# **Europe for us 4**

Covid-19 report: impact on people with disabilities and families

# **Editors note**

Hello everyone

Just wanted to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In this Europe for us newsletter you will find out different articles written in easy to read.

Hope 2021 is better than 2020 was.

Again from the easy to read editor

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

[**Speach of László Bercse during the European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020.**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/european-day-persons-disabilities-2020-laszlo-bercse/)

László Bercse is the Chair of the

[**European Platform of Self-Advocates**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/european-platform-of-self-advocates-epsa/)

and the Vice-President of[**Inclusion Europe.**](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/)

László is also the Co-Chair of the

Hungarian organisation [**ÉFOÉSZ.**](http://efoesz.hu/)

During the Corona crisis, persons

with intellectual disabilities

had to adapt, like everybody else.

Our families had to adapt.

Our service providers had to adapt.

You really have to admire the

people with intellectual disabilities,

the family members supporting them,

the staff in-services.

As a [**self-advocate**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Self-Advocacy), I was able to do a lot of tasks.

I was in contact with other self-advocates across Europe.

This was different for many people with

intellectual disabilities in Europe.

Many thousands have faced complete isolation,

especially those [**segregated**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Segregation) in residential care [**institutions.**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#SeparateInstitutions)

The pandemic means losing our support networks.

Not being able to see our family and friends.

Not being able to go to work.

In some countries, people were left without support.

Students with intellectual disabilities were left out of

school, online classes were not accessible to them.

It was hard to stay connected and working.

Online meetings or calls are not for all people.

Sometimes, we do not have computers

or phones to do it.

Sometimes, we do not have

internet connections.

Many people with intellectual disabilities

have lost their jobs.

Many of us feel that we were left out.

Our needs were often not considered

when preparing the measures and solutions.

Information was mostly not accessible to us,

provided only in difficult language.

We often could not understand what was going on.

What do we need to do and why?

Many people with intellectual disabilities were denied proper health care when sick with Covid.

Many people with intellectual disabilities died

from the Coronavirus

In England, they died at 3 times higher rate

than the general population.

**How is it in other countries?**

Especially where there are a lot of people

in residential care institutions?

We don’t know,

because other countries do not

report this information!

It is important to understand that the bad things

happening during the pandemic are not new to us.

The pandemic made existing problems,

[**discrimination**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Discrimination)and **segregation** worse**.**

It made this easier to see – I hope also for the [**governments**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Government).

**What needs to be done now?**

Governments must learn from these experiences.

They must listen to us when preparing the measures.

Our lives have the same value as everyone else’s.

Governments and the [**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) must investigate

properly the things that happened to people with intellectual disabilities.

**How many died?**

How many died because they did not receive

proper medical care?

Governments must provide [**easy-to-understand**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#ETR) information.

Some have been doing that,

others can learn from their example.

The European Union and national money

for economic recovery must reach people

with intellectual disabilities and families.

The money must go into support,

especially in **inclusive education**

and in employment for

people with intellectual disabilities.

The money must go into

community-based services.

**People with intellectual disabilities must be able**

**to move out of the segregated residential care institutions.**

# [**Speech by Commissioner Helena Dalli on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/helena-dalli-edpd2020/)

On the International Day of

Persons with Disabilities,

European Commissioner for

Equality Helena Dallisaid:

This year, we mark the

International Day of Persons

with Disabilities at hard times with Coronavirus.

While the pandemic has affected us all,

people with disabilities

were affected even harder.

Also, those living in [**institutions**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#SeparateInstitutions).

Community services and access

to [**healthcare**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#HumanRights) were harder to organize.

**Online schooling** and working from home

were not always accessible to all.

COVID-19 has bought a lot of barriers that

people with intellectual disabilities are facing.

We must remove these barriers.

The [**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) is promoting

the **rights of people with disabilities**

but there is still a long way to go.

At the beginning of 2021,

The [**European Commission**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EC) will present the new

**European Strategy on the Rights**

**of Persons with Disabilities.**

The European Commission will

shape inclusive societies

and they will do their

best to continue to help.

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020

has done a lot of good work but there

is still a long way to go.

[Ending violence against women and girls with disabilities](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-with-disabilities-easy-to-read/)

Even before COVID-19, women and

girls experienced violence.

Women and girls with disabilities

make 16% of the total population

of women in the European Union

and 60% of the overall population

of 100 million persons with disabilities.

Data show that women are 2 to 5 times more likely

to experience violence than other women and girls.

In the European Union, 34% of women with a

health problem or a disability have experienced

physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime.

Violence includes domestic and institutional violence,

forced sterilisation, contraception and abortion,

and harassment, including sexual harassment

Women and girls with disabilities receive

limited support due to lack of awareness,

accessibility, and reasonable accommodation.

