

Include

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Editorial

2015 was a busy year, full of good memories, for Inclusion Europe.

Inclusion Europe has organised different events with its members.

Inclusion Europe has also worked on different projects helping persons with intellectual disabilities.

This year was important because the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities verified what the European Union has done to help the lives of persons with disabilities. They said that the European Union still has a lot of work to do.

In 2016, Inclusion Europe will continue to make sure that the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities are respected in Europe.

Dear friends and supporters of Inclusion Europe,

We left 2015 behind, and the time has now come to reflect on it.

As every year, 2015 was the year in which we organised a number of events for our members and supporters, enabling us to meet, exchange views and learn from each other.

In May, we had our traditional Europe in Action conference, which this time we co-organised with our Italian member – ANFFAS. All roads took more than 350 of us, where else but, to Rome, where we discussed families and self-advocacy. In December we went back to the eternal city. This time we were there to proudly witness the moment when the Italian self-advocacy movement was officially inaugurated, within ANFFAS's project 'lo, Cittadino!' (I, Citizen!).

In October European Platform of Self Advocates (EPSA) brought us all together in Madrid for our biannual conference of self-advocates 'Hear Our Voices'. This year the conference was organised together with self-advocates from Spain. This was also the occasion for our Spanish member – FEAPS, to change their name into a more inclusive – Plena Inclusion. All Spain celebrated together with us, and many monuments, including the magnificent Alhambra were lit green to support Plena Inclusion's new inclusive colour!

In November, Inclusion Europe organised a leadership training for self-advocates and family members in Brussels. Over three days we discussed how to support self-

advocates and members of their families to become leaders of their groups and how to better advocate for full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. Future leaders from several European countries attended the training and we are looking forward to our future cooperation with them.

2015 was also the year in which for the first time in history an international body reviewed how the European Union has complied with an international human rights instrument. Throughout the year Inclusion Europe was working together with the rest of the international and European disability movement to ensure that the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities raises with the EU all the issues important for persons with intellectual disabilities. And we succeeded. The Committee raised with the EU issues of limitations to legal capacity, right to inclusive education and obligation of the EU to foster deinstitutionalisation, to name but few.

We also worked with the CRPD Committee on development of a General Comment on the right to inclusive education and in December the Committee published a draft. The past year was also the year in which we actively work on many of our projects. Over the year we were very busy with our projects, Safesurfing and Topside+. In Safesurfing we produced five videos in five languages explaining to persons with intellectual disabilities how to safely use the internet. With Topside+, we developed curriculum and training

materials for peer-support for persons with intellectual disabilities.

In October we went to the ICT2015 conference in Lisbon. where we presented our Able to Include project, in which we are working together with a number of partners to develop an accessibility layer for people with intellectual disabilities.

The NewPaths to InclUsion project ended in 2015, after three years which saw nothing but success. In November we organised a final project event, which was kindly and competently hosted by MEP Richard Howitt, where we discussed person-centred planning and deinstitutionalisation.

So, we will fondly remember 2015, while we are already working hard to make 2016 as exciting. Be ready to join us and our Portuguese member, FENACERCI, in Lisbon from 26 to 28 May, for our Europe in Action 2016, where we will discuss the role of families in inclusive education. In November we will have another round of leadership training, so keep an eye on our invitation to register for the training. The number of places are always less than the number of candidates. And, more than anything else, in 2016 as in all previous years, continue being our friends!

> Aleksandra Ivankovic Inclusion Europe Executive Director

Inclusion Europe's participation in the review of the EU in front of the UN CRPD Committee

Magdi Birtha

Inclusion Europe



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an important document that tries to make sure the rights of people with disabilities are respected.

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

This year, the UN CRPD Committee tried to find out whether or not the European Union was doing a good job.

The UN CRPD Committee published a document called the Concluding Observations of the CRPD Committee.

The document said the European Union did a lot of good things, but that is not enough.

They still have more work to do.

