



Europe for us

**Your own front door:
Your way to independence**



LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



LIFE AFTER INSTITUTION



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 36 to 53.

“Europe for us” is available in:

- English
- French
- German
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Romanian
- Spanish

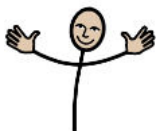
Go to www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us to find the other language versions.

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Soufiane's editor note



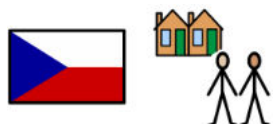


Hello to our readers
of Europe for us.

It is that time of the month again
where I tell you some of the things
that Inclusion Europe has been doing.



Inclusion Europe has done quite a lot on
end segregation in the last few months.



Inclusion Europe also has done a lot of
work on Deinstitutionalization in Czechia.

In this edition of Europe for us you
will get to read about the following
topics about ending segregation.



Heather Gilchrist talks about having
3 jobs and ENABLE's Scotland campaign.



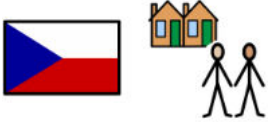
Pietro Vittorio talks about how to
improving the rights of people with disabilities.



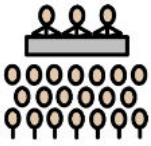
Katrin Langensiepen talks about jobs
for people with disabilities in the European Union.



Elizabeta Moldovan talks about how she got out of institutions and what is her life now.



Lázsló Bercse talks about deinstitutionalization in Czechia.



For my part, I will go to the European Day of Persons with Disabilities on 24 and 25 November with my colleague Inge.

Heather Gilchrist on employment



How did Heather start her 3 jobs?



Heather Gilchrist started her jobs with interviews.

Does Heather like her jobs?



Heather loves her 3 jobs.

The jobs keep her busy.

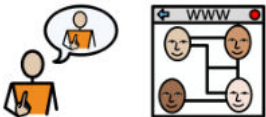
Heater is happy with her 3 jobs.

What does Heather like the most in her jobs ?



Heather loves that each jobs have different skills.

What did Heather learn with her jobs?



With the jobs, Heather has learned
to speak up for herself and
share her views on social media.

What chances does Heather have as an ENABLE membership ambassador?



Heather is an ENABLE membership ambassador.



ENABLE is an NGO from Scotland that
helps people with intellectual disabilities.

By being an ambassador, Heather has the chance to share her views and to help the NGO team with daily tasks.

What is Heather's dream job?



Heather is working at the theatre, which is her dream job.

And Heather is working at her favourite NGO ENABLE Scotland.

Why is it important to have a job as a person with intellectual disabilities?



I feel it gives you freedom and you contribute to the society.



Heather says that it is important for people with intellectual disabilities to have a job.



The jobs give freedom to people with disabilities and people with disabilities can contribute to the society.

How does a person with intellectual disabilities find jobs?

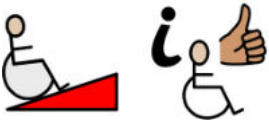


Heather says that NGOs help people with intellectual disabilities finding a job.

How can employers make workspaces more accessible for people with intellectual disabilities?



Heather says that offices should be accessible for everyone.

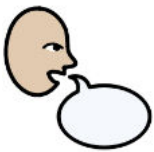


The offices should have accessible services.
For example, a ramp to enter buildings.
Or signs in Easy-To-Read.

My Own Front Door Campaign



It's everyone's human right
to live in a home of their choice,
in a community they choose,
close to the people they love.



Heather Gilchrist from Schottland talked
about My Own Front Door campaign
At the Europe in Action conference in Brussels.



Heather Gilchrist is a membership ambassador
and self-advocate from ENABLE Scotland.

In 2000, the Scottish Government
wanted to end institutionalisation.



But there are still 1,000 people
with intellectual disabilities
who live in institutions.



In 2022, ENABLE started a campaign
called "My Own Front Door".

The Scottish Government
saw the campaign.



The Scottish Government promised to end institutionalisation in March 2024.

The Scottish Government made sure that people with intellectual disabilities only live in institutions if they need to.



They wanted people who have a learning disability to have an equal chance to live a good life independently in the community.

Pietro Vittorio on Improving the rights of people with disabilities



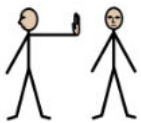


Pietro Vittorio is the President of the Thematic study group on disability rights.

It is a group that works with NGOs and organisations that represent people with disabilities.



