



Europe for us

**Inclusion Europe helps
families in Ukraine**



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 18 to 32.

“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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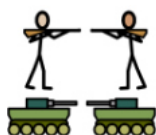


Letter from László Bercse about Ukraine



Dear Self-Advocates all over Europe,
tragic events have been happening
these days in Ukraine.

In these dark days, I would like to ask you
to think about people with intellectual disabilities
and their families in Ukraine.



After the coronavirus emergency,
our Ukrainian friends
once again found themselves in a new crisis.



It is important to pay extra attention
to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.
Just as it was at the times of lockdowns.



It is crucial that people continue
to get the support they need.



They need accessible information
about what is happening
and how to stay safe in this tragic situation.



We must not forget the people
living in institutions in Ukraine.

They should not be left
alone and without support.



It is also very important that
people get mental support
to cope with the situation.

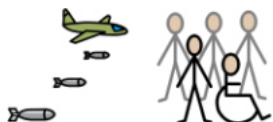
On behalf of the European Self-Advocacy movement,
this is my message to people with
intellectual disabilities in Ukraine.



We all think of you and stand beside you.
We strongly hope that war is coming to an end
and peace will be restored soon.

Best wishes,
László Bercse

Inclusion Europe helps families in Ukraine



For most people with intellectual disabilities and families it's not possible to leave the warzone.



For many it is not even possible to hide in shelters because they are not accessible.



There is severe lack of basic supplies including medicines, hygiene products, and other necessary items.



Inclusion Europe is helping their member in Ukraine called VGO Coalition.

Ukraine VGO Coalition have told us that the best way to help is to donate.



Inclusion Europe have agreed that they will coordinate this.



VGO Coalition is member
of Inclusion Europe since 2019.

VGO Coalition brings together
118 local organisations from all over Ukraine.

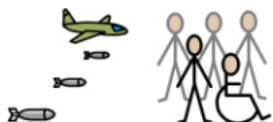


VGO Coalition is a family-based
organisation for people with intellectual disabilities.

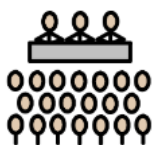
VGO Coalition represents 14,000 families.



Weeks of horror. And we cannot leave



In Ukraine there are 2.7 million people with intellectual disabilities at risk because of the Russian war on Ukraine.



Three organizations held a press conference on the 10th of March to talk about what is happening in Ukraine.

The names of three of organizations:

- Inclusion Europe
- European Disability Forum
- EASPD



There were also other people from disability organizations from Ukraine.

Valery Sushkevych is president of National Assembly of Persons with Disabilities Ukraine.

Raisa Kravchenko and Yulia Klepets
from Ukrainian Coalition VGO.

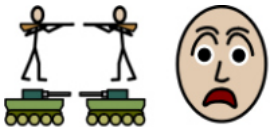
All families in Ukraine are trying the best to
survive because of what is happening in their country.



In Ukraine all the centers are closed
all the community-based service have stopped.



Mothers are very tired and have huge
health problems because
of what is happening in Ukraine.



Yulia Klepets said they seen
2 weeks of horror.

Yulia is from Kyiv.

She has a daughter who is autistic
and has intellectual disabilities.

She also has her mother who is 82 years old
and they cannot leave the flat.

Yullia and her family live on the 7th floor
and there is no way to get to the bomb shelter.

Raisa Kravchenko thanked the organizations
for all the help they have given.

Raisa has a son who is 37 years old
and she must dedicate all her time for her son.



Raisa wants to say a big thank you
to Inclusion Europe for the donations.

EPSA activities in 2021



Introduction

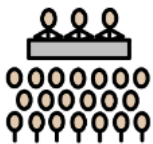
My name is László Bercse.

I come from Budapest, Hungary.

I am the Vice-President of Inclusion Europe
and the Chair of EPSA.

EPSA is the European Platform of Self-Advocates.

I would like to tell you
what EPSA worked on in 2021.



Self-advocates from our members
were invited to talk at conferences
and other events.

They also organised their own conferences,
in their own countries.



We also organized international events online.

Challenges due to COVID-19



EPSA Steering Group
and most of our members
continued to work online
because of the pandemic.



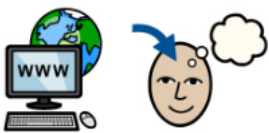
Many self-advocates struggled
with online meetings
due to misunderstandings
or bad internet connection.



Most of us prefer to work
with other people in person.



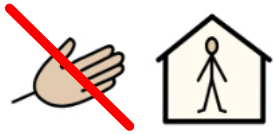
It is also easier to make new friends
if we meet face to face.
We missed travelling to conferences
and meeting new people.



The good thing is that we learned
digital skills and now we are able
to do that with less support.



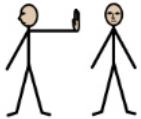
Support is always very important for us,
even more so during these difficult times.



During lockdowns,
many people did not get
the support they used to.



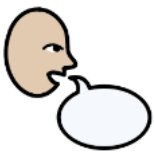
**Because of that, self-advocates felt sad,
lonely, confused, and angry.**



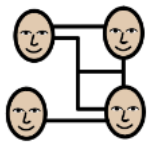
The pandemic once again showed
the discrimination we face every day.



