



Annual Report 2008

2008 has been a very busy year for EPSA.
The members of the Steering Group have been very active.
They had 3 important meetings in January, April and September 2008.

The problems faced by self-advocacy organisations.

During the EPSA General Meeting 2007 in Warsaw,
members of EPSA received a questionnaire.
We wanted to know
what are the problems that self-advocacy organisations have.

During the Steering Group meeting in January 2008,
members of the Steering Group analysed the answers they received.
The 6 main problems which were mostly reported were

- the need for help in the field of networking
- problems in defending our rights
- problems to be recognised by government and other organisations
- money
- the need for more information on self-advocacy
- problems to find good support

A new work-plan for 2008-2010

On the basis of these answers, the Steering Group wrote a new work plan for the years 2008 to 2010.

This work plan was accepted by the members of EPSA during the EPSA General Meeting 2008 in Vienna.

This new work plan has 4 priorities:

1. Tell to other people about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities
2. Help groups of self-advocates at local level
3. Get more training for self-advocates and make them more accessible
4. Promote the networking at European and national level

During this EPSA General Meeting in Vienna in April 2008, EPSA members also elected a new Steering Group.

This new Steering Group will work on the implementation of the work plan for the years 2008 to 2010.

This new Steering Group is made up of

- Andrew Doyle, from ENABLE ACE – Scotland
- Paul Alford, from The Union on the Hill – Ireland
- Zdenka Petrovic, from ASA – Croatia
- Fabrice Vannobel, from Nous Aussi – France
- Tommi Valli, from Me Itse – Finland

Andrew Doyle was also re-elected as the president of EPSA. And Andrew, Paul and Zdenka were re-elected as Board Members of Inclusion Europe.

Implementing the work plan 2008-2010

Meetings of some experts in supporting the self-advocacy movement

In July and November 2008,
Inclusion Europe invited 3 persons to meet together.

- Jack Collett, from Scotland
- Neil Morris, from the UK
- Juliane Lesum, from Germany

These 3 persons have been supporting the self-advocacy movement
in their country for a long time.

So they are quite experts in this field.

We ask them to bring their ideas
on how Inclusion Europe should work better on self-advocacy.

They came up with a list of recommendations.

These recommendations were shown to the EPSA Steering Group.

They will then be presented to the Board of Inclusion Europe
at the next Board meeting.

Making training more accessible: the Pathways project

A European project called “Pathways” is running in 2008 and 2009.
Its aim is to make training more accessible
for people with intellectual disabilities.

4 EPSA Steering Group members are involved in this project.
They met 4 times in 2008 with the other 8 partners of this project.

They worked on 4 different publications:

- European standards
on how to make information easy to read and understand
- Guidelines on involving people with intellectual disabilities
in the writing of text easy to read.
- Guidelines on training people
to write documents easy to read and understand
- Recommendations for teachers to make their courses accessible

They also worked on creating a check-list to evaluate the level of a text with regards to easy to read and understand.

These tools and publications will be ready by mid-2009.

More information on www.life-long-learning.eu

Helping self-advocates to participate: the User Council position paper

A lot of people with intellectual disabilities use services. These can be sheltered workshop, day-services or residential services.

Inclusion Europe and EPSA think that it is very important that these people have a say in how these services work.

Therefore, we wrote a position paper on this topic and we translated it into easy-to-read. Then it was presented and adopted by all the members of Inclusion Europe at the General Assembly in April 2008 in Vienna.

After that, we worked hard to make sure that people would make this paper a reality.

We translated it in many European languages. We wrote letters to many politicians and service providers to let them know about this paper. We presented it at different meetings and conferences. For example Andrew Doyle presented it at a European Conference in Paris.

Some things were already achieved in 2008. But a lot of work still has to be done in this area in 2009.

Promoting the idea of a “self-advocacy training team”

In 2008 and for the years to come, Inclusion Europe decided to employ 2 more persons with intellectual disabilities.

For the moment, Inclusion Europe is training these 2 self-advocates. We hope that in a near future,

they can themselves attend conferences and seminars and speak about self-advocacy, EPSA and Inclusion Europe.

This is something that all Inclusion Europe members should do. Nobody can talk or explain better self-advocacy but people with intellectual disabilities themselves.

Helping self-advocacy group to be better know: Europe for Us

In 2008, EPSA published 4 issues of “Europe for Us”, the newsletter of the European self-advocacy movement.

In these issues, we tried to present as many self-advocacy groups as possible. This newsletter is a good promotion tool for self-advocacy organisations. They can present their events and what they are doing. They can be better know at national and European level.

You can find all the previous issues of Europe for Us at www.inclusion-europe.org.

People with intellectual disabilities evaluate services: the UNIQ project

In 2008, Inclusion Europe prepared for a new project called UNIQ. The aim of this new project is to train some people with intellectual disabilities to evaluate themselves services which are provided for their peers.

Such thing exists already in Austria. In this country, people with intellectual disabilities are employed by an association called atempo. They are employed as evaluators. This means that they meet the users of the services and ask them questions. Then they can tell what the service is proposing and if the users of the service are happy to be there.

The UNIQ project was accepted by the European Commission in 2008. It started in December 2008.

People from Austria will go in the Czech Republic, in Germany and in Norway to see how such thing can be developed in these countries.

Another 6 countries will also be participating and observing how this is working.