



# Europe for us

News for self-advocates

Number 4 / 2018

## Our Inclusion Heroes!



Find explanations for words in **bold**

at the end of Europe For Us (pages 27 to 34).

“Europe for us” is available in:

**English**

**French**

**German**

**Hungarian**

**Romanian**










**Spanish**

**Italian**

Go to <http://bit.ly/europeforum>

to find the other language versions.

# Topics

		Page
	The right to vote in Europe	3-7
	Our Inclusion Heroes	8-11
	Inclusion Europe turns 30	12
	Interview with Sami Helle	13-17
	Interview with Hendrik Jan Menninga	18-20
	Our new president: Jyrki Pinomaa	21-23
	Short news	24-26
	Explanations	27-34
	Summary	35

# The right to vote in Europe



Voting is very important for everyone.



It gives you the chance to have a say and to tell **politicians** what you would like to change.

Next year there will be the **elections** for the European Parliament.



People from all over Europe will decide who will be part of the new **European Parliament**.

But there is a problem:



Many people with **intellectual disabilities** in Europe are not allowed to vote.

In some countries, politicians want to change that.



For example, in France:

The French president has promised to let people with **intellectual disabilities** who are under full **guardianship** vote.

There are 360,000 adults under full guardianship in France.



At present, a judge can take away their right to vote.

After the changes, a judge will not be allowed to take away their right to vote anymore.



Or in Germany:

German politicians want to give the right to vote to people with intellectual disabilities.

They want to reach this goal before the elections for the **European Parliament**.

**People with intellectual disabilities must get the right to vote!**

But still in many European countries people with intellectual disabilities do not have the full right to vote.

At the moment, people under **guardianship** are not allowed to vote in 15 member states of the **European Union**.



In 6 member states, a judge decides if someone under guardianship can vote.

There are some European politicians who want to change that.



One of these politicians is Cecilia Wikström. Cecilia Wikström is a member of the **European Parliament**.

Cecilia Wikström has asked the **European Commission** what it wants to do to make elections **accessible** for all.

There was an event at the European Parliament to answer Cecilia Wikström's question.

At the event, people who work at the European Parliament and the European Commission talked about making next year's elections accessible.



Věra Jourová is a **Commissioner at the European Commission**.

She said that every person with a disability must have the right to vote.

She said that this is written in the **European Disability Strategy**.





Another important person who has spoken about the right to vote is Dunja Mijatović. Dunja Mijatović is the **Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe**.

She spoke to the **European Court of Human Rights** about the right to vote for people with disabilities.

She said:  
“Everybody has the right to vote.  
That includes people with disabilities.”

Many important texts say that people with disabilities have the right to vote.



One of these texts is the **UN CRPD**.

Dunja Mijatović said that these texts are more important than the laws of a country.

She said that everybody must have the right to vote because this is good for the whole community.

She said that people with **intellectual disabilities** must have the chance to vote for people that care about their needs.

Dunja Mijatović said that every European country must make voting **accessible** to people with intellectual disabilities.



## How to make voting accessible

There are many ways to make voting accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.



- There should be **easy-to-read** information about politics and elections.
- People with intellectual disabilities should get support with documents needed for voting. For example, if they need to register to vote.
- People with intellectual disabilities should get encouraged to go voting.



**Everyone should be able to have a say in politics!**





## ► Our Inclusion Heroes!



Dana Migaliova, a mother of a son with **intellectual disabilities** and president of our Lithuanian member Viltis



Hendrik Jan Menninga, a Dutch “UN ambassador”  
(see page 18-20)



