

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.

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.