

Inclusion Europe

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

PAPMH

The Polish Association for Persons with Mental Handicap

“Let us open our lives for them”

People with intellectual disability and their families
in Poland

_____ **Position Paper** _____

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



The Polish Association for Persons with Mental Handicap in cooperation with Inclusion Europe has undertaken a detailed survey of the human rights situation of persons with intellectual disability and their families in Poland. On the basis of the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for People with Disabilities this survey has revealed several problems and shortcomings in Poland. The findings of the survey have been presented in English and Polish at European and National level.

The main issues for Poland were:

Creating possibilities of employment for people with intellectual disability

It is necessary to create a system of occupational training, consulting, job finding and job coaching for persons with intellectual disability. It should work effectively in all forms of employment, open as well as sheltered. The lack of legislation in that field is the reason why persons with intellectual disability are mostly unemployed or even, in the case of persons with severe or profound disability, are treated as being unable to work.

Awareness raising

The governmental awareness-raising policy towards disability issues is very poor – it normally simply ignores the problem. Therefore, a lot of prejudice towards persons with disability still exists in society. A national awareness-raising campaign concerning intellectual disability should be started in the European Year of Disabled Persons 2003. It should use different methods and communication techniques, and be adapted to a diverse public.

The legal status of NGOs

The status of NGOs who provide public services, but have a non-profit status, is not regulated, especially regarding their access to public financial resources. One of the biggest obstacles to the introduction of good changes is the absolute insufficient co-operation and the lack of partnership between all public bodies and NGOs representing the interests of persons with

The Polish Association for Persons with Mental Handicap and Inclusion Europe have collected information on the situation of people with intellectual disability in Poland.

The situation is not very good.

Brochures were published in English and Polish.

They include the following information:

People with intellectual disability often do not find a job.

It is necessary to create education, training and job places for disabled people.

People in Poland know very little about disabled people.

There is no information about the life and needs of disabled people.

Many people should be informed about this in the European Year of Disabled People 2003.

The government does not work together with disability organisations.

There is no law that helps disability organisations.

disability and their families. It is necessary to adopt legislation on the status of non-profit NGOs with public utility and to ensure their access to public resources equal to the other public service providers.

To improve the situation of persons with intellectual disability in Poland, the Polish Association for Persons with Mental Handicap and Inclusion Europe challenge

- the European Commission

- To create pressure on the Polish government, during the negotiation period and thereafter, to implement equal standards regarding disability as they exist in the countries of the European Union.
- To create programmes which strengthen the equalisation of opportunities for disabled persons and their organisations, especially in the areas of employment, training and awareness raising.

- Members of the European Parliament

- To convince Polish Members of Parliament during the parliamentary work to implement equal standards regarding disability as they exist in the countries of the European Union.
- To take action with the aim of awareness-raising regarding the situation of people with intellectual disability.

- the Government of Poland

- To treat disability NGOs as partners in the process of legislation and building of a system that ensures equal opportunities for disabled citizens.
- To create an employment support system for persons with profound and severe disability.
- To widen the possibilities of fundraising for disability NGOs for education, employment and social rehabilitation as well as for information activities.

- the Permanent Representation of Poland to the European Union

- To support the cooperation between the Polish Government, the European Union and the disability NGOs.
- To spreading helpful and relevant information on EU disability policy to Polish NGOs and disabled persons.

They should receive the same money as other service providers.

PAPMH and Inclusion Europe want the following:

The European Commission should ask the Polish government to make the situation of disabled persons better. It should also help persons with intellectual disabilities to get help.

Members of the European Parliament should talk about the needs of people with intellectual disability.

The Polish Government should make sure that disabled people have education and employment. Disability organisations should be allowed to get money from donations.

The “embassy” of Poland to the European Union should help the European Union, the government and the disability NGOs to work together.

- **the Council of Europe**

- To promote the concept of equal treatment of children, young people and adults with intellectual disability in the documents of the Council of Europe.
- To improve the number and significance of initiatives that improve the situation of disabled persons due to active participation and by official support.

It should also send important information in Polish to Polish disability organisations.

The Council of Europe should support all activities which are helpful for disabled persons.