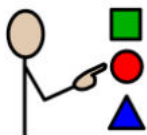
Pietro says that it is important that people with disabilities have a job.



People with disabilities still face discrimination when they want to find a job.



Pietro says that people with disabilities own their lives.



And that people with disabilities need to be more heard and have choices.



NGOs and organisations must come together to empower people with disabilities.

Katrin Langensiepen talks about employment for people with disabilities in the European Union





Katrin Langensiepen is a member of the European Parliament from Germany.

Katrin has been working in the European Parliament since 2009.



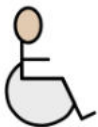
Katrin is a woman with a disability.

When Katrin started working at the European Parliament, Katrin was the only person with a disability.

Now, there are 6 people with a disability working in the European Parliament.



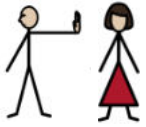
There are still people with disabilities who cannot vote in their countries.



But the European Parliament voted that people living in the European Union must have the right to vote and to participate in the European Union elections.



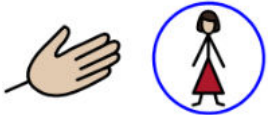
People with disabilities are more likely to not have a job.



And women with disabilities
receive more discrimination.



Katrin says that people with disabilities
must have a choice and must decide on their lives.



Katrin wants to make rules for
support persons and mothers.
Mothers cannot work when they care for
their children with disabilities.
And it is a discrimination for the mothers.

Elizabetha Moldovan on life after getting out of institutions





Elisabeta Moldovan is the co-president of Ceva de spus.



Ceva de spus is an NGO created by adults who have disabilities.



Elisabeta is a self-advocate and she is a member of EPSA.

Living in institutions

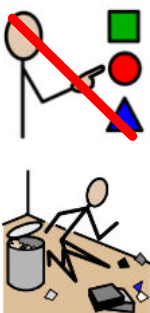


Elisabeta lived in an institution most of her life.

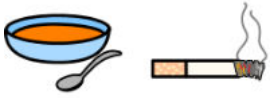


Elisabeta had a very bad experiences in institutions.

Elisabeta moved from institutions to institutions.



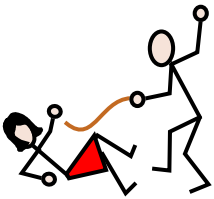
Elisabeta did not have a choice in the institutions. Elisabeta had to work hard in the institutions to receive money.



But Elisabeta only received some food and cigarettes.



Elisabeta was punished when she did not do what the people working in the institutions told her to do.



Elisabeta's hair was cut, she was beaten with a belt and she was thrown in the basement of the institution.

Getting out of institutions

Elisabeta got out of the institution after 25 years.



Elisabeta is now living in her own house.



Elisabeta is now part of the community.



Elisabeta trusts more women than men because of the sexual abuses she faced by the men in the institutions.

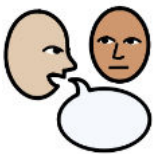
Becoming Eli



Elisabeta became a self-advocate because she wanted to learn out her own rights.



Elisabeta learned a lot of things when she became a self-advocate.



For example, how to speak in front of the public or how to speak her mind.



Elisabeta wrote a book about her life in the institutions.



The book is called 'Becoming Eli'.

Deinstitutionalisation in Romania



Elisabeta wants people with intellectual disabilities to be able to live independently.



And people with disabilities deserve to live in the community.

People with intellectual disabilities have the right to a good life like everyone else.



16,607 people with disabilities are still living in institutions in Romania.



The NGO “Ceva de spus” and another NGO called “Unloc” help people with disabilities to live in the community.



Every year 1,500 people with disabilities die in institutions.

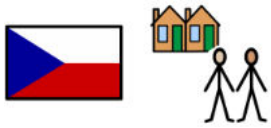


Elisabeta asks for the European Union to stop giving money to the countries which don't end institutionalisation.

László Bercse talks about deinstitutionalisation in Czechia



Lázsló Bercse is vice-president of Inclusion Europe and chair of EPSA.



Lázsló Bercse talked about deinstitutionalisation in Czechia.

Deinstitutionalisation in Czechia



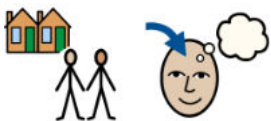
Czechia has done a lot for deinstitutionalisation.

1,000 people moved from institutions to community-based services.



Many institutions are closed.

