

Europe for Us



**Our Money.
Our Future.**

Easy-to-read magazine

Number 3 / 2025

Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe for Us on pages 16 to 18.

Europe for Us is available in:

- English
- French
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Editor's Note

Soufiane El Amrani



Money matters.

I can buy things with the money that I earn.

I'm happy that I have money to buy whatever I want.

Having money means I can meet up with friends and have a social life.

It means I can be independent and live on my own.



EU money is harder to understand.

EU money is money that the European Union (EU) gives to countries and organisations.

EU money should be explained in easy-to-read and understand.

Then people with intellectual disabilities can know how to ask for that money.

They already know what to spend it on.

We don't want EU money to be used

for keeping people in institutions or large care homes.

We want EU money to be used

for making sure people with intellectual disabilities can live in the community.





The European Union should give money
to companies who want to hire
people with intellectual disabilities.
We have the right to earn our money,
and to spend it exactly how we want.



EU money plays an important role in my life.
A part of my salary is covered by it.
I like having this job.
And I think others should have the same chances as me.



Everyone has the right to a job
and to live independently in the community.
EU money can help people with intellectual disabilities
lead a good life.



Let's speak up for our rights
and make sure our voices are heard!

Soufiane El Amrani

Easy-to-read editor

Money matters



Money is important.



We use money to buy food, clothes, or pay for a flat.

We need money to take part in our community.



Managing money means planning

for what we need

and sometimes also for what we want.



A plan for how we spend our money

is called a budget.

Budgets help us make sure we have enough money

for the things we need in life.

Money and the EU



The European Union (EU) is a group of 27 countries. These countries are called member states. They work together to make life better for all people living in the EU.



The EU gives money to member states to support projects. Some of these projects are important for people with intellectual disabilities.



Like projects to close institutions.



Or provide good jobs.



Every 7 years, the EU agrees on a big money plan. This plan is called the Multiannual Financial Framework, or the MFF.

The MFF says:

- how much money the EU will spend
- what the money will be used for the next 7 years



Because it is a long-term plan, governments and organisations can prepare and look ahead.

How EU money is decided

There are 3 important steps:



1. The European Commission proposes how to spend the money.



2. The European Parliament checks it and gives its go ahead.



3. The governments of all member states work together in the Council of the EU.
All of them must agree.



Only when all agree,
the MFF becomes the EU's budget.
This makes sure the decision is fair
and that every member state has a say.

Where the money goes: Funds that matter for us



The EU puts money into different funds.
A fund means money saved for a special purpose.
Some funds are very important
for people with intellectual disabilities:



- **European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)**
Helps people get jobs, learn new skills,
and be included.



- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**
Supports housing, transport,
and services in the community.



- **Cohesion Policy**
Makes parts of Europe more equal
and supports inclusion in all parts of the EU.



- **Erasmus+**
Supports learning, education,
and youth activities in different countries.

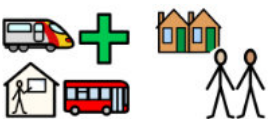


This money can make a big difference
in our everyday lives.
But only if the money is used in the right way.

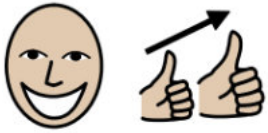
EU Money for Us

How should EU money be used
so it really helps people with intellectual disabilities?

Here are some ideas:



- Countries should use EU money to close institutions.
- Countries should use EU money to build social housing for people with intellectual disabilities. That way more people with intellectual disabilities can live independently and be part of the community.
- Countries should use EU money to make information easy-to-read and understand, so that people with intellectual disabilities can take part in public life.
- Countries should use EU money into making education inclusive.
- Countries should use EU money to train public services, like healthcare and the police on how to work with people with intellectual disabilities.
- EU money should be used to make housing, transport, and jobs accessible.



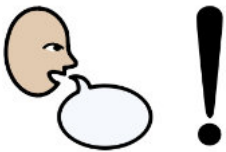
When money is used properly it can make a very real difference in people's lives.



Money should support rights, inclusion, and participation for everyone.



Now is the time to make sure your voices as self-advocates are heard. You can talk to governments and decision makers about what you need and where the money should go. You can do this on your own or together with other self-advocates.



When things like the budget are being decided it is important to speak up for what you need. Like more money for good jobs, housing, and support.

There are 7 areas where EU money can make a big difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities:



1. Right to decide and right to vote

Public money should be used for supported decision-making.