2015 was a historical year for disability rights in the EU, as the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) reviewed the measures taken by the EU to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are considered in all policies and relevant legislative proposals. The UN CRPD was the first international human rights treaty that was open for signatures for regional integration organisations, like the European Union, and it was a very important decision that the EU, for the first time in its history, ratified the Treaty in 2010.

Inclusion Europe has followed the first review process of the EU very closely and took an active part in the wide collaboration of European NGOs. We contributed to the Alternative Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published by the European Disability Forum by highlighting the perspective and experiences of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. The Alternative Report was prepared to help the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities review the progress of the European Union in implementing the UN CRPD and highlight the gaps where further action is needed.

Inclusion Europe had a comprehensive advocacy strategy to highlight through position papers, background documents, press releases and personal meetings the most urging issues that prevent persons with intellectual disabilities from enjoying their rights on an equal basis with others. While Inclusion Europe recognised that the EU has limited legal competences in several policy areas, we were convinced that the European institutions could do a lot more to ensure the fulfilment of the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities. In its position papers, but also in bilateral meetings with Committee members, Inclusion Europe emphasized the areas where the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and their families are routinely violated, whether this refers to political participation, legal capacity, accessibility, independent living or education. It was evident that fundamental changes are necessary across EU policies, programmes and the internal operational structures of the European Institutions.

On 2 April 2015, Inclusion Europe was in Geneva to voice its main concerns on the measures taken by the European institutions to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are considered in all relevant legislative proposals, as well as in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU policy. Later that month, the Committee adopted a List of Issues, a set of questions and requests for clarification for the European Union. Inclusion Europe also provided the Committee with information and answers to some of the most important questions from this list and advocated for our main priority goals.

On 27-28 August 2015, Inclusion Europe went again to Geneva to attend the Constructive Dialogue between the CRPD Committee and the delegation of the EU. The Constructive Dialogue is a very important step of the review process, as it provided Committee members with the opportunity to directly question high-ranking European Union officials on the measures that have been taken by European Institutions to ensure equal rights for all Europeans, regardless of their disability. During these days, Inclusion Europe together with our allies from the European disability movement also held a side event where we had a fruitful dialogue with members of the Committee about the backlogs of the EU level implementation of the Convention.

We are delighted that the CRPD Committee had taken our points into account and asked particular questions revealing the main gaps in the implementation of the CRPD in the European Union. Legal capacity and the violations of the rights of people with intellectual disabilities, including the right to vote and active participation in policy-and decisionmaking processes topped the agenda of the Constructive Dialogue. In early September, the Committee adopted the Concluding Observations on the EU's performance in the area of disability rights. Inclusion Europe fully supports this document and welcomed the strong language the Committee used to call for better implementation at EU level. Publishing these recommendations mark the end of a yearlong process of examining EU's progress of implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The next report of the EU is due by January 2021, in which the EU must report on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee this year. ★



At the side event in Geneva, Inclusion Europe President Maureen Piggot recalled the importance of consulting with people with intellectual disabilities in a meaningful way.

SafeSurfing - Ready to train persons with intellectual disabilities on safe online behavior

SafeSurfing partners



Inclusion Europe and other organisations started a project called SafeSurfing to teach persons with intellectual disabilities how to use the internet in a safe way.

For the SafeSurfing project, they have created 5 videos to give tips on how to stay safe online.

In February, the online training will start. Participants will learn many things such as how to protect their personal information or how to have a safe Facebook profile.

The videos and the training are available in 5 languages: English, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

For more information about SafeSurfing, please visit www.safesurfing.eu

SafeSurfing is an innovative project aiming to train people with intellectual disabilities on data protection and safe online behavior. Data protection is a major problem for all European citizens, and particularly for persons with intellectual disabilities who are more vulnerable online, and more prone to suffering abuse.

Children and young adults with intellectual disabilities are especially exposed to cybercrimes such as cyberbullying or online sexual harassment. They face many dangers due to problems with understanding issues of data protection, or the fact that accessing easy-to-read information could identify a user as having an intellectual disability.

