



Europe for us

**Hear our Voices:
My voice counts!**



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 22 to 28.

“Europe for us” is available in:

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

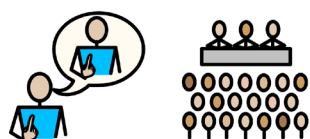
Go to www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us to find the other language versions.

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Introduction

We did this edition of Europe for Us
for the Hear our Voices conference.



Hear our voices is a conference of **self-advocates**.

This year, it happens in Graz in Austria.

It happens from 18-20 September.

It is organised by **EPSA**.

The topic of conference this year is "My voice counts!".

This is the conference **hashtag**: #HoV19



In this issue of "Europe for Us",
you will find many interviews with self-advocates.

You can read about Manuel Lankmair on page 6.



Manuel has **complex support needs**.

He talks about **accessibility** at events.

You can also read interviews with
parents with **intellectual disabilities**
on page 9 to 14.



You can also read interviews with
employees with intellectual disabilities
on page 15 to 21.



We hope you like this issue of Europe for Us!

Interview with Manuel Lankmair



Manuel Lankmair works at Lebenshilfe Hartberg.

Lebenshilfe Hartberg is a part of our member Lebenshilfe Austria.

Manuel Lankmair has **complex support needs**.

He gave a workshop at the Europe in Action conference.

We did an interview with Manuel.

We asked him about his job and about **accessibility** for people with complex support needs.

Manuel, what is your job at Lebenshilfe Austria?



I am working in advocacy with my colleagues.

Advocacy means to tell **politicians** what they should do better.

I have been **elected** by my colleagues to speak for them.



You have a personal assistant.

Did you already have the personal assistant before you started working?

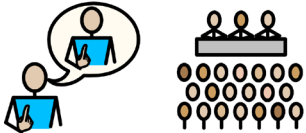
I got a personal assistant only when I began working.

Before I got support from employees of Lebenshilfe and my family.

During your workshop, you said that you get a lot of support from your personal assistant.

Most people with complex support needs in Austria do not get that much support.

Why do you think you get so much support?



I get this support because I am a **self-advocate**.

I am often invited to conferences and seminars.

Also my family supports me a lot.

As a self-advocate, you know a lot about accessibility.

What are the most important things you can do to make a meeting accessible for people with complex support needs?

There are four points:

- Texts in **easy-to-read**
- Accessibility for wheelchair users, for example ramps
- Images in Power Point presentations and not just text
- Texts should be sent around before the conference, so people can prepare

Have you been to any conference that was a very good example for accessibility?



There was a meeting of the self-advocates' council in Salzburg in Austria.

It was very accessible!

It happened in spring this year.

About 20 self-advocates meet four times a year to discuss their issues.

This was the first time I took part in this meeting.

What needs to change so we can make events more accessible?



Organisers should speak with the people responsible for the venue.

There should be a checklist to make sure things are accessible.

For example, having ramps so wheelchair users can access the stage.

"We take the bike or we go for walks" – Parents with intellectual disabilities



It can be difficult for parents with **intellectual disabilities** to raise their children.



Often, there is not enough support.

But there are also good examples!

We have made 2 interviews with parents with intellectual disabilities.

In the interviews, they talk about their lives and relationships.

Read the interviews: →



Michel and Vanessa, Belgium

Tell us about your daughter.

How old is she?

Michel:

Our daughter Laura is 14 years old.

Have you always wanted to have children?

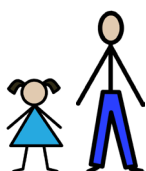
Michel:

No, I wasn't thinking about it.

Laura came by surprise.

It was the first time that I was living with a partner.

How did you raise Laura?



Michel:

My partner and I split up
and I took care of Laura by myself.

I cannot read or write.

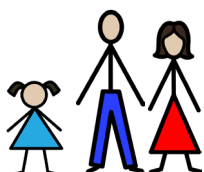
But I still did it.

For one year I lived with Laura
in a community centre.

I was the only man there.

After that I met Vanessa.

Now we take care of Laura together.



What do you do when you spend time with Laura?

