

## **Union of equality? Here's the reality.**

**Inclusion indicators 2023 reveal what Europe looks like for 20 million people with intellectual disabilities and their family members.**

Brussels, 24 November 2023

**Half of EU countries don't allow some people to vote.**

**700,000 people are forced to live in harmful segregated institutional "care".**

**Families are isolated and left to provide all support to family members with disability.**

New report shows for the first time what the "European way of life" means for 20 million people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

"This is the reality for millions of people," says Jyrki Pinomaa, president of Inclusion Europe and father of two adult sons with disabilities. "Despite the countries legally committing to rights and inclusion persons with disabilities, they deny them a good life and their basic rights.

"Governments don't even care enough to collect and provide data about the situation. But now, we have this information, and it is not a good look."

This new report shows information about 29 countries, 23 of them in the EU.

### **Not being allowed to decide about ones' life**

- In 26 countries a person's legal capacity can be removed, and they cannot decide about their own money, or where to live, or who to marry.
- In 7 countries people under guardianship cannot vote at all.

- In 15 countries people with intellectual disabilities are restricted to stand for elections.
- Only 5 countries fully respect the right to vote and make voting accessible.

All of these are grave violations of people's rights as protected by law signed by these countries ([UN CRPD](#)).

- With EU elections coming up, how does the EU hold up its claims about democracy and rule of law?

### **Segregated in harmful places**

- 750,000 people with intellectual disabilities must live in segregated "care" institutions with 30 persons or more in one place.
- 39,000 "live" in psychiatric hospitals.

### **No place to live, support left for families to provide**

- In 21 countries few or no adults with intellectual disabilities live in their own place. That is a far cry from how adults in Europe typically live.
- Many are forced to segregated institutions (see above).
- Many more live with their parents until they are unable to provide daily support. Family members become disability support providers instead of being just parents or siblings.

### **Education on a good path**

- 1,1 million children with intellectual disabilities are in mainstream schools. This allows them to grow up alongside their non-disabled schoolmates, develop important skills, and belong in the community where they live.
- Still, 700,000 are in special schools, deprived of the positive effects of inclusive schooling.
- 20,000 children with intellectual disabilities are getting no education at all.

### **Looking for a workforce?**

- Less than 10% of people with intellectual disabilities have a paid job. (Employment rate for people with disabilities in general is 50%, and 75% for people without disabilities.)
- In 17 countries people with intellectual disabilities risk losing disability benefits when they earn their salary.
- Similarly, lack of support means family members, mostly women, leave the labour market and stay at home with their disabled family member.

On a continent strained for workforce governments and businesses could do worse than engage and benefit from people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The *Inclusion indicators* report shows information about 29 countries, 23 of them in the EU. The data comes from national experts on the subject. The report was done by Inclusion Europe, organisation representing people with intellectual disabilities and families, and is revealed on 29 November.

The report investigates 7 areas of high importance to people with intellectual disabilities and families: Right to decide about their life, and right to vote; Right to live independently and to be included in the community; Housing and support; Education; Employment; Healthcare; and Representation.

This is the first year of Inclusion indicators. Reports in following years will monitor progress and changes in European countries.

[Inclusion indicators 2023 report](#)

**For media inquiries:**

Milan Šveřepa, director of Inclusion Europe

[milan@inclusion.eu](mailto:milan@inclusion.eu), +32-472-211-868

**Inclusion Europe** is European organisation representing 20 million people with intellectual disabilities and their families from nearly 40 countries. Inclusion Europe is based in Brussels, Belgium.

[inclusion.eu](http://inclusion.eu)

**Additional quotes:**

"Nearly 50,000 people under guardianship cannot vote in Hungary. But we are citizens of Hungary and of the European Union! We have the right to vote and to have a say in common decisions. We need the right to vote so that decision-makers do not decide about us without us."

**László Bercse**, co-chair of [EFOESZ](#), Hungary; vice-president of Inclusion Europe

"This report shows the reality of Europe: How much still needs to be done. For us, it will be helpful to highlight why the CRPD examination of Germany this summer was not as successful as expected by state representatives."

**Jeanne Nicklas-Faust**, executive director of [Lebenshilfe](#), Germany; mother of a young woman with disabilities; board member of Inclusion Europe

**Inclusion Europe**

Avenue des arts 3, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

+32 25 02 28 15

[office@inclusion.eu](mailto:office@inclusion.eu)

[inclusion.eu](http://inclusion.eu)