Several policies of the **European Commission**

have the potential to end violence against

women and girls with disabilities.

Policies like the Gender Equality **Strategy**and

Strategy for Victims’ Rights adopted earlier this year,

and the **European Disability Strategy** to be adopted in 2021.

Read the [Life after Violence report in easy-to-read.](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/life-after-violence/#Outcomes)

# [**Affect of Covid-19 on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/covid-report-2020-etr/)

Inclusion Europe published a report about

how Covid-19 affected the rights of people

with intellectual disabilities and their families.

**Read the** [**Covid-19 report.**](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/COVID-report-Final.pdf)

Inclusion Europe wants people to know

what happened to people with [**intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability)

and their families during the Covid-19 crisis.

The report shows people with intellectual disabilities

were [**segregated**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Segregation) and [**discriminated**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Discrimination) against once more.

# **Numbers**

Numbers are important to see how Covid-19

changed the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities.

For example, to know how many people

died in institutions or hospitals.

The[**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) and countries

need to investigate.

# **Health**

The Covid-19 pandemic showed that accessibility

of health and emergency services is bad.

Accessing treatment in hospitals was not sure

for persons with intellectual disabilities sick.

Sometimes, the medical personnel did not know

how to behave with people with intellectual disabilities.

People working in [**institutions**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#SeparateInstitutions)did not have enough

protections (masks, gloves).

# **Institutions**

Persons with intellectual disabilities

were isolated from their families and friends for months.

They were at high risk of infection.

It is proof that institutionalization is harmful

and is a violation of European values and [**human rights**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#HumanRights).

# **Support services and the role of families**

Because of lockdown, daycare centre

and support services closed.

Many persons with intellectual disabilities

got no support.

This had a big impact on families

having to take care.

This led to panic and worry for everyone.

Some countries supported to families.

Several countries are letting parents take paid

leave so that they can stay home

and look after their children.

# **Education**

Schools had to close and be online.

People with intellectual disabilities were left behind,

because they did not have support,

or the material was not accessible.

When schools reopened, some did not allow

children with intellectual disabilities.

Many families were afraid.

# **Access to information and consultations**

Information was not in [**easy-to-read.**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#ETR)

Some people did not understand the situation.

Disability organisations talked to governments

to tell them to consult people with intellectual disabilities.

# **Employment**

Because of Covid-19, many people lost their jobs.

The situation was very uncertain.

People with disabilities are afraid to lose their jobs.

# [**EU instruments to foster employment of people with intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/my-talents-for-diversity-online-events-etr/)

Tim Ghillan works at the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities.

Tim talked about [**employment**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Employ) of

people with [**intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability).

People with intellectual disabilities

have the right to have a job

like everyone else.

People with intellectual disabilities also

have the right to get help from their community.

But Tim said that there are barriers

that stop people with intellectual disabilities

from finding a job.

He presented two important documents that can be used

to encourage employment of people with intellectual disabilities:

* The [**European Disability Strategy**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EDS)
* The [**European Pilar of Social Rights**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EuropeanPillarofSocialRights)

Tim said we need to make education, housing and transports more [**accessible**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Accessible) to encourage employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

Mark Bell is Head of the

School of Law of Trinity College Dublin.

Mark talked about reasonable accommodation.

He said that employment needs to be made accessible for all people with intellectual disabilities.

Mark gave some examples of reasonable accommodation:

* Employers can provide information in [**easy to read**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#ETR) format
* Employers can provide support to employees with intellectual disabilities
* Employers can adapt the tasks of the job to make sure employees with intellectual disabilities can do the job.

Anouk Van Hoofstadt works at the Antwerp Management School in Belgium.

Anouk talked about employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the regular economy.

Anouk introduced Thibeau who works with her.

Thibeau has an intellectual disability.

Thibeau works at the Antwerp Management School.

Thibeau has made a great impact on

the team that he works with.

# [**“We help people with disabilities to live a normal life” - Online meeting with Rytmus**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/my-talents-for-diversity-online-event-rytmus-etr/)

Rytmus is an organisation that

supports [**employment**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Employ) of people with disabilities

in Czechia.

In 2019, Rytmus helped 40 people

with disabilities to find a job.

**How does Rytmus support job seekers with disabilities?**

Rytmus organises meetings with people with disabilities

where they can share their job preferences.

Rytmus helps people with disabilities creating

their CV and answering job offers.

Rytmus uses social media

to make first contacts with companies and

to publish short articles presenting

job seekers profiles and preferences.

**Martin Lubojacký said that companies are afraid to employ people with disabilities.**

Rytmus meets with companies to learn more

about their business and hiring practices.