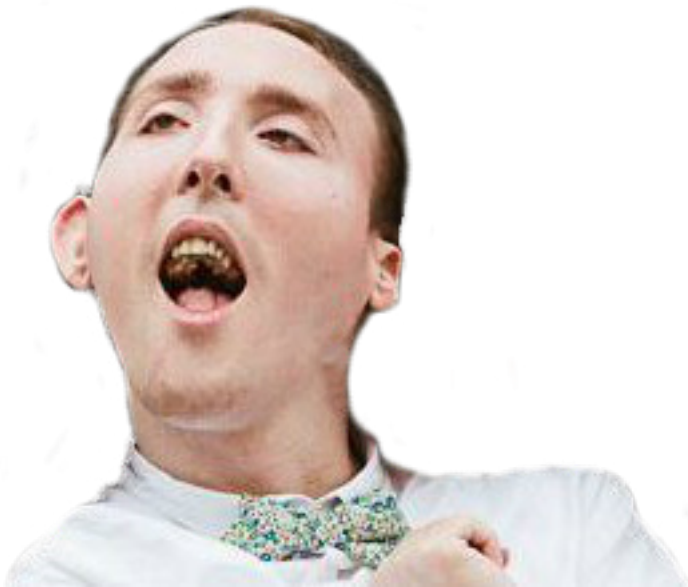
Irish actress and musician Aimée Richardson



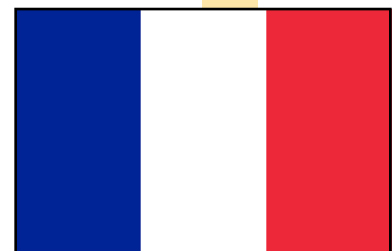
Gerhard Furtner from Austria,  
the managing director of a company  
that employs people with **intellectual disabilities**



Maribel Cáceres, a Spanish self-advocate who fought to regain her right to vote



Charles, a young man from France





Self-advocate Elisabeta Moldovan  
from Romania

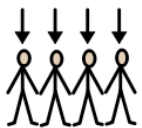


Sami Helle, a musician, self-advocate  
and politician from Finland  
(see page 13-17)

# ► Inclusion Europe turns 30



**Inclusion Europe** turns 30 years old in 2018.



We are celebrating this in a special way: we are looking at what has been done in Europe to make sure people are included.

Every month we talk about one person who has worked towards inclusion in Europe.



Here you can read two interviews with our Inclusion Heroes.



You can find the other interviews here: [inclusion-europe.eu/?tag=inclusion-heroes](https://inclusion-europe.eu/?tag=inclusion-heroes)





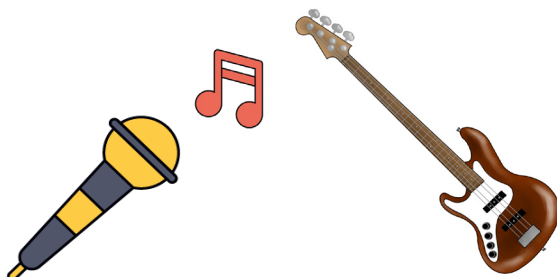
## ▶ Interview with Sami Helle



Sami Helle is from Finland.

Sami has many talents:

- He is a gifted musician.
- He sings and plays the bass guitar.
- He loves jazz and blues music.
- He is also part of a punk band.





# EUROVISION

SONG CONTEST



With the punk band,  
he represented his country in Eurovision.

Eurovision is a contest where  
people represent their countries with songs.

A lot of different countries take part.

Sami was on a talk show!

He is also active in politics.

Question 1:

How did you become part of the punk band?

The band leader asked me to join the band.  
I was happy to!

Question 2:

What was it like to take part in Eurovision?

I was worried, but it was interesting and fun!  
We did not win, but I enjoyed it a lot!



# EUROVISION

SONG CONTEST



Sami Helle and his bandmates



Question 3:  
How did it feel when you came back to Finland?

It felt great to have people cheer for us when we got back to Finland.



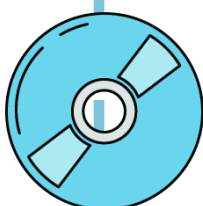
Question 4:  
You also play the trumpet and sing.  
You set up a jazz band with 4 other people.  
Why did you choose jazz?

It is different from punk rock!  
Jazz was one of the first kinds of music I played.  
It felt good!

