1/2019

**Europe for Us**

This time we are voting

Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us (pages 27 to 38).

“Europe for us” is available in:

* English
* French
* German
* Italian
* Hungarian
* Portuguese
* Romanian
* Spanish

Go to [www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us)

to find the other language versions.

[**Introduction**](#_bookmark0)

[**“We are all able to vote.**](#_bookmark1)

[**And it is important for us to vote!”**](#_bookmark1)

[**Our Voting Champions**](#_bookmark2)

[**“It is very bad that many people   
do not have theright to vote”**](#_bookmark3)

[**People under guardianship in Germany   
will be allowed to vote**](#_bookmark4)

[**Director’s meeting in Hungary**](#_bookmark5)

[**5 new videos**](#_bookmark6)

[**Register now   
for Europe in Action!**](#_bookmark7)

[**Explanations**](#_bookmark8)

Introduction  
  
The **European elections** will be in May 2019.

The elections are a very important topic for **Inclusion Europe**.

This year Inclusion Europe will talk about how to make voting **accessible** for

people with **intellectual disabilities**.

We will also talk about

why it is important to **vote**.

In this issue of Europe for Us,

you can find many articles about

* the European elections
* voting rights
* accessibility for elections.

If you want to know more, have a look at our website! We recently launched a new website.

It has a lot of information in easy-to-read (in English). This is the address: [www.inclusion-europe.eu](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu/)

You can find Inclusion Europe’s elections **manifesto**

in **easy-to-read** here (in English): bit.ly/IEelect

You can also read it in

- Czech - Hungarian

- Dutch - Italian

- Finnish - Polish

- French - Portuguese

- German - Swedish

- Greek - Spanish

- Hungarian - Slovene

- Italian

here: bit.ly/IEelectLanguages

You can also read about what we do for

the European elections on **social media**.

This is our **hashtag**: #ThisTimeWeAreVoting

You can also watch two videos we did (in English):

* + - * on the right to vote: bit.ly/LetUsVoteVideo
      * why voting is important: bit.ly/ThisTimeWeAreVoting

We hope you like this issue of “Europe for Us”!

“We are all able to vote.   
And it’s important for us   
to vote!”  
  
Inclusion Europe had an event

at the European Parliament.

During this event, we spoke about the European elections

and accessibility for people with intellectual disabilities.

The Belgian self-advocate Jean Molynas

talked about his opinion on the topic.  
  
We also talked about a document

that was published by the

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

This document talks about the right to vote

for people under guardianship

in the countries of the European Union.

Sylvie Guillaume is a vice-president

of the European Parliament.

Sylvie Guillaume said that the European Commission

should do more things

to make sure that people with intellectual disabilities

can have full voting rights.

We also talked about getting elected.

Self-advocate Jean Molynas

said that next year he wants to be a candidate

at the local elections.

André Burger said that parents of people

with intellectual disabilities

should try to be elected,

because they also know

what needs to be changed.

Our voting Champion

Every month we talk with one of our “Voting champions”.

Voting champions are people who

talk about the right to vote.

They also want governments to make voting accessible

for people with intellectual disabilities.

Read here interviews with two voting champions:

László Bercse and Andreas Zehetner.  
  
  
  
“It is important that we are all

represented in the European

Parliament“  
  
Andreas Zehetner is a member of the steering group

of the European Platform of Self-Advocates.

He is a self-advocate at Inclusion Europe’s member

Lebenshilfe Austria.

Andreas talks to people about accessibility

in many areas of life.

He has been doing this for a long time.

In Austria people under guardianship

have the right to vote since 1988.

“The Disability Equality Act” talks about

having information in easy-to-read.

What needs to be done

to make voting more accessible in Austria?

Some things still need to change.

For example:

* voting stations need to be more accessible

for people who cannot climb stairs

* information about voting needs to be in

easy-to-read.

What do you say

to people with an intellectual disability

to make them go to vote?

In Austria the European elections will be on 26 May 2019.

I talk about the elections to people with

intellectual disabilities who I know:

- the people I live with

- my colleagues

- other self-advocates

We talk about why voting is important.