Rytmus sets up meetings between companies

and employees to personalise **working conditions**.

Jobs must meet preferences and needs

of each employee with disability.

Rytmus implements “job shadowing”.

Job seekers can work from 1 to 3 days in the

company before starting their new position.

Job seekers can also meet self-advocates

that are already working in the company.

Once employees start their new job,

Rytmus supports and coaches them

during their inclusion in the company.

# [**How employment should be covered in the next EU Disability Strategy?**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/my-talents-for-diversity-online-event-9th-october-2020-etr/)

### **Soufiane El Amrani**

“I have been working at

Inclusion Europe for a long time.

I am happy with my job.

But I know not all people with

[**intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability)have the

opportunity to have a job.”

Soufiane El Amrani is the Easy-to-read and

Advocacy Officer at Inclusion Europe.

### **Katarina Ivanković-Knežević**



Katarina Ivanković-Knežević works

at the Directorate-General for

Employment, Social Affairs and

Inclusion of the [**European Commission**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EC)**.**

Katarina Ivanković-Knežević presented

positive outcomes of the

previous EU Disability Strategy:

* In 2018, 110 000 young people with disabilities were supported by the Youth Employment Initiative that help young people to have a job.
* In 2019, the European Commission published a guide presenting good practices of reasonable accommodations put in place by employers.

Katarina Ivanković-Knežević said that

a lot of work remains to be done

to make sure people with disabilities

can have a job.

She presented some priorities about employment

for the 2020-2030 EU Disability Strategy:

* The labour market should be [**accessible**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Accessible)
for people with disabilities.
* Employment services should work with
and for people with disabilities.
* All the Member states of the
[**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) should recognise
the disability of a person the same way.

### **Haydn Hammersley**

Haydn Hammersley works at the

 [**European Disability Forum**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EDF)(EDF).

Haydn Hammersley presented some

ideas that EDF has about employment

for the 2020-2030 EU Disability Strategy.

For example:

* Making sure the workplaces can adapt to the needs of each person with a disability.
* Making sure no people with disability who has a job is paid less than the minimum wage of their country.

### **Milan Brglez**

Milan Brglez is a **Member** of the

**European Parliament.**

Milan Brglez explained that

people with disabilities are at greater risk

of poverty and social exclusion.

For Milan Brglez, every law should consider

the most vulnerable people of the society.

Milan Brglez explained that the

COVID-19 crisis impacted employees with disabilities.

Milan Brglez said that the Member states of the EU must increase their commitment to deal with the discrimination in access to employment.

# [Supporting employment and inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/my-talents-for-diversity-online-event-8th-september-2020-etr/)

KLAPjob is a project of **Lev**.

**Lev** is an association in Denmark.

Lev believes that people with

[**intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability) have the right

to decide where and how

they want to work.

KLAPjob promotes [**inclusion**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#InclusiveEducation)

of people with intellectual disabilities

in the labour market.

KlAPjob works with many different companies.

KLAPjob helps companies prepare

for employing workers with disabilities.

KLAPjob helps job seekers

with intellectual disabilities to find a job.

Claus Hansen is the Head of KLAPjob.

Claus explained that KLAPjob employees

receive 495 Euro per month.

Claus also said that in Denmark

people with intellectual disabilities

receive disability pensions of 2.500 Euro per month.

Bjørn Burkal is a[**self-advocate**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Self-Advocacy)

and KLAPjob ambassador.

Bjørn is finishing school.

He wants to be a graphic designer.

Bjørn found a job thanks to the help of KLAPjob.

Bjørn is very happy with his current job.

Bjørn works 16 hours a week and earns a lot of money.

Bjørn said that “when you have a job, you get a social life”.

[**It is really important to have strong self-advocacy groups**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/it-is-really-important-to-have-strong-self-advocacy-groups/)

This year, because of the COVID-19 situation,

training for self-advocateswas done online.

By doing this we were able to reach more people.

We had 93 registrations for the events and 71 attendees.

The participants were self-advocates

and professionals supporting them.

The aim of these online meetings

was to collect some ideas on how

people were affected by the COVID-19 situation

on their ability to advocate

for themselves and exercise rights.

We had online events in 7 languages

and the participants were from

11 different European countries.

**What have we learned that it’s important?**

* It is really important to have strong self-advocacy groups. When we have them, they can help to decide on good measures.

* It is also important to teach self-advocates
on how to use mobile phones
and the internet to stay in touch.

* Governments should involve persons with disabilities and their representative organisations
when they think about measures
to respond to events like the pandemic.

* It is easier to protect ourselves
against the virus and to live an independent life
if we have community-based services.