A lot of knowledge and experience



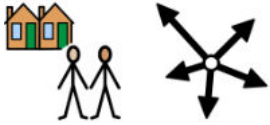
Community-based services can provide knowledge and share experiences with others. There are many experienced and motivated people working to change deinstitutionalisation.



Many regions are very active and do a lot to support deinstitutionalisation.

Lack of clear direction

There is a lack of direction and control of deinstitutionalisation in countries.

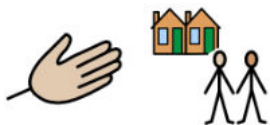


Deinstitutionalisation should be spread all over the countries.



There are 12,000 people with disabilities living in institutions.

Normal Housing



People with disabilities should use existing housing and support services.



Lázsló Bercse finds it very useful to use your own money to pay for houses.

To make sure people with disabilities can choose the best support services.



Support services must be free for everyone.



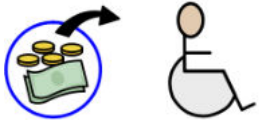
All institutions should be closed.



People with disabilities should be able to use places that they have as their houses.

Better use of European Union's money

NGOs have to use European Union's money for support services, education, and to raise awareness.



The European Union should control better their money to help people with disabilities.

Involve self-advocacy in deinstitutionalisation



Self-advocates should participate in deinstitutionalisation.

Self-advocates should say their ideas and needs.

Self-advocates should decide where, with whom, and how to live.



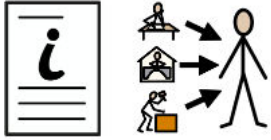
Guardianship should end.

Thibeau Bastien on education



Thibeu is a researcher from the Antwerp Management School in Antwerp.

Thibeu helped Inclusion Europe to make a report.



The report is called “My Talents. For Diversity” and it is about jobs for people with intellectual disabilities.

Going to a special education school



Before the age of 7, Thibeu went to a school for people with no disabilities.

At 7 years old, the doctors discovered that Thibeu has an intellectual disability.



It was hard for Thibeu to write, read and to do maths.

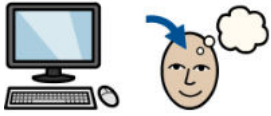


After Thibeu was 7 years old, he went to special education school.

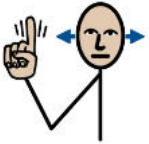


At school, the director and the teachers did not believe that Thibeu could work.

The teachers prepared Thibeu to live in an institution for all his life.



Thibeu wanted to learn how to use a computer and to do an internship.



But the director and the teachers at the school did not let him do it.



One teacher believed in him and gave him an internship.

Thibeu's first job



Thibeu worked at the greenery service at his hometown.

After his internship, Thibeu continued to work at the greenery service as a volunteer.



Now, Thibeu works at Antwerp Management School as a researcher.



And Thibeu helps at the road and traffic services in his hometown.

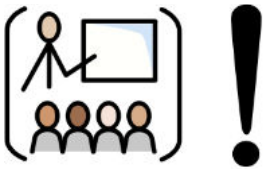


As a researcher, Thibeu helps making reports.



As a volunteer, Thibeu helps building roads.

The importance of getting an education



Thibeu says that it is important that people with intellectual disabilities get an education.



Because with education, people can get a degree and a job.

Winning a prize



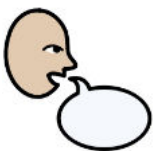
Thibeu was happy that he worked on the report about jobs with Inclusion Europe.

Thibeu had the same chances to work on the report as the other people.



Thibeaup was proud and happy to receive the award at the European Parliament for the report with Inclusion Europe.

How to get an education as a person with disabilities?



Thibeaup gave some advice for people with intellectual disabilities who want to work.

Thibeaup said:

Make your voice heard.

Work to make your dreams come true.

Enjoy yourself.

Tell the teachers you can
do things.

Don't let people walk over you.

Do not give up.

Believe in yourself.

Get support to achieve
your dreams.

Paul Alford on independent living

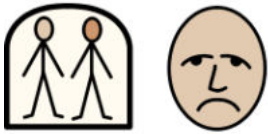


Paul Alford is a self-advocate and works at Inclusion Ireland.



Paul Alford talked about how he lives independently as a person with intellectual disabilities.

I had no choice at the institution



Paul Alford was not happy living in an institution.

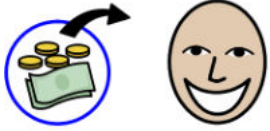
Paul Alford did not have a choice on whom to live with.