I also have a blues band called  
“Sam Heat & His Blue Kings”.

I am also doing a solo record under the name Sam Heat.

You see: I love music!







Sami Helle ran for the town elections in Helsinki in 2017



Question 5:

You are also active in politics.

You ran for the town elections in Helsinki in 2017.

Helsinki is the capital city of Finland.

What did you learn from this experience?

I learnt how **elections** work.

I met new people.

I would like to stay active in politics!



Question 6:

In 2017, you were not elected.

Will you run again?

Yes, I am running for other local elections!



Question 7:

You recently had an interview with a Finnish TV show.  
What did you talk about?

I talked about when public organisations  
buy things from companies.



The Finnish organisation  
for people with **intellectual disabilities**,  
called Tukiliitto,  
has started a project with other disability organisations.

Often the services for people with disabilities  
that cost the least money get used.  
People's needs get overlooked.  
This does not respect **human rights**.



# Interview with Hendrik Jan Menninga



Hendrik Jan Menninga is a “**UN** ambassador”.

The “UN ambassadors” work for the rights of people with **intellectual disabilities** in the Netherlands.



An ambassador is a person who speaks for an organisation.

The “UN ambassadors” talk about the **UN CRPD** to mayors and other politicians.



They tell them how important the **UN CRPD** is. They help them make sure that people with disabilities get equal rights.



There are 100 people working at the “UN ambassadors”. Hendrik Jan Menninga is part of the group.

**Question 1:**  
How did you become a UN ambassador?



In 2015 I was part of a group of people with disabilities. They told me about this project. Then I decided to join.

**Question 2:**  
What are you doing as a UN ambassador?



We tell the politicians in our towns and cities about the things that are important to us.

For me, information in **easy-to-read** is important.



But we also talk about other things. For example, easy access to buildings.

We give the politicians some time to fix the problems that we have found. Then, we check back to see if they have changed anything.





**Question 3:**  
What have you done so far?

For example, the village of Vries is now more **accessible** to people with disabilities.



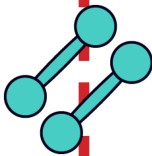
We also created rules on how to make websites more accessible. We used these rules when we were working with some politicians in one town. Now the town's website is much easier to use for people with disabilities!

**Question 4:**  
Do you use the **easy-to-read** version of the **UN CRPD** document?



The original text is too hard for me. The easy-to-read text is good, but it does not have everything in it.

**Question 5:**  
What will you do in the future?



We will build an accessible gym in one village in the Netherlands.

I will also bring together the people in my region who work as **UN** ambassadors, so we can work together.





# Our new president: Jyrki Pinomaa



Jyrki Pinomaa is the new president of **Inclusion Europe**. He has replaced Maureen Piggot. He is from Finland.

He has been working for many years for the rights of people with **intellectual disabilities**. Until May, Jyrki was a director of the Aspa Foundation. The Aspa Foundation rents out homes to people with intellectual disabilities and those who have mental health problems.

Mental health means how healthy your mind is.

From 2010, Jyrki has been the president of Inclusion Finland KVTL. Inclusion Finland KVTL is a Finnish organisation for people with intellectual disabilities. It is a member of **Inclusion Europe**.





Jyrki has four children with his wife Marianne. Two of their children have **intellectual disabilities**: Markus, who is 31, and Robin, who is 27.

While he is president, Jyrki wants to make sure **Inclusion Europe** continues to be known for being trustworthy.

He also wants to get the members of Inclusion Europe to use the **UN CRPD**. Jyrki said he is glad to be the president of Inclusion Europe.

He said that he cares a lot about the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.



He is looking forward to working with all kinds of people who are also fighting for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.



He also said that there are no words big enough to say thank you to Maureen, for the work that she has done.

Jyrki is set to be the president for at least the next 4 years.