**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.

**Discrimination**

Discrimination means that you are treated worse than others or that you do not get the chances you deserve.

**Easy-to-read**

Easy to read is information that is written in a simple way

so that people with **intellectual disabilities**can understand.

It is important to use simple words and sentences.

If there are words that are difficult to understand,

an explanation is provided.

The text needs to be clear to see,

for example, black writing on a white background is good.

It needs to be well-spaced.

Easy-to-read often uses pictures

to explain what the text talks about.

Someone with an intellectual disability needs to

check the information is easy to 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.

**Educate**

Educate means to teach.

It means to make sure people have access to training

so they can learn new skills.

**ÉFOÉSZ**

ÉFOÉSZ is an association of organisations that care and support the rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability in Hungary.

**Employment**

Employment is when a person works and gets paid for their work. It is usually based on a contract between the worker and the person who provides the job. This person is the employer.

**EPSA**

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 a part of **Inclusion Europe.**

**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 Parliament**

The European Parliament is a place where

important decisions of the **European Union** are made.

For example: laws.

The Members of the European Parliament (in short, MEPs)

make these decisions

and speak for all the people

who live in the European Union.

Every five years,

the people who live in the European Union

**vote** for their country’s MEPs.

**European Union**

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

We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together

to be stronger politically and economically.

The EU makes laws on many important things for the people who live in

those countries.

The EU makes laws in different areas. Some examples are:

* Laws to protect the environment.
* Laws for farmers.
* Laws to protect consumers.

A consumer is someone who buys things.

The EU also makes laws that are important

for people with disabilities.

It also made a law that gives people with disabilities

more rights when they are travelling.

The EU also gives money to its member states.

Some of this money is used for people with disabilities.

**European Pilar of Social Rights**:

The European Pilar of Social Rights makes sure

people in the European Union have new and more effective rights.

**Government**

A government is a group of people
that make decisions on how to run a country.
For example,

* about where the money is spent,
* about public transport,
* about schools,
* about hospitals.

Every few years there are **elections**
to **vote** for a new government.

**Guardianship**

Guardianship allows some people

to make life choices for others.

The person who makes choices for you

is your guardian.

Your guardian 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.

**Healthcare:**

Healthcare is the services given to someone

who is ill or who needs to take care of their health.

Healthcare involves going to the doctor, getting medicine

and getting support for health problems

of the body or the 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 the laws in Europe.

We started in 1988.

We have 79 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.

**Inclusive education, training, employment**

Inclusive education, training or employment

means that people with **intellectual disabilities**

can learn and work together

with other people without disabilities.

**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.

People who live in institutions

have to follow the rules of the institution

and cannot decide for themselves.

**Intellectual disability**

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.

There are things that can make life easier

for people with intellectual disabilities.

For example, information in **easy-to-read** language.

Some people say learning disabilities

instead of intellectual disabilities.

**Lockdown:**

A lockdown happens when there is a need

to control a situation that can be harmful.

During a pandemic like the one of COVID-19,

the countries have lockdowns to

stop the spread of the virus.

**MEPs**

The members of the [**European Parliament**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EP)

are the [**politicians**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Politician) who sit

in the European Parliament.

We call them MEPs for short.

**NGO**

**Non-governmental organizations**

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs are are generally defined as nonprofit and independent of governmental influence.

**Online Schooling:**

Online schooling is a way for students

to attend their classes using a computer

or another device to connect to the internet.

These classes happen with the help of

online applications for meetings or

online classrooms.

**Petition**

A request made for something desired, especially a respectful or humble request, as to a superior or to one of those in authority.

**Policies**

Actions or practices of governments and institutions.

Policies are trying to make the situation better.

Policies can be a set of rules or guidelines

to follow in or to achieve a specific goal.

**Rights of people with disabilities:**

A right is a rule that makes sure people

are protected and they can have and do

what they need to live a life with respect and safety.

Rights of people with disabilities are rules

that are about the lives of people with disabilities.

For example, the right to get an education,

or the right to have a job and live independently.

**Self-Advocacy**

Self-advocacy is when

people with **intellectual disabilities**speak up for themselves.

These people are called self-advocates.

**Segregation**

Segregation is when someone is set apart from others for an unfair reason.

For example, because of their disability.

**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.

**Vote**

Voting means choosing

the **politicians**who represent us

and make decisions for us.

You can vote in different areas.

For example:

* in your town or city

when you elect a new mayor

* in your country

when you elect a new president

* or at the European elections**,**

when you choose the new

Members of the European Parliament (**MEPs**).

**Working conditions:**

Working conditions is the working environment

and the circumstances of the job.

This includes the working hours, legal rights and responsibilities.

Working conditions also include the work that a person does with their body or their mind.