Paul Alford did not do what he wanted to do.

It was difficult to leave the institution



Paul Alford took 3 years to move out of the institution. 2 NGOs helped Paul Alford to leave the institution.



Paul Alford received money from the government.



Paul Alford bought a house.

Living Alone



Paul Alford got a job at an NGO called Inclusion Ireland.

The NGO and the bank helped Paul Alford to pay his house.



Paul Alford was happy to live alone.



But Paul Alford did not leave his house for 2 months.

Paul Alford was not used to leaving the house.

My support person, and controlling my money



Paul Alford chose a support person.



The support person helped Paul Alford to leave the house.



Paul Alford studied how to control his money at the bank.

Travelling

Paul Alford wanted to travel.

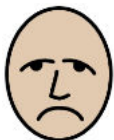


Paul Alford bought a ticket to Australia with his money.

Going to the doctor



Paul Alford went to the doctor with his support person.



Paul Alford was not happy with the doctor.

Paul Alford got another doctor.



The doctor gave him papers in easy-to-read and listened to Paul Alford.

Getting an education

Paul Alford did not know how to write, read and use computers.



Paul Alford studied how to write, read and use computers.



Now, Paul Alford can work good at Inclusion Ireland.

Easy-to-read is very important



Easy-to-read is very important for people with intellectual disabilities.



Easy-to-read helps people with intellectual disabilities to understand what is written.

With easy-to-read people with intellectual disabilities can be independent and make the right choice.

People with intellectual disabilities need to be listened to



The government and the media need to listen to people with intellectual disabilities.



People with intellectual disabilities need to live their life independently, get a job and get an education.

Explanations



Accessible

Something that is easy to use for people with disabilities.
Such as:

- Ramps to get into a building.
- Information in easy-to-read.
- Information in sign language.



Bank

A place where you can keep and take out money



Charter of Fundamental Rights

A paper that says what basic rights every person has.
For example, the right to freedom, the right to education.



Climate change

When nature is damaged because of human actions.
For example, pollution, heavy rains, forest fires.



Commissioner at the European Commission

A Commissioner is a person who is responsible
for a field of work at the European Commission
and manages a lot of people.



Community

People that belong to something.
For example, neighbourhood community.
People who live in the same neighbourhood.
Or religious community.
People who have the same religion.



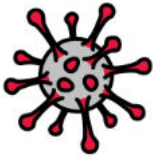
Community-based services

Support given by people from the community.



Convention

An agreement between countries or organisations which talks about many topics.



COVID-19

A virus that spread all around the world.
A lot of people got sick.

People could not meet each other,
work at the office or go to school.



Degree

When you finish school or university you
get a paper that shows your grades. It's called a degree.



Deinstitutionalisation

Deinstitutionalisation is helping people
to move out of institutions.

It is when the people who lived in institutions get help
so they can live independently in the community.



Democracy

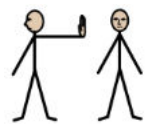
When everybody has the same right to be heard.
When everybody has the same right to vote and
to stand for elections.



Disability

A person who is not able to do some things,
because it is hard for the person.

For example, a person has no legs cannot walk.
Or a person who has a reading difficulty cannot
understand a hard text.



Discrimination

Discrimination means that you are treated worse than
others or that you do not get the chances you deserve.

It is discrimination when it happens
because of your disability.

It can also happen to other people.

For example, people who have a different skin colour.
Or older people.



Easy-to-read

Easy to read is information that is written in a simple way so that people with intellectual disabilities can understand.

It is important to use simple words and sentences. If there are words that are difficult to understand, an explanation is provided.

The text needs to be clear to see, for example, black writing on a white background is good.

It needs to be well-spaced.

Easy-to-read often uses pictures to explain what the text talks about.

Someone with an intellectual disability needs to check the information is easy to understand.

Easy-to-read documents often have this logo, so it is easier to find them.

There are rules on how easy-to-read should be done.



Educate

Educate means to teach.

It means to make sure people have access to training so they can learn new skills.



Employment

Employment is when a person works and gets paid for their work.

It is usually based on a contract between the worker and the person who provides the job.

This person is the employer.



EPSA

The European Platform of Self-Advocates is made up of organisations of self-advocates from different countries in Europe.

We call it EPSA for short.

It is a part of Inclusion Europe.



European Commission

The European Commission works with the European Parliament.

The European Commission suggests laws for the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union to discuss.

It also makes sure that the laws that have been decided upon are being followed by the member states.