You went to a conference discussion called

“Voting and Political Participation

for People with Learning Disabilities.”

What did you talk about there?

For me voting means that I have a say about things

that are important for my life.

Voting rights are also part

of the European Disability Strategy.

At the conference, we talked about this strategy.

These are the important things:

- Be there.

This means having accessible rooms

and support for people with disabilities.

- Be informed.

Information must be in easy-to-read

and translated in other languages.

For example, sign language.

- Say your opinion.

This means I should be able

to say what I think in discussions and meetings.

Or as an expert on intellectual disability.

- Vote.

Every adult should have the right to vote in all elections.

* Decide.

This means that when we vote we decide

who makes the rules.

At the end of the conference

we talked about this question:

“What do you need to be able to have a say?”

As a self-advocate, it is important that you

can listen to others.

It is also important that you can speak up

and say what you think.

You also need people and organisations

to work with.

In May there will be the European elections.

Why is it important for you to vote?

There are 7 million

people with intellectual disabilities in Europe.

It is important that we are represented

in the European Parliament.

In December 2017 some self-advocates

visited the European Parliament.

They wanted to make sure

that we get the European Disability Strategy.

Now we have the European Disability Strategy.

And we must make sure now that it is used

in the countries in the European Union.

“For me it is very important to

vote at the European elections”  
  
  
László Bercse is a member of Inclusion Europe

and of **EPSA**.

László works with our Hungarian member ÉFOÉSZ***.***

He wants **accessible elections**

for people with **intellectual disabilities**.

We asked László some questions.

**You have the right to vote.**

**But you know many people who cannot vote.**

**Can you tell me more about it?**

In Hungary, when you are

under **guardianship**

a judge can take away

your right to vote.

I know many people under guardianship

who do not have the right to vote.

I know self-advocates who are sad

because they cannot vote.

One self-advocate said that he feels

like he is less important than other people,

because he cannot vote.

Another self-advocate said

that he really wants to vote

because his vote can make a difference

for people with intellectual disabilities.  
  
**When you go to vote,**

**what are the things that work well?**

When we have elections in Hungary,

we can ask to the **government**

to send us an **easy-to-read** letter

on how to vote.

This is a good thing.

**When you go to vote,**

**what are the problems that you find?**

We need easy-to-read information

on the different **political parties**.

With easy-to-read information

people with intellectual disabilities

can decide who they want to vote for.

We also need easy-to-read voting papers.

**ÉFOÉSZ wrote an easy-to-read document**

**about European elections.**

**What does this document talk about?**

I think it is a very good document!

It explains many things in easy-to-read:

z What is the **European Parliament**?

z Why are the **European elections** important?

z How can you vote?

z How can **politicians** help us if they get elected?  
  
 We want all people with intellectual disabilities

to be able to vote.  
  
We want to be supported when we go to vote.

With our **self-advocacy** group

we talk a lot about the right to vote

for people with intellectual disabilities.

**ÉFOÉSZ is doing a campaign**

**on the right to vote**

**for people with intellectual disabilities.**

**Why are you doing it?**

**What do you do for this campaign?**

We started the campaign at the end of 2018.

With this campaign we want to ask politicians

to give the right to vote

to people with intellectual disabilities.

We want to tell other people

that people with intellectual disabilities

are like everyone else.

And they should have the right to vote.

We use social media to talk about this topic.

We organise conferences on the right to vote

and we talk to politicians about it.

We talk to the media

and we organise events and trainings

for self-advocates.

**Why is it important for you**

**to vote at the European elections?**

For me it is important

to vote at the European elections

because I care about

who represents me in the European Parliament.

I want the European Parliament

to make decisions which are good for me

and for other people with disabilities.

“It is very bad that many people

do not have the right to vote”  
  
We interviewed Sylvie Guillaume.

Sylvie Guillaume is a vice-president of

the European Parliament.

We asked her about

her work at the European Parliament.

We also asked her about

what the European Parliament is doing

to become more accessible

for people with intellectual disabilities.

Here are Sylvie Guillaume’s answers:

**How does a normal day look like**

**for you?**

I do many different things.

I travel a lot for my job.

