



# European Platform of Self-Advocates

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## EPSA Annual Report 2012

The year 2012 was not an easy year for EPSA.  
But EPSA wanted to implement its workplan 2010-2012.  
This was not an easy task.  
Several events made it very difficult to achieve.

Andrew Doyle could no longer be a candidate to elections.  
He has been a member of the EPSA steering group for 4 years,  
Fabrice Vanobel, another member of the steering group, resigned.  
Although we tried to find 2 new candidates,  
only 4 self-advocates proposed themselves to be steering group members.  
Before the end of the year, Kriise Paaskinen informed us that  
he could not continue to work with the steering group.  
The reason for this was lack of money from Me Itse ry to pay for a supporter.  
This means that EPSA steering group will start 2013 with just 3 members.

But we were able to grow in 2012.  
Pentru Voi, a self-advocates organization from Romania, is now a member.  
We have now 15 members, from 14 European countries.  
Several of our members worked to disseminate EPSA and  
the self-advocacy movement in Europe.

### **What have we done?**

#### **Croatia**

In Croatia, they have organized more than 100 meetings with self-advocates.  
Our Croatian member also organized 2 conferences for self-advocates.  
Our member was actively involved in the fight to change legislation and allow  
persons with intellectual disabilities to vote.  
Senada Halilcevic was invited to participate in the ARC Conference in  
Washington.  
The next EPSA "Hear our Voices!" Conference will be in Croatia,  
and our member is helping us to organise it.



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## **United Kingdom**

Our member from Scotland organised 4 national meetings related with self-advocacy.

They also have organised monthly meetings with self-advocates.

In England, our member lobbied for better health care for persons with intellectual disabilities.

They also had successes around the changes to benefits that the English government has introduced.

## **Estonia**

In Estonia, our member organized 2 national meetings for self-advocates.

## **Germany**

In Germany, 2.500 persons with disabilities were at the Parliament and discussed with politicians.

The papers that identify persons with disabilities are smaller now, so persons do not have to let everyone know about their disability.

## **France**

Our member from France organised one national meeting.

They also have been invited to participate on other meetings.

They have talked about easy-to-read and self-advocacy at meetings organised by the Fundamental Rights Agency and by the European Commission.

They organised a congress to celebrate their 10th anniversary.

They have now almost 400 members and 22 local sections all around France.

The Ministry for persons with disabilities contacted them to

have major speeches from the Government translated in easy-to-read.

They did a lot of work for the accessibility of the elections. It was in the news.

## **Czech Republic**

In the Czech Republic our member organised meetings every week to talk about self-advocacy and other things important for self-advocates.

Because of the involvement in Inclusion Europe projects, some members have now more skills.

They have become easy-to-read experts and also trainers and peer supporters.

Our member organised a meeting for parents of persons with intellectual disabilities.



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### **What are our main difficulties?**

Main problems are linked with lack of money.

In fact, this is a big problem for our members, and we expect more difficulties in 2013.

Because of this problem our members are having difficulties to spread the word about self-advocacy.

Our members also refer to the lack of information in their national languages.

We were not able to implement our proposal to have them translating the materials to their national languages.

According to our members, they do not have enough time or human resources to do it.

Some members say that EPSA needs to be more connected with them and provide them with more support.

They want opportunities to get together, but they do not have money.

They want materials about EPSA and self-advocacy in their own languages.

But they want EPSA to provide for this.

They do not have the resources to do the translations.

### **What must EPSA do?**

In 2013, EPSA must work harder to find solutions for the problems reported by its members.

EPSA must tell its members about success stories on self-advocacy and give ideas on how to make Governments aware about self-advocacy.

EPSA must lobby at European level.