To achieve an effective protection of their personal data, persons with intellectual disabilities have to be provided with the personal support and training they need to decide which data and information they want to share with others on the internet. SafeSurfing project does just that, by providing them interactive online training courses on online safety.

SafeSurfing underlines the importance of technology as a tool to improve the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities. Supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in using the internet safely could have a huge impact on their level of independence, their well-being and their sense of ownership, while contributing to break down the barriers to their full inclusion in society.

Within the framework of the SafeSurfing project, Inclusion Europe and its partners Mencap, Anffas, Plena Inclusion and PSOUU, have produced five training videos, available in each language of the project, to help people with intellectual disabilities navigate different aspects of data protection from understanding what personal information is, to setting up secure profiles on social media, handling privacy settings on mobile devices, or managing potentially risky situations. The videos were all created in collaboration with people with intellectual disabilities.

The video topics stemmed from both research and from an online campaign Inclusion Europe and project partners conducted on their Facebook and Twitter pages in December 2014. Answers provided a glimpse into both the challenges and the opportunities facing people with intellectual disabilities using the Internet. For example, participants in the campaign shared concerns of having their bank details stolen, of unclear website terms and conditions and of not understanding the subtlety of language. Carers and family members of people with intellectual disabilities worried about online abuse and dishonest behavior, as well as about bullying and online predators.

Partners met throughout the year to develop the training modules and materials and discuss the best ways to engage the training participants in discussion. Each module has specific learning objectives and includes practical exercises.

This approach was appreciated by the members of the EPSA Steering Group who reviewed the training in December. "It is important that participants learn by doing things themselves, not just by watching you" said Senada Halilcevic.

The feedback of the EPSA Steering Group has helped partners to make sure that the training modules were comprehensive and accessible, while integrating all the concerns shared by persons with intellectual disabilities when they use the internet. "I love this project because it will really have an impact on the participants' everyday use of the internet" concluded Harry Roche.

After a year of development, SafeSurfing project partners are now ready to roll out interactive online training sessions on data protection and safe online behavior for persons with intellectual disabilities. Each partner of the project will offer five interactive online training sessions to participants, with the possibility of asking questions in real time. The training will start in February and be available in the five languages of the project: English, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

For more information about the SafeSurfing Project, please check www.SafeSurfing.eu ★



Inclusion Europe delivers an interactive session on assistive technology and intellectual disability

Vanessa Vovor

Inclusion Europe



Inclusion Europe is working on 2 projects to help persons with intellectual disabilities use the Internet and applications on their smartphones and tablets.

Able to Include will help persons with intellectual disabilities use social media and applications on their phone or tablet with tools that:

- Translate text into Easy-to-Read
- Translate text into voice
- Translate text into images

SafeSurfing helps persons with intellectual disabilities to use the internet in a safer way.

Inclusion Europe has been invited at an important conference in Lisbon called ICT 2015 to present the projects Able to Include and SafeSurfing.



Inclusion Europe has been selected to deliver an interactive session on disability and technology at ICT 2015 – Innovate, Connect, Transform, the largest ICT-related event in the European Union. Organised by Digital Agenda for Europe, the conference took place on 20-22 October 2015 in Lisbon and gathered more than 4000 participants. The event comprised a number of parallel activities, including a policy conference

presenting the European Commission's policies and initiatives on Research & Innovation in ICT, an interactive exhibition, as well as varied networking sessions.

Inclusion Europe was present at the event, along with partners of the Able-to-Include project, to give an interactive networking session. Our session at ICT 2015 had an educational role, informing the wider public, as well as developers, service providers and policy-makers of the difficulties people with intellectual disabilities are facing when trying to access technological developments.

The attendees, split into small groups, were able to test our different tools, such as converting text into pictograms or into accessible formats. We discussed the dangers of the internet from the perspective of people with intellectual disabilities, and solutions to increase accessibility. The configuration of the room allowed an important level of interaction, fostering dialogue on what it takes to create accessible software for people with intellectual disabilities, and develop their skills and confidence.

