

Inclusion Europe

The European Association of Societies
of Persons with Intellectual Disability and their Families

MESSAGE

The Republic Centre for Helping Persons with Mental Handicap

“LIVING WITH DIGNITY”

People with intellectual disability and their families
in the Republic of Macedonia

_____ **Position Paper** _____

This paper includes
summaries in easy-to-
read language for
people with intellectual
disability.



The Republic Centre for Helping Persons with Mental Handicap – MESSAGE – in cooperation with Inclusion Europe has undertaken a detailed survey of the human rights situation of persons with intellectual disability and their families in Republic of Macedonia. On the basis of the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for People with Disabilities, this survey has revealed many problems and shortcomings in the Republic of Macedonia. The findings of the survey have been presented in English and Macedonian at European and National level.

The main issues for the Republic of Macedonia are:

Community-based support services

Alternative community-based support services should be available throughout the country to people with disabilities wherever they live in their local communities. These should respond to the needs of all age groups and include developmental counselling services, home help services, foster family placements, adoption, social and leisure-time clubs, day centres with individually tailored person-centred developmental programmes, day centres providing occupational and vocational training, respite centres and small group homes.

Income maintenance and social security

The income from the social security system must satisfy the needs of families, which arise from the disability of their sons and daughters. The right to an allowance for those who have to work part-time must also include those parents who are unemployed because they must stay at home to care for their son or daughter with intellectual disability. Cash benefits should be based on disability and not on income and/or the socio-economic status of the family.

Awareness-raising

Public awareness of the problems and needs of persons with intellectual disability is very low.

Message is the Republic Centre for Helping Persons with Mental Handicap in Macedonia.

Message and Inclusion Europe have collected information about the situation of people with intellectual disability in the Republic of Macedonia.

There are many problems.

Brochures were published in English and Macedonian.

They include the following information:

People with intellectual disability must receive the services they need no matter where they live.

They need lots of different services for all age groups.

Social security should be enough for the needs of people with intellectual disability.

It should also be given to parents who cannot work because they have to take care of a disabled child.

The help should be given because of what a disabled person needs.

Most people in Macedonia do not know about people with intellectual disability.

Only the complete participation and inclusion of persons with intellectual disability in all forms and levels of ordinary life, instead of their current separation and rejection from it, will raise public awareness and create conditions which ensure them a life with dignity. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia should prepare an Action Programme, which will provide ongoing information to its citizens about the needs and interests of people with intellectual disability and thus contribute to achieving their equal participation in society. More information should be made available to help the general public to distinguish between people with intellectual disability and people with mental illness.

To improve the situation of persons with intellectual disability in Republic of Macedonia, the Republic Centre for Helping Persons with Mental Handicap – MESSAGE – and Inclusion Europe challenge

- the European Commission

- To support the Macedonian Government in the reform process of advancing Human Rights for people with intellectual disability.
- To initiate proposals for the improvement of legislation related to the rights of people with intellectual disability in the country.

- Members of the European Parliament

- To encourage the European Commission to provide financial support for the reform process in the country.
- To participate actively in the monitoring of the implementation of the reform process.

- the Government of the Republic of Macedonia

- To recognise the presented Country Report as an official document and National Strategy for advancing the Human Rights of persons with intellectual disability in Macedonia.
- To work in partnership with disability NGOs in the provision of community-based services.

The government should make a plan how to change that.
It should tell people about the needs and abilities of disabled people.
Disabled people must take part in normal life and not be separated.

Message and Inclusion Europe want the following:

The European Commission should support the Government to help disabled people better.
It should also make proposals for better laws.

Members of the European Parliament should ask the European Commission for money for disabled people in Macedonia. They should also check if the situation of disabled people really gets better.

The Government should approve the Country Report written by Message and Inclusion Europe.
It should work with disability organisations to provide small services in the community.

- the Embassy of the Republic of Macedonia in Brussels

- To support the transmission of experiences in the field of human rights of people with intellectual disability from European Union countries to Macedonia in close collaboration with the national disability NGOs.
- To advocate and lobby for the rights of people with intellectual disability in all contacts with the European Union.

The "embassy" of Macedonia in Brussels should tell people in Macedonia about services for disabled people in the European Union. It should work together with disability organisations. It should also include disability in all its work.

- the Council of Europe

- To set priorities giving political direction and measures for the improvement of the human rights of people with intellectual disability in the country.
- To establish intergovernmental partnerships for the improvement of the human rights of people with intellectual disability in the country.

The Council of Europe should support all activities to improve the life of disabled people in Macedonia. It should also support partnerships with other governments to help disabled people.

- the World Bank and the international donor community

- To support the partnership between the Government and disability NGOs in the provision of a network of alternative services for people with intellectual disability.
- To support the Government in the reform process.

The World Bank and others should give money for new services for disabled people. They should also help the government to make things better.