



European Platform of Self-Advocates

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Annual Report 2007

The EPSA Work Plan 2006-2008 had 4 priorities.
The report will therefore follow these 4 priorities.

1. Tell others about our abilities

In Greece in October 2007, the president of EPSA gave a speech in front of parents and professional.
He told them about the importance of self-advocacy.

Another member of the Steering Group also gave some important speeches.
Zdenka from Croatia spoke in Geneva in front of the United Nations.
She spoke about the problems of legal capacity in some countries.

The self-advocacy officer also spent one day in March 2007 informing a Serbian delegation about self-advocacy and the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.

This self-advocacy officer and a Belgian self-advocate also participated at a Round Table at the European Parliament.
The topic was “the rights of people with intellectual disabilities to work”.
We also supported an Austrian self-advocate during 6 weeks.
He went to meet many decision-makers, including members of the European Parliament and Commission, to speak about user councils in sheltered workshops.

Finally, EPSA participated in 2 training for self-advocates during the year 2007.

In Croatia in January 2007, the self-advocacy officer trained some 20 self-advocates to make interviews.
Then they interviewed 100 Croatian people with intellectual disabilities and published a report about the situation in Croatia.

In Hungary in March 2007, the self-advocacy group of EFOESZ invited the self-advocacy officer for a 2-day training. More than 20 self-advocates were trained to speak up and to know about their rights.

2. Help self-advocacy group at local level

In order to help self-advocacy groups at local level, we need to know what their problems are. Therefore, the steering group decided to make a questionnaire.

This questionnaire was distributed during the General Meeting 2007. The results show what kind of problems the self-advocacy groups are facing at local and national level.

The Steering Group will base the proposal for the Work Plan 2008-2010 on these results.

3. Accessible Information

We said we would

- make some accessible information on how to speak with decision makers
- and inform people about the rights of people with disabilities.

In terms of accessible information on how to speak with decision-makers, we published a training pack under the MMDP project in 2006. This training pack was widely distributed and used by many self-advocacy organizations in 2007.

Moreover, EPSA organised a study visit on policy engagement in November 2007.

The result of this event will be a brochure explaining “how self-advocacy organizations could get more involved into policies”.

In terms of information, more and more parents associations who are member of Inclusion Europe have part of their website containing easy-to-read information.

Finally, we organized 2 other important events:

- A training in October 2007 in Prague on User involvement.
We explained that service users have the right to be involved in the decision process of the service.
- A study visit in October 2007 in Austria on Quality Evaluation.
The organisation we visited is evaluating the services in its Region.
To do that, they have employ 13 self-advocates.
They have trained them to lead interviews.
And these self-advocates have then interviewed more than 1600 people with intellectual disabilities in more than 220 services.

4. Promote EPSA and raise EPSA membership

During the General Meeting 2007, EPSA welcomed 4 new members:

- Latvian Self-Advocacy Movement – LATVIA
- Der Rat behinderter Menschen der Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe – GERMANY
- EFOESZ Self-Advocacy Group – HUNGARY
- NFU Self-Advocacy Group – NORWAY

We also used our publication to keep the link between all our members.
4 issues of Europe for Us were written in 2007.

Most of the EPSA Steering group members spoke about EPSA at the conference they attended.
They also sometimes promoted EPSA in their newsletter.

Finally, EPSA was also very well represented in 2007 at International level.
Zdenka participated in some very important meetings with international organisations.