We took advantage of this event to gather comments and suggestions from the participants. We have incorporated their feedbacks into the development of the accessibility layer.

Meeting like-minded individuals, committed to using technology as a tool to create a better world, only reinforced our strong confidence that this project will significantly help persons with intellectual disabilities to access the digital world. ★

Europe in Action 2015, families and self-advocates improving the self-advocacy movement together

21-22 May 2015



Inclusion Europe has organised the Europe in Action conference 2015 in Rome.

This year, the conference took place in Rome.

The conference was about family and self-advocacy.

People with intellectual disabilities, their families and carers discussed many different topics: legal capacity, education, health, community living, political participation and accessibility.

We hope to meet you in Lisbon for the Europe in Action conference on 26-28 May 2016!



The Europe in Action conference is always a fun event to participate in.

Inclusion Europe and Anffas welcomed more than 350 participants to the Europe in Action Conference 2015, a yearly event that has become a tradition for many people with intellectual disabilities, their families, carers and representative organisations. The event, which took place in Rome on 21 and 22 May addressed effective and innovating ways of strengthening the self-advocacy movement at local, regional and national levels, while discussing the impact of self-advocacy on families.

The conference also debated ways in which families and self-advocates can work together to promote the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). "Our credibility hinges on getting support for self-advocacy right," said Maureen Piggot, Inclusion Europe President, at the opening of the conference.

The conference programme mixed personal stories from self-advocates with sessions delivered by experts in the field or European policy-makers. The personal and political dimensions of self-advocacy were central to the programme, particular in relation to issues such as legal capacity, political participation, accessibility, health, education and community-living.

Participants had also the opportunity to learn from each other and exchange best practices and sustainable models of self-advocacy in organisations.

We are already looking forward to the next Europe in Action conference for engaging and eye-opening discussions on inclusive education in the beautiful setting of Lisbon. This year's conference will take place on 26-28May. So, save the date and join us in Portugal! ★



Senada Halilcevic, EPSA President and Inclusion Europe Vice-President, addressed the importance of strengthening the self-advocacy movement in Europe.

"I, Citizen!" Tools for full participation, active citizenship and self-advocacy of people with intellectual disabilities

Daniela Cannistraci

Anffas Onlus



Anffas Onlus is the Italian member of Inclusion Europe.

In December 2015, Anffas started a project called "I, Citizen!".

With this project, Anffas wants to help persons with intellectual disabilities to speak for themselves and participate in society.

The goal of the project is to give a voice to people with intellectual disabilities in Italy and help them become self-advocates.



Strumenti per la piena partecipazione, cittadinanza attiva e self advocacy delle persone con disabilità intellettiva e/o relazionale

Anffas Onlus project "lo, Cittadino" aims at helping persons with intellectual disabilities to make their voices heard.

Anffas Onlus has chosen the International Human Rights Day, on 10 December 2015, to launch a new project called "lo, Cittadino" developed with the financial support of the Italian Ministry of Social Policy. The main purpose of the project "I, Citizen! Tools for full participation, active citizenship and self-advocacy of people with intellectual disabilities" is to facilitate the establishment of the first self-advocacy group in Italy by helping and supporting persons with intellectual disabilities in understanding that they can be active citizens.

"I, Citizen" aims at providing persons with intellectual disabilities with opportunities, tools and empowerment to stand up for their rights to self-determination, participation and social inclusion and at fully endorsing their active role as citizens, as referring to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been ratified by Italy.

The core element of the project is to bring in Italy those international skills, methods and experiences that people with intellectual disabilities can carry on in self-advocacy groups in order to promote civil and human rights, to fight discrimination, as well as to be considered full citizens and to have an access to active participation and social inclusion.