European Convention on Human Rights

A paper that says the rights every person has. For example, the right to live, the right to speak your mind. The paper is respected by all countries in Europe.



European Parliament

The European Parliament is a place where important decisions of the European Union are made. For example: laws.

The Members of the European Parliament (in short, MEPs) make these decisions and speak for all the people who live in the European Union.

Every five years,
the people who live in the European Union
vote for their country's MEPs.



European Union

The European Union (in short, EU)
is a group of 28 countries.

We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together
to be stronger politically and economically.

The EU makes laws on many important things for the
people who live in those countries.

The EU makes laws in different areas.

Some examples are:

- Laws to protect the environment.
- Laws for farmers.
- Laws to protect consumers.

A consumer is someone who buys things.

The EU also makes laws that are important for people with disabilities.

It also made a law that gives people with disabilities more rights when they are travelling.

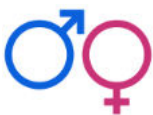
The EU also gives money to its member states.

Some of this money is used for people with disabilities.



Fund

To give money to someone or to an organisation which helps people or organisations.



Gender

The gender says if you are female or male.
Some people do not see themselves as either female or male.
They call themselves non-binary.



Government

A government is a group of people that make decisions on how to run a country. For example,

- about where the money is spent,
- about public transport,
- about schools,
- about hospitals.

Every few years there are elections to vote for a new government.



Guardianship

Guardianship allows some people to make life choices for others.

The person who makes choices for you is your guardian.

Your guardian can decide things for you, like where you live.

Sometimes, people under guardianship are not allowed to vote, get married, or take care of their kids.



Healthcare

Healthcare is the services given to someone who is ill or who needs to take care of their health.

Healthcare involves going to the doctor, getting medicine and getting support for health problems of the body or the mind.



Independent living

Independent living means that people with intellectual disabilities live in the community and have support to do what they want.

They also can:

- choose with whom and where to live
- decide how they want to spend their time
- have the same experiences as all other people

Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe is an organisation for people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

We fight for their equal rights and inclusion in Europe.
We also want to make a difference to the laws in Europe.

We started in 1988.

We have 79 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.



Institutions

Institutions are places where people with intellectual disabilities live with other people with intellectual disabilities.

They live apart from other people.

This is what we call "segregated".

Sometimes this happens against their will.

People who live in institutions have to follow the rules of the institution and cannot decide for themselves.



Intellectual disability

If you have an intellectual disability,
that means it is more difficult for you
to understand information
and learn new skills than it is for other people.

This makes some parts of life harder.

People with intellectual disabilities
often need support in learning or at work.
Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult.

It affects you for your whole life.

There are things that can make life easier
for people with intellectual disabilities.

For example, information in easy-to-read language.

Some people say learning disabilities
instead of intellectual disabilities.



Internship

A place where you work for a short time and helps you to find what kind of job you want to do later.



MEPs

The members of the European Parliament are the politicians who sit in the European Parliament. We call them MEPs for short.



NGO Non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs are generally defined as nonprofit and independent of governmental influence.



Organisation

A group of people who work for the same thing.



Report

A paper that says what researchers find about a topic.
For example: Inclusion Europe and
Antwerp Management School
worked on a report about employment for people with
intellectual disabilities.



Researcher

A person that finds things about a topic and
makes a report about the topic and the findings.



Rights of people with disabilities

A right is a rule that makes sure people
are protected and they can have and do
what they need to live a life with respect and safety.

Rights of people with disabilities are rules
that are about the lives of people with disabilities.

For example, the right to get an education,
or the right to live.



Segregation

Segregation is when someone is set apart from others for an unfair reason.

For example, because of their disability.



Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is when people with intellectual disabilities speak up for themselves.

These people are called self-advocates.



Services

Support for people with disabilities.



Special education schools

Schools for people with disabilities.



Support person

A person that helps people with disabilities to do things.

For example: doing grocery shopping or understanding a hard document.



Training

A class often given at work where people learn new things.



Volunteer

A person that works and helps for free.

For example: taking care of animals at a shelter.



Vote

Voting means choosing the politicians who represent us and make decisions for us.

You can vote in different areas.

For example:

- in your town or city
when you elect a new mayor in your country
- when you elect a new president
- or at the European elections,
when you choose the new
Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).



Working conditions

Working conditions is the working environment and the circumstances of the job.

This includes the working hours, legal rights and responsibilities.

Working conditions also include the work that a person does with their body or their mind.



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



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