**Inclusion Europe** is happy to welcome someone with so much experience as our new president.

**We are looking forward to working towards inclusion with Jyrki!**



# Short news

## ▶ Leadership Training in October



In October **Inclusion Europe** is organizing a 3-day leadership training.



The leadership training is for **self-advocates** and their families. The training will happen in Brussels from Tuesday 2nd October to Thursday 4th October.



During the 3-day event self-advocates will learn about many things like:

- European **elections** and the right to take part in **politics**
- How to be a self-advocate on the European level



You can see more information at this link: <https://bit.ly/2Pw1eIN>



# Read our Annual Report!



Annual Report 2017  
Inclusion Europe

Our Annual Report has been published!

Find out more about

- our projects and events in the last year
- our achievements in 2017
- the new strategy for the next 5 years

and many other things in our publication.

Read the report at this link:

<https://bit.ly/2LfXUb0>





## Video about our new strategy

**Inclusion Europe** has a new strategy!

A strategy is a plan with goals for the future.  
The strategy also says how these goals will be reached.



We have made a video to explain our strategy.

Over the next five years, we will talk about different topics.

All these topics are important  
for people with **intellectual disabilities** and their families.

Find out more about the strategy and the topics in our video.  
You can watch it here:



<https://bit.ly/2OQRXTS>



# 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.

## 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.

## Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe

The Commissioner for Human Rights is part of the **Council of Europe**. The Commissioner makes sure people understand and respect **human rights**.

The Commissioner visits the countries who take part in the Council of Europe, to talk to people about **human rights**.

## Council of Europe



The Council of Europe is an organisation made up of different European countries.

It has 47 members.

The Council of Europe works for **human rights** and equality for all in Europe.

The Council of Europe does not make laws. It can just make countries follow some international agreements.

## Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union is where the national ministers from the countries of the **European Union** meet.

They meet to adopt laws and talk about politics in the European Union.

The Council of the European Union is also called Council of Ministers.

## Easy-to-read

Easy-to-read is information that is written in a simple way so that people with **intellectual disabilities** can understand.



Easy-to-read documents often have this logo, so it is easier to find them.

There are rules on how easy-to-read should be done. You can read the European standards of easy-to-read information here: [www.easy-to-read.eu](http://www.easy-to-read.eu)



## Elections

An election is when people can decide about who should speak for them and make choices for them.

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



## European Commission

The European Commission works with the **European Parliament**. The European Commission suggests laws for the European Parliament and the **Council of the European Union** to discuss.

It also makes sure that the laws that have been decided upon are being followed by the member states.

## European Court of Human Rights



A court is a place where a judge decides how to put the law into practice.

The European Court of **Human Rights** makes sure every European country respects human rights.

Human Rights are the rights that every person should have. For example, the right to live. Or the right to speak your mind.

## European Disability Strategy

The European Disability Strategy is an important text.

It says what the **European Union** has to do to make sure people with disabilities in Europe get the same rights as everyone else.



European Parliament

## 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** are in 2019.



## 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**. 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.



## Human Rights

Human Rights are the rights that every person should have. For example, the right to live. Or the right to speak your mind.



## 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 policies in Europe. We started in 1988.



We have 75 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.

## Intellectual disabilities

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.

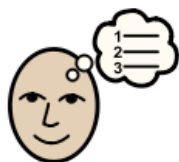
Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult. It affects you for your whole life.

## 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 work contracts).



- Take part in politics and have the right to vote.

When there is a **guardianship**, the guardian has legal capacity.

## Politician

Someone whose job is to help run the country or part of the country.

## Self-advocacy



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

## 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 / United Nations

The United Nations is an international organisation.

It works for peace and security everywhere in the world.

In short, we call it UN.

# 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 Dunja Mijatović say about the right to vote?
- 2) Where is Inclusion Europe's new president from?
- 3) What kind of music does Sami Helle play?



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Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!

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Birthday cake: Photo on Visual Hunt

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Dunja Mijatović: www.coe.int

Sami Helle pictures: Reuters UK, www.centreforwelfarereform.org