Many European self-advocates and members of European Platform of Self-Advocates (EPSA) will be involved in the project and support Italian counterparts (jointly with families, support persons and all other experts in this sector) in raising awareness and sharing best practices. Senada Halilčević, President of EPSA and Vice-president of Inclusion Europe has recorded a video message that was broadcasted at the launch of the project in Rome, and Elisabeta Moldovan, EPSA Steering Group member, joined by video call to deliver a

message on the importance of self-advocacy. Aleksandra Ivankovic, Executive Director of Inclusion Europe, was present at the event to pledge Inclusion Europe's support to this historic project in Italy.

First step of the project is to establish 8 test groups all over the Italian territory, made up by 60 persons with intellectual disabilities and 30 support persons. This is the way to directly involve persons with disability in advocating their own rights, ensuring respect of equal opportunities and influencing decision making process on policies and services that mostly concern them. As to say, exercise their right to act as socially included active citizens. Moreover, Self-Advocates will have the opportunity to enhance their level of participation in national, regional and local Anffas activities.

Once test groups are established, they will be the basis for the first National Platform of Italian Self-Advocates to be created. 8 leaders will be selected among people with disabilities. Their role will be to represent local claims at national level and eventually a future participation in EPSA with a representative with intellectual disabilities.

For the next step, families, associations and support persons will be involved. A campaign, called "I, citizen", achieved with full and direct contribution of people with intellectual disability, will be launched to raise awareness among the civil society on the significant contribution that people with disabilities can bring to their own community, to their rights to participation and social inclusion as well as to their capability to influence their own lives, take their own decisions and be active citizens.

Self-Advocates, as story tellers, will directly count their personal story.

With this project, Anffas hopes to Identify the barriers to self-determination, self-advocacy, participation and active citizenship of people with disabilities in Italy. By transferring international tools, experiences and skills within an innovative context, "lo Cittadino" will contribute to the establishment of the first National Platform of Self-advocates in the country. ★



Inclusion Europe Director Aleksandra Ivankovic was present in Rome on the International Day of Human Rights for the launch of the project "lo, Cittadino".

Hear Our Voices 2015: "My life, my decisions"

2-4 October 2015



In October, Inclusion Europe organised a big conference in Madrid with the European Platform of Self-Advocates and Plena Inclusion.

There were many workshops on things that are important for self-advocates such as the right to make your own decisions or peer-support.

Participants were also able to get practical skills on things like creating an easy-to-read document, or using the internet safely.

At the end of the workshops, self-advocates agreed on messages they wanted to share with families, organisations and politicians.

The Hear Our Voices conference, the largest self-advocacy conference in Europe, took place from 2-4 October in Madrid. The European Platform of Self-Advocates (EPSA), together with Inclusion Europe and Plena Inclusion (formerly known as FEAPS) welcomed persons with intellectual disabilities, their families, support persons and interested individuals coming from 27 different countries. More than 350 participants took part in this completely accessible event developed by and for self-advocates.

The different sessions focusing on the theme "My life, my decisions" addressed ways to ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities can fully participate in society and make their own decisions."I lived in an institution for 20 years and now I live independently. If I take wrong decisions, I learn from them", said Elisabeta Moldovan, Member of EPSA Steering Group and Inclusion Europe Board Member. Speakers, most of them being self-advocates, also shared their personal stories and presented their work. They also provided the participants with useful advice on how to build or strengthen the self-advocacy movement in their own country.

The self-advocates exchanged views and experiences at the workshop sessions covering topics such as legal capacity, peer-support or supported decision-making. They also had the chance to gain more practical skills on how to create an easy-to-read document, to use technology to find a job or to safely use the internet.

At the end of each workshop, participants agreed on three important messages they wanted to share, hoping that they would reach policy-makers. Reminding them that everyone should get on board for the journey to inclusion, they urged

experts, politicians and support persons to hear their voices. Here are some of the messages that self-advocates wanted you to hear from them:

- We are people first and we contribute to society
- We are experts in our lives. Nobody can make a decision about us without us
- Mistakes are opportunities to learn
- Information is power and it has to be accessible
- Sexuality is part of our freedom
- We want to vote and participate in political life
- Policy-makers should meet persons with intellectual disabilities and talk with them to understand them *



Leadership training for self-advocates and family members

17-19 November 2015



Inclusion Europe organised a 3-day leadership training seminar which took place in Brussels in November.