The European Parliament works at 2 places:

In Brussels, Belgium.

And in Strasbourg, France.

So I am often in Brussels and Strasbourg.

I also travel home to my region

to talk to the people who live there.

When I am in Brussels I have a lot of meetings.

I meet different people.

This helps me make good decisions.

**Why is the European Parliament important**

**for the people living in the European Union?**

The Members of the European Parliament speak for

the people who live in Europe.

The European Parliament protects the rights

of these people.

Here are some examples of the things we do:

* we voted for a law that gives free assistance to

people with a disability who travel

* we voted for the European Accessibility Act

that makes things more accessible for

people with disabilities.

**We did an event in the European Parliament**

**on the European elections.**

**You decided to host our event.**

**Why?**

I think the event is very important.

We learned about how to make elections accessible

for people with intellectual disabilities.

I wanted my colleagues to know about that.

It is very bad that many people do not have

the right to vote.

This is an important right, and all people should have it.

**What does the European Parliament do**

**to be more accessible**

**to people with intellectual disabilities?**

There is a law on the accessibility of websites.

We followed this law.

Now it is easier to find information

on the website of the European Parliament.

We also added subtitles to videos.

This makes videos easier to understand.

But we still need to do more

to make information accessible

for people with intellectual disabilities.

I have asked the people who work on this

to make more improvements.

People under guardianship in

Germany will be allowed to vote

Judges in Germany have finally said

that taking away voting rights

from people under guardianship

is against the law.

In Germany, more than 85.000 people

were not able to vote.

Now Germany has to change the law.

People will be able to vote

at the European elections in May.

This is a great victory

for our German member Lebenshilfe.

Lebenshilfe pushed to change the law.

Inclusion Europe’s president Jyrki Pinomaa

said that Germany is a great example

for other countries in Europe.

Things are finally getting better

for people under guardianship

in Europe.

But even in countries

where people under guardianship

have full voting rights

elections are often not accessible.

This is a problem,

and it must be changed.

There are positive examples.

For example:

- In Sweden, politicians got trained in easy language.

Then the politicians met people with

intellectual disabilities.

- Afterwards, in Sweden they added the logos of the

parties to the voting paper.

This helps people understand

who they want to vote for.

- In Scotland, politicians also met

with people with intellectual disabilities.

Self-advocate Maribel Cáceres

got back her right to vote.

Maribel says:

“Everyone has the right to vote.

We should not be discriminated

against because we are

disabled.”

Director’s meeting in Hungary

The directors of all the member organisations

of Inclusion Europe

have met in Budapest.

They talked about these topics:

**European elections in May 2019**

Inclusion Europe’s members

are already doing many things

for the European elections

in their countries.

The European Parliament is also doing a lot

to encourage people to vote.

Some people from the European Parliament

came to our meeting

and they told us about it.

**People who help people with**

**disabilities**

Some people with disabilities

have people who come to their house

and help them with different things.

For example, cooking and cleaning.

The European Union gives money

to cities and towns to pay these people.

More and more cities and towns

use the cheapest person.

But this doesn’t always mean

that the person does a good job.

This needs to change.

**Work for people with**

**intellectual disabilities**

Our Danish member LEV told us

about a project they do.

With this project they found work

for many people with intellectual disabilities.

A big thank you to everyone who came

and to our Hungarian member ÉFOÉSZ

who hosted us!

5 new videos

One video is about how Inclusion Europe

supports self-advocacy.

You can watch it here:

bit.ly/SelfAdvocacyVideo

Another video is called “My inclusion story”.

In the video, self-advocates talk about

what inclusion means to them.

You can watch the video here:

bit.ly/MyInclusionStory

Another video is called “Let us vote”.

In the video, self-advocates explain

why everyone should have the right to vote.

You can watch the video here:

bit.ly/LetUsVoteVideo

Inclusion Europe has published

many new videos!

The videos are all in English.

Another video is called “This time we are voting”.

For the video, we asked self-advocates:

“Why is voting important to you?”

You can see their answers in the video:

bit.ly/ThisTimeWeAreVoting

The last video is about the United Nations.

The video explains what the United Nations is

and why it is important.