Public money should be used to create easy-to-read information on elections and voting.



2. **Right to live independently and to be included in the community**

Public money should be used for community support so that institutions can finally be closed. Public money should never be used to build institutions and to keep people segregated.



3. **Housing and support**

Public money should be used to build new housing in the community for people with intellectual disabilities, so they can move out of their families' homes when they are adults and want to live independently.



4. **Education**

Public money should be used to make all schools inclusive, so that students with intellectual disabilities can learn with everyone else.



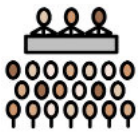
5. **Employment**

Public money should be used so that people with intellectual disabilities have access to jobs with equal pay and get the support they need.



6. Healthcare

Public money should be used for training doctors and nurses how to speak in easy-to-understand to people with intellectual disabilities. It should also be used to make easy-to-read information on health.



7. Representation

Public money should support people with intellectual disabilities to speak at conferences and to be included in decision making. People with intellectual disabilities should be able to take part and be represented.



'I want our countries to include us. I want us to be equal members of society. I want us to be able to live just like everyone else. Inclusion means that we can work, learn, have fun, vote, make decisions and decide where, with whom, and how we want to live. Even if we need support to do so. We don't want to be segregated.'

— László Bercse, Self-advocate from Hungary

“ 'I know how hard it is to get employment when you have a disability. I have experience from sheltered workshops, supported employment without pay and work with a salary.'

— **Paulina Bäckström, self-advocate from Finland**

Rules for getting EU money



There are important rules
countries must follow
to get EU money.

These rules are important
for protecting rights and making sure money
is used well.

These rules are called “enabling conditions”.



Enabling conditions mean
that before money is given,
countries must meet certain standards.



For example:
they must show
they respect human rights,
that people with disabilities are included,
that no one is segregated,
that there is inclusive education and employment.



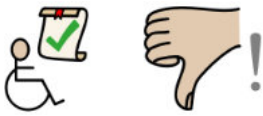
Countries must also show
how they will use the money
and report on what they have done.

Why enabling conditions matter



Both, the European Commission and the European Parliament want to remove these rules, so that it is easier for member states to get EU money.

For people with intellectual disabilities this is dangerous.



Without the rules:

- money could be spent in the wrong way
- institutions could stay open or grow
- rights could be ignored



The EU must make sure that the member states cannot just access money without showing that they will respect rights, include us, and support community living.



The rules matter.

Looking ahead

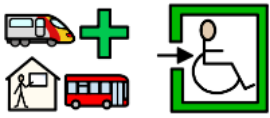
If the EU uses money well:



- More people with intellectual disabilities will live independently in the community.



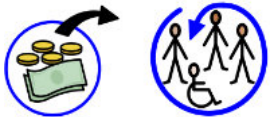
- More people will have jobs and education.



- Services like housing and transport will be more accessible.



- The rights of people with intellectual disabilities will be respected.



The EU and our governments must use money for our inclusion.



We must keep reminding them.

“

'We will never stop dreaming and setting goals. We want to get education and enjoy life, just as others do.'

— Anna Ghazaryan, self-advocate from Armenia

Get Involved

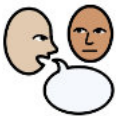
Here are some things you can do:



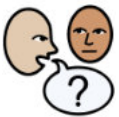
- Join your national or local self-advocacy group.



- Ask for information in easy-to-read and understand about EU money in your country.



- Talk about what inclusion means to you.



- Contact your local government and ask how EU funds are being used for people with intellectual disabilities.



- Follow Inclusion Europe and subscribe to newsletters to keep informed.



'Self-advocacy means learning our rights and who can support us. It helps us achieve our goals.'

— László Petrovics, self-advocate from Hungary

Easy Words

Explanations



Budget

A plan about how to spend money.



Cohesion Policy

EU money and programmes that aim to make regions more equal and support inclusion of all people.



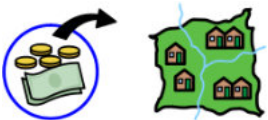
Enabling Conditions

Rules that must be fulfilled by countries before they get EU money, to protect rights and make sure money helps inclusion.



European Union (EU)

A group of 27 countries that work together on laws, rights, and money.



ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)

EU fund that supports investment in housing, transport, services, infrastructure to make regions and communities stronger.



ESF+ (European Social Fund Plus)

EU fund to support jobs, inclusion, education, and skills for people, especially those at risk of exclusion.



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



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