This seminar was organised to help people with intellectual disabilities and family members make their voices heard in Europe.

Self-advocates and family members learned about their rights but alos how laws are made and how the European Union works.

They also met people working at the European Commission, the European Parliament and organisations fighting for the rights of persons with disabilities.



Group discussion among family members and self-advocates at the Leadership Training Seminar.

In order to increase the capacity to engage in European policy debates, Inclusion Europe has hosted a leadership training seminar for family members and self-advocates from the national level in Brussels. The 3-day seminar comprised an introduction to different EU policy areas that are relevant for persons with intellectual disabilities, as well as to EU level advocacy work, the work of EU-level NGOs, funding sources, and to the European institutions.

Self-advocates and family members gained knowledge and skills by engaging in different workshops. They learned about the functioning of the EU institutions and the best ways to approach them in order to make their voice heard. The seminar highlighted how effective advocacy work at EU level can pervade national level and make a real change in people's lives.

Family members also received information about the available EU funding that can support advocacy work in their home country. Annelisa Cottone, representative from the European Commission's Unit on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, has provided useful insights on what is necessary for a successful application.

Participants also had the opportunity to learn more about how Easy-to-Read can help self-advocates to stand up for themselves or why the EU level is a good place to raise awareness about the situation of persons under guardianship who are not being able to participate in the elections.

The roundtable "Together we are stronger" gathered allies of Inclusion Europe from the European Disability Forum, European Network on Independent Living, EASPD, Autism-Europe, Mental Health Europe on how to best advocate together. They discussed topics such as employment, education or independent living. "Living in an institution is not right! That is the change that we have to organise.



the European Parliament.

We need to make this message loud and clear in Brussels", said Luk Zelderloo from EASPD while recalling the importance of the voice of self-advocates and families in the process.

Elisabeta Moldovan, Board Member of Inclusion Europe and EPSA Steering Group Member, introduced the European Platform of Self-advocates and its work to raise awareness of EU decision- makers about independent living and legal capacity. Self-advocates were particularly moved by the video she shared, showing the horrible conditions of the institution she ran away from in Romania.

The Policy Seminar on the importance of person-centers planning in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, organised by the New Paths to Inclusion Network and hosted at the European Parliament, concluded the 3-day event. Participants were able to ask questions directly to European Commission staff and learn more about the implementation of the UN CRPD at the European level. "It is important to bring your stories and experiences to the EU institutions" said Richard Howitt, Member of the European Parliament, to the participants. Annelisa Cottone from the European Commission echoed his statement "The European Commission wants to hear about your stories. Not only about what is not working but also about what is working so we can learn from these success stories". *





After insightful sessions, self-advocates and family members also enjoyed some sightseeing in Brussels and did not miss the chance to taste some traditional Belgian cuisine.



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Inclusion Europe is a non-profit organisation that campaigns for the rights and interests of people with intellectual disabilities and their families throughout Europe. Respect, Solidarity and Inclusion are the fundamental values shared by all members of our movement of and for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Inclusion Europe is represented in 40 countries by national and regional organisations of parents and self-advocates. We are represented in:

Albania Austria Belgium Bosnia-Herzegovina
Bulgaria Croatia Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark
Estonia Faroe Island Finland France Germany
Greece Hungary Iceland Ireland Israel Italy Latvia
Lithuania Luxembourg Former Yugoslav Republic of
Macedonia Malta Moldova Netherlands Norway
Poland Portugal Romania Russia Scotland Serbia
Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland
United Kingdom

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Call for contributions

If you would like to inform the network about your events, projects or campaigns connected to intellectual disability issues, please send us a short description of such activities and we will include it in the next issue of our newsletter or post it on the website. Please send all contributions to information@inclusion-europe.org.

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For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/ programmes-2014-2020/rec/



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