You can watch the video here:

bit.ly/VideoUnitedNations

Register now for

Europe in Action!

Every year for 3 days,

self-advocates, support persons, family members and

professionals

meet in a city in Europe.

They meet for a conference called “Europe in Action”.

In 2019, Europe in Action will take place

from 5-7 June in Vilnius in Lithuania.

We will talk about making decisions

and living independently.

Register here: [www.europeinaction.org/register](http://www.europeinaction.org/register)

Hear our Voices

EPSA organises a bi-annual conference

for self-advocates called “Hear our Voices”.

At this conference,

people with an intellectual disability

come together to talk about

and share ideas and experiences

about intellectual disability.

In 2019, Hear our voices will take place

from 18-20 September in Graz, Austria.

Please put this date in your calendar.

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

Accessibility Act

The Accessibility Act is a law

made by the European Union.

Every country in the European Union

must respect the Accessibility Act.

The Accessibility Act says what companies need to do

to make their products and services more accessible.

For example:

-smartphones,

- computers,

- e-books,

- ticketing machines

- travels by bus or train.

Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union

is where the national ministers

from the countries

of the European Union meet.

They meet to adopt laws and talk about

politics in the European Union.

The Council of the European Union

is also called Council of Ministers.

Discrimination

Discrimination means that you are treated unfairly   
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.

Elections

Elections decide who should speak for us

and make choices for us.

Elections happen in different areas.

For example in your town or city

when you can elect a new mayor.

Or in your country

when you can elect a new president.

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 Disability Strategy

The European Disability Strategy is an important text.

It says what the European Union has to do

to make sure people with disabilities in Europe

get the same rights as everyone else.

European elections

The European elections

are the elections to the European Parliament.

When you vote at the European elections,

you can have a say on who the new MEPs will be.

The MEPs speak for

all the people who live in the European Union.

The European elections take place every 5 years.

The next European elections will be

from 23-26 May 2019.

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.

For example, the **Accessibility Act**.

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.

European Union Agency for

Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

is an organisation working for the European Union.

We call it FRA for short.

FRA makes sure that the rights of all people

living in the European Union are respected.

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.

Hashtag

On social media you can use the symbol #.

This symbol is called hashtag.

You can write a word after the hashtag symbol.

If you click on that word,

you will be taken to all the messages

that have to do with that word.

For example:

- If you write #inclusion and you click on it,

you will be taken to all the messages

that have to do with inclusion.

- If you write #EuropeanUnion and you click on it,

you will be taken to all the messages

that have to do with the European Union.

- If you write #HearOurVoices and you click on it,

you will be taken to all the messages

that have to do with Hear Our Voices.

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 75 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.

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.

Intellectual disabilities

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.

Manifesto

A manifesto is a text that explains the goals

of a person or an organisation.

It is often made before an election

by a person or organisation that wants to be elected.

Some manifestos are also done by organisations

to tell the candidates for the elections about

what they think is important.

Everyone can read a manifesto.

Political party

A political party is a group of people

who think the country should be run in a certain way.

Politician

Someone helps run the country or part of the country.

Or someone who would like to do this.

Politicians, for example, are

- mayors

- ministers

- candidates in the elections

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is when people with

intellectual disabilities speak up for themselves.

These people are called self-advocates.

Social Media

Social media is made up of websites and apps

that let you create and share content.

For example, photos, videos and information.

Apps is short for applications.

These are tools that let you use social media

on a mobile phone or tablet.

United Nations

The United Nations is an international organisation.

It works for peace and security everywhere in the world.

We call it the UN for short.

The UN is based in different places.

For example, it is in New York,

in the United States of America,

and in Geneva, in Switzerland.

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).

Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your

self-advocacy stories!

Website:

inclusion-europe.eu

Email:

[secretariat@inclusion-europe.org](mailto:secretariat@inclusion-europe.org)

Telephone:

+32 2 502 28 15

Address:

Rue d’Arlon 55, 1040 Brussels, Belgium

Facebook:

facebook.com/inclusioneurope

Twitter:

twitter.com/InclusionEurope

Sign up to get Europe for Us when it comes out:

bit.ly/EuropeForUs