need to make sure that
people with intellectual disabilities
in Europe can get married.

We need to make sure that
people change their opinions about
people with intellectual disabilities who have a partner.

I say it again: Love is for everyone.
I wish to all of you
lots of love and good friends in your life!



“I say it again:

Love is for everyone.”

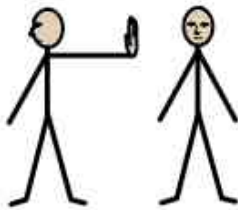
- Senada Halilčević

Inclusion Europe sends contribution to the UN CRPD Committee



There is a document called the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (definition page 25)**.

It has different parts.
These are called articles.



One of them is about what states need to do so that people with disabilities are not **discriminated (definition page 20)** against.

The **UN CRPD Committee (definition page 25)** is currently preparing a General Comment on this article.

The General Comment will say what the article really means.



Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe has told the UN CRPD Committee what we think still needs to change in the General Comment.

Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/UNCRPDcontribution>

Spain: the right to vote for all

People with intellectual disabilities
are not allowed to vote in many European countries.



That is the case in Spain.

Plena inclusión helped organise a campaign last year.
Plena inclusión is the Spanish member
of Inclusion Europe.



The campaign aimed to change the law so that
people with intellectual disabilities
are allowed to vote in Spain.

Inclusion Europe supported this campaign.

The Spanish Parliament has now
started the process to change the law.

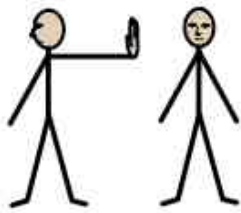
Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/Spainvoting>

Definitions

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.



Discrimination

Discrimination means that you are treated unfairly or that you do not get the chances you deserve.

It is discrimination when this happens because of your disability.



Election

An election is when people go to vote. Voting is when you choose someone to be a leader and make big decisions for you.

Elections happen in different areas. For example, when you elect a new mayor in your town, or when you elect a new president in your country.



European Disability Forum

The European Disability Forum is an organisation of people with disabilities in Europe. We call it EDF for short.

EDF works to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Europe.

EDF was created by people with disabilities in 1996.



European Parliament

The European Parliament is a place where important decisions of the European Union are made. For example, decisions about laws and budgets.

The Members of the European Parliament (in short, MEPs) make these decisions and represent all the people who live in the European Union.

Every 5 years, the people who live in the European Union vote for their country's MEPs. The next **elections (definition page 20)** are in 2019.



European Platform of Self-Advocates

The European Platform of Self-Advocates is made up of organisations of self-advocates from different countries in Europe. We call it EPSA for short.

It is part of Inclusion Europe.



European Union

The European Union (in short, EU) is a group of 28 countries.

We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together so that people in Europe can live in peace, have jobs and a good life.

Guardianship

Guardianship allows some people to make life choices for others.

The person who makes choices for you is your guardian.

Your guardian has **legal capacity (definition page 24)**. They can decide things for you, like where you live.

Sometimes, people under guardianship are not allowed to vote, get married, or take care of their kids.



Inclusion International is an international organisation for people with an intellectual disability.

It was founded more than 50 years ago.

Inclusion International works to protect the rights of people with intellectual disabilities worldwide.



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.

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

Legal capacity

Capacity means being able to make a decision or choice at one point in time.

There are laws about how to decide if someone has capacity.
Then it is called legal capacity.

Having legal capacity means that people with intellectual disabilities can do things on their own.
For example, they can:

- Make choices about their lives.
- Get married, start a family and raise children.
- Sign contracts (including working contracts).
- Take part in politics and have the right to vote.



When there is a **guardianship (definition page 22)**, the guardian has legal capacity.



Member of the European Parliament

See **European Parliament (definition page 21)**.

UN CRPD



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in short, UN CRPD) is an important document.

It tries to make sure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected.

Read the UN CRPD
in easy-to-read here: <http://bit.ly/EtRUNCRPD>

UN CRPD Committee

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in short, the CRPD Committee) is a group of people that check what countries do to make sure the rights of persons with disabilities are respected.



United Nations

The United Nations is an international organisation.

It works for peace and security everywhere in the world.

Summary

You have read a lot of important things today.
Maybe you would like to let others know about them.

Tell your friends what you read:

1) What did Andreas talk about at the Hear our Voices conference?

2) What did Harry speak about at the
European Parliament for Persons with Disabilities?

3) Why should people come to the World Congress 2018?



Inclusion Europe



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