

People with intellectual disabilities and their families: **Make the most of the 2019 Elections to the European Parliament**

Inclusion Europe has prepared this document
to make the most of the European elections in 2019.

**Parts 1 and 2 are for people who support the
inclusion movement:** for self-advocates, for family
members and for all other activists and European Union
citizens.

Part 3 is for political parties and their candidates.
It is also for authorities in charge of organising elections,
to help make elections more accessible.

Part 1

Why are the European elections important?

In May 2019, there will be elections to select new Members of the European Parliament (MEPs, for short).

The European elections are very important for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Members of the European Parliament make decisions that influence the lives of all European Union (EU) citizens.

MEPs make decisions about laws.

These laws are about topics such as the accessibility of products and services, or the right to travel, live, and work within the European Union countries.

MEPs also make decisions about the money for many activities and projects in European Union countries.

Members of the European Parliament help to select the European Commission's President and Commissioners. Commissioners are responsible for topics such as employment, social affairs, justice, education, and health.

MEPs monitor how the European Union is fulfilling the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

This means that who is elected to the European Parliament is very important to you. It is important to all of us in the inclusion movement.

Inclusion Europe wants to make sure the elections have good results for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

You have a vital role in helping make this happen.

You can ask the candidates to provide clear and accessible information.

You can ask the candidates to do things that support people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

You should vote in the elections yourself, and you should tell others to vote too.

The right to vote is very important.

It gives you the opportunity to decide the future of cities and countries, and also the future of the European Union.

Some people have their right to vote taken away
by legal capacity laws.

This is wrong and must be changed.

Everyone has the right to vote.

Some people find it hard to vote
because they do not have clear information
about the elections.

Some people find it hard to vote
because nobody helps them to make a decision
or to communicate their decision.

Some people think it does not matter if they vote
because the candidates do not talk to them
and listen to them.

And for some people it is difficult to vote
because they care for a family member
with an intellectual disability and they do not have
the time or resources to go to the voting station.

This can be changed.

Things like this have been improving in many countries.

To improve things even further so that more people vote,
we need to make the most
of the opportunities that come with the European
elections.

The European Union is important for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

There is a lot of talk about how the European Union works and if it is good to be part of it.

Some people are unhappy with the European Union because they say it does many things they do not like.

Some other people are unhappy with the European Union because they say it does not do enough of the things they would like it to do.

Inclusion Europe listens to these concerns and we take them seriously.

At the same time, we see that respect for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families has very much improved in the European Union over recent decades.

The quality of life for many people with intellectual disabilities and their families has improved too.

A lot of this progress has happened thanks to the work of the European Union.

This is because living in the European Union means:

- **Living in peace.**
There has never been a war in the European Union.

- **Improving quality of life.**

The quality of daily life for many people in the European Union has been improving. We know that life can be a struggle, especially for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Life for many people has been even harder following the recent economic crisis.

Still, the European Union invests in services to improve the quality of people's lives.¹

- **Progress on rights and inclusion.**

The European Union is based on human rights.

The European Union is the only organisation of countries that ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The European Union puts a lot of money towards making sure these rights are fulfilled.

We always strive for more progress towards inclusion.

We also need to protect the achievements that have already been made.

Inclusion Europe calls on people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and all citizens of the European Union to:

- 1. Talk to the candidates in elections to make them aware of your opinions.**

¹ <https://www.socialprogress.org/index/results>

(You can use part 3 of this document
to get some ideas.)

2. **Tell your friends, families, and colleagues why the European elections are important and that they should participate in them too.**
Help your friends and colleagues understand more about the elections and take part in them.
3. **Cast your vote in the European elections to keep and strengthen your rights in Europe.**