# 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 3

# What Inclusion Europe thinks the candidates and parties should do for the European elections 2019.

There are 7 million Europeans with intellectual disabilities.

We have many millions of family members   
and friends.

Altogether, we are more than 20 million people.

Most of us face discrimination and exclusion   
from society on a daily basis.

Children with intellectual disabilities are prevented   
from going to school with their friends and neighbours.

Young people with intellectual disabilities have limited options to receive education and training   
related to getting a job.

Many adults with intellectual disabilities   
cannot get paid employment.

Hundreds of thousands of people with intellectual disabilities live in institutions, segregated from society and without a chance to lead a life as part of the community.

Very often, family members are left to provide all support and care for their relatives with intellectual disabilities, because there are not enough support services.

People with intellectual disabilities and their family members often have limited access to healthcare,   
and suffer poor health as a result.

Many countries in the European Union deny   
people with intellectual disabilities their right to vote.

This is wrong and must change.

Everyone has the right to vote.

People with disabilities have this right guaranteed   
by the UN Convention on the Rights   
of People with Disabilities.

Even in countries where the right to vote   
is not taken away from people with intellectual disabilities, many find it hard to participate in elections.

The candidates do not take the time to talk   
and to listen to them.

Information about elections is complicated   
and not given in an accessible way.

The topics of election campaigns are often far   
from the daily experiences and needs of people   
with intellectual disabilities and their families.

We know it is already a struggle for candidates   
in the elections for the European Parliament  
to reach out and persuade the general public to vote.

We see that the low participation of voters is often used   
to argue that the voice of the MEPs is less important.

We want as many people to vote as possible.   
We talk to people to tell them to vote.

We care how the European Union protects the rights   
of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

We call on the candidates and parties   
standing for European elections to:

1. Engage with people with intellectual disabilities   
   and their families, who make up more than 20 million European Union citizens.
2. Provide clear and accessible information.
3. Deal with issues that are important to people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

## 1. Engage with people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

**Meet, listen, talk.**

Organise discussions including people with intellectual disabilities and their families so you can listen to their views – and explain your own.

Visit people with intellectual disabilities   
at work or school, to gain an idea of their lives.

Make sure you talk with people with intellectual disabilities directly, not only to their support or care staff.

Make sure to ask about what they would like to do   
in their lives, and where would they like to live.   
Ask about how they are supported to participate   
in elections.

**Include people with disabilities in everything you do.**

When organising a meeting about disability related issues, always include people with intellectual disabilities.

Refuse to take part in such meetings if they do not include people with intellectual disabilities.

Organise meetings at times that are convenient for those who care for their family members.   
Provide care support so they can take part.

## 2. Provide clear and accessible information.

**Prepare your election manifesto in plain,   
easy to understand language.**

Better still, provide an easy-to-read version.

Easy-to-read makes information accessible   
for everyone, not just people with intellectual disabilities.

Get in touch with organisations that help with accessible information.

Learn more about easy-to-read at [www.easy-to-read.eu](http://www.easy-to-read.eu).

**Tell people about elections in a way that is easy   
to understand.**

Let people know who can vote, when, where, and how.

Make sure people know about the parties   
and the candidates in the run-up to the election.

During voting, make sure information is easy   
to understand.  
This may include having pictures of the politicians   
on the ballot.

**Remove barriers that prevent people from voting.**

Take the voting to where people live.

Make sure polling stations are marked in a way that is easy to understand.  
Make sure polling stations (including the voting booths) are also accessible to persons in a wheelchair.

Make sure there is assistance available during voting.   
This includes making sure people can be accompanied   
to the voting booth if required.

Make sure there are arrangements   
for those who cannot get to the voting station.   
This includes family members who care for their relatives with disabilities and who will have difficulties finding time and resources to go and cast their vote.

**3. Deal with issues that are important to people   
with intellectual disabilities and their families.**

**Disability rights**

Implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through your voting decisions.

Lead towards an ambitious European Disability Strategy 2020-2030.  
Pay attention to issues such as the right for people   
to make their own decisions, and ending segregation.

Improve accessibility in Europe by supporting a strong European Accessibility Act, which ensures that European services and products are accessible to everybody.

**The right to vote**

Remove restrictions on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities to vote and to stand for elections.

Review the accessibility of the European elections   
and share your ideas on how they could be improved.

**Quality of life**

Ensure the European Union is reaching its targets   
to improve quality of life, as stated in the UN Agenda 2030.   
This includes reducing poverty and improving education and health.

Improve access to paid employment for people with intellectual disabilities and their families, as promised   
by the European Pillar of Social Rights.   
This includes providing inclusive education, skills-based training related to getting a job, and access to social security.

**EU budget**

Ensure European funds promote inclusion and respect the rights protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Ensure European Union funding is used to support the move from institutional care to community-based support.   
This includes providing adequate support to people who are leaving institutions to live in the community.

Ensure programmes such as Erasmus+ are used to strengthen inclusive education.

**Inclusive participation**

Always include people with intellectual disabilities   
in everything you do that involves people with disabilities.

Refuse to participate where people with disabilities are not included in the creation of law and policy that directly affect them.

Ask the European Parliament to communicate   
in an accessible way.   
This includes offering easy-to-read information   
about the European Parliament.

Make meetings in the European Parliament accessible   
for everyone, as well as written information and consultation processes.

Engage with people with intellectual disabilities   
and their families when developing policy papers   
– even when they are not about disability.