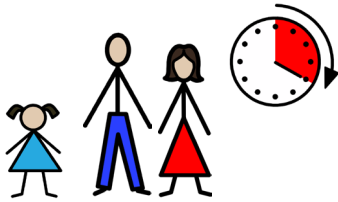
Michel and Vanessa:

Laura goes to a boarding school.

A boarding school is a school with other buildings.

Children live at the boarding school
during the week.

They go back home during the weekend.



When Laura comes home,
we go to the market together.

Or we visit her grandparents.

We take the bike or we go for walks.

We go to local events
and we make food together.

Laura also does many activities, like:

- dancing
- cooking
- roller blading

And the 3 of us go to the seaside.

The support services help us
do these things.

Vanessa:



I play games with Laura
and we talk about girls' stuff.

These are things
that she would not ask her dad.

When it is time for bed, we cuddle.

When she doesn't behave well,
I tell her.

What kind of support do you receive?

Michel and Vanessa:



We live in a flat
that we received from a support service.

They help us if we need something.

We also receive support from our family.

Do you talk to Laura about your disability?

Michel:

Yes, I tell her that I cannot read or write.

She does not understand why I have a disability.

She goes to a special school.

There they also talk about disabilities.

Have you ever been discriminated against?

Vanessa:



No.

I do many activities in the community, like:

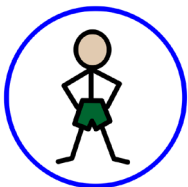
- dance classes
- gym
- volunteering

And I have never been **discriminated against**.



Ludovic, Belgium

**Tell us about your child.
How old is he?**



I have a son, Alexis.

He is 9 years old.

Have you always wanted to have children?

Yes, but Alexis was a surprise.

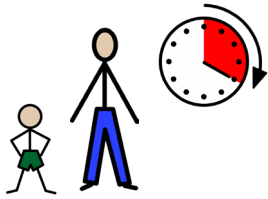
I wasn't ready.

But I took care of him.

He is my little soldier.

He listens to me.

What do you do when you spend time with Alexis?



During the week
Alexis goes to boarding school.

When he is at home, we play games.

Sometimes he cheats!

When he behaves well
I let him play with the play station.

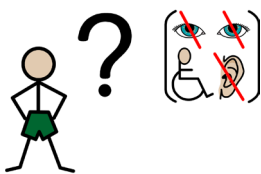
We visit our family and we talk about
how his body will change.

What kind of support do you get?



We are supported by the Edelweiss centre
and by my mother.

Do you talk to Alexis about your disability?



No, because he is still too young.

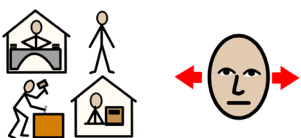
He doesn't understand that I have a disability.

If he will ask questions in future,
I will do some internet research
so I can answer.

Have you ever been discriminated against?

Yes.

When I look for a job, people always say no to me.



"I wanted to go to work and earn my own money" – Employees with intellectual disabilities



It is often hard for people with **intellectual disabilities** to find a job.

Sometimes, **employers** are afraid.

Or there is not enough support.

But there are people with intellectual disabilities who work!

We interviewed 3 people about this topic.

We asked them many things.

For example, what they like most about their job.

And about their dream job when they were kids.

You can read the interviews here:

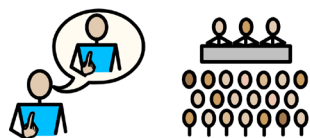




Sarah Pickard, England

Sarah Pickard works at **Inclusion International**.

What are you doing as part of your job?

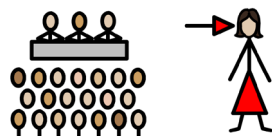


I speak for Europe at Inclusion International.

This means that I

- travel to different places
- speak at conferences
- talk to other **self-advocates**
- learn about what self-advocates do in and around Europe.

What do you like most about your job?



Giving speeches!

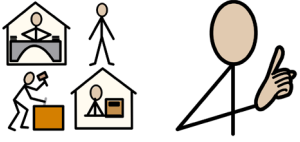
And I like visiting different countries.

Taking part in meetings is also nice.

Are there things you don't like?

I can be difficult if things change at the very last minute.

For example, with travels.



Why is working important for you?

I think it is always important to have a job!

It makes me free because I have my own money.

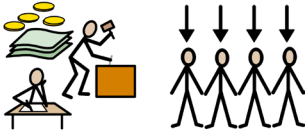
And it makes me feel important.

Was it hard for you to find a job with fair pay?

It wasn't hard for me.

But it's different for many other people.

Everyone should be able to work like I do.



What was your dream job when you were a kid?

I wanted be an actress or a dancer.



Carlos Pires, Portugal

Carlos Pires works at Fenacerci.

Fenacerci is our member in Portugal.

What are you doing as part of your job?

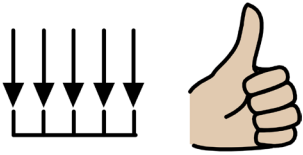
I do different things.

Fore example:

- go to the bank
- take photocopies

- ask my colleagues what materials they need
- get them the materials ...

What do you like most about your job?



I like everything I do.

But the best thing is to walk in the street
to get something for the office.

Are there things you don't like?

I like everything I do.

But sometimes people send boxes.

In the boxes, there are "donations".

But these donations are often just rubbish.

I don't like dealing with that.

Why is working important for you?



It makes me feel good.

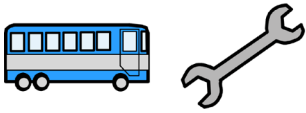
I also need the money.

I do not think it's good if we only get money
from the state.

Was it hard for you to find a job with fair pay?

No. I have been working here for 29 years already.

What was your dream job when you were a kid?



I wanted to repair busses.

When I was younger,
I spent the weekends in a workshop for busses.

I helped there.

But my parents thought it was not a good job.



Petra Philipsen, Germany

Petra Philipsen works at Café Henry.

Café Henry is an inclusive café.

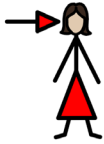
Some people with disabilities work there.



What are you doing as part of your job?

My tasks are:

- washing dishes
- cleaning tables in the café
- tidying up our conference rooms
- helping with the distribution of food
- collecting money



What do you like most about your job?

I like working in the café.

I like talking to our customers.

It's good to see that they like the café.

They tell me that that everything tastes very good!

Are there things you do not like?

We have large metal boxes to store food.

I do not like cleaning them.

They are big.

They are not easy to clean.

It is hard work.

Why is working important for you?

I did another job before.

The other job was a bit boring for me.

I wanted to go to work and earn my own money.

Here I have good colleagues.

I am right in the middle of everything.



Was it hard for you to find a job with fair pay?

Yes, it was very difficult.

I worked in many other jobs before.

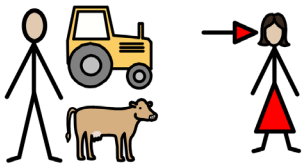
But it never worked out for long.

I was happy when someone asked me
if I wanted to try out the café.

And it worked!

I have been working at Café Henry for 7 years now.

What was your dream job when you were a kid?

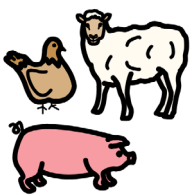


I wanted to drive a truck or become a farmer.

My dad drove trucks.

It was great sitting next to him.

But I do not have a driver's license.



My grandparents had a farm.

I could have worked with animals there.

Today I am glad that I did not work out.

At the farm you need to work every day!

Here I have free days.

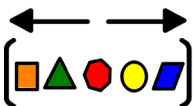
Explanations



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



Complex Support Needs

Complex support needs are when a person with disabilities needs help in different and complicated ways.

For example, if someone cannot speak and needs support telling other people what he or she wants.



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.



Employ

Employ means to hire someone to do a job.



Employer

A person who hires another person to do a job.



Employee

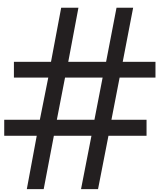
A person who gets hired to do a job.

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**.



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 #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.

Inclusion International

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

It fights for their equal rights and inclusion in all aspects of life.

It started over 50 years ago.

It has 200 members in 115 countries all over the world.

Inclusion International is based in London in the United Kingdom.

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.



Politician

Someone helps run the country or part of the country. Or someone who would like to do this.

Politicians, for example, are

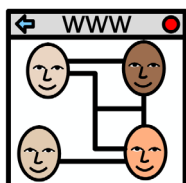
- mayors
- ministers
- candidates in the **elections**



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.



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



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