It has also made clear that we need
a strong self-advocacy movement.



So, we continued working
and speaking up.



We stayed committed
and we stayed in contact,
despite every difficulty.

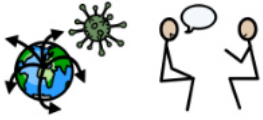


Hear our Voices! 2021

**This year the Hear our Voices
Conference was different.**



Self-advocates from all over Europe
got together in their own countries
and organised several events.



We talked about how it was for us to go through the COVID-19 situation.



We also talked about what kind of Europe we want for the future, and how we can achieve it.

We had events in 9 countries, with more than 300 participants.

We had events in Portugal, Romania, Ireland, Hungary, Czechia, Austria, Croatia, Moldova, and Spain.

Then we had a closing plenary, where we all got together from all the countries.



We gathered a lot of good ideas and demands from self-advocates to share with European decision makers.

CRPD consultation on deinstitutionalisation



I spoke at a regional consultation organized by the CRPD Committee.



The consultation was about
deinstitutionalisation
and community living.



There were many people with disabilities
and organizations
at the online consultation.



I represented self-advocates from Europe.
I prepared my statement
together with other self-advocates,
some of them are residents of large institutions.



The CRPD Committee used
the information we shared
to prepare guidelines for countries.



The guidelines will help countries
to put the Convention in practice.

Inclusion International's consultation on deinstitutionalisation

European self-advocates took part
in a regional consultation
organized by Inclusion International.



The consultation was about
deinstitutionalisation
and community inclusion.

We talked about:



- What kind of support
do we need to live in the community?



- How can we make sure
that people with disabilities
do not go back to institutions?

Inclusion International forwarded our ideas
to the CRPD Committee.



Inclusion International made sure
that the CRPD Committee considers our ideas
when monitoring how the countries implement
the Convention.

Public hearing on the right to make decisions



The European Economic
and Social Committee (EESC)
organized a public hearing.



The public hearing
was about the right to take decisions.
Senada Halilčević was one of the speakers.
Senada is a self-advocate from Croatia
and the former Chairperson of EPSA.



She spoke about the importance
of legal capacity.
She also talked about
how the countries should support
people with disabilities in making decisions.

Spanish Platform of Self-Advocates



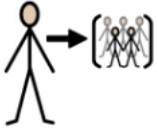
In Spain a National Self-Advocacy Platform
was launched at a conference
with more than 500 participants.



Spanish self-advocates
have been working in groups
for many years now.



This Platform will help them
to work together more closely
and in a more inclusive way.



The Platform will also help
to involve more people in the movement.



I congratulate them
for founding this platform
and wish them good luck for their work.

European Disability Strategy

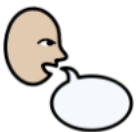


The European Commission presented
the new 10-year Disability Strategy.



The Strategy describes
how the EU will support
the rights of people with disabilities
in the next 10 years.

The document includes very important goals
and useful steps to achieve them.



Inclusion Europe, including self-advocates
commented on the Strategy.

We wanted to make sure
that the Strategy really supports our rights.

The conference of Harvard Law School



I had the honour of speaking at an online conference of Harvard Law School.



I talked about my experience working on a shadow report of the CRPD.

A shadow report is when we share point of view to governmental reports. Shadow reports is also called alternative reports.



Me and other self-advocates wrote an easy-to-read report about the implementation of the CRPD in Hungary in 2018.

I learnt that there are not many self-advocates across the world who take part in shadow reporting.

What do we want for 2022, and for the future?



We want respect.

We want equality.

We want accessibility.

We want full citizenship!

And we want it now!!



I wish all my colleagues around Europe
a lot of strength to achieve these.

I know that in the last two years
you have worked really hard
to adapt to the new situation
and to overcome barriers.

This is true for self-advocates,
family members and supporters.

I wish you a better year for 2022!
Please keep up the good work
and to continue standing up for each other!

László Bercse

Chair

European Platform of Self-Advocates

Explanations



Accessible

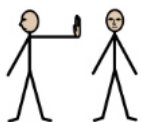
Something that is easy to use for people with disabilities.
Such as:

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



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.



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.



ÉFOÉSZ

ÉFOÉSZ is an association of organisations that care and support the rehabilitation of people with intellectual disability in Hungary.



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 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.



European Pillar of Social Rights:

The European Pillar of Social Rights makes sure people in the European Union have new and more effective rights.



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.



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.



Inclusive education, training, employment

Inclusive education, training or employment means that people with **intellectual disabilities** can learn and work together with other people without disabilities.



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.



Lockdown

A lockdown happens when there is a need to control a situation that can be harmful.

During a pandemic like the one of COVID-19, the countries have lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus.



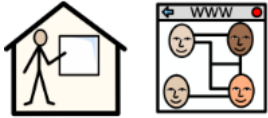
MEPs

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.



Online Schooling

Online schooling is a way for students to attend their classes using a computer or another device to connect to the internet.

These classes happen with the help of online applications for meetings or online classrooms.



Petition

A request made for something desired, especially a respectful or humble request, as to a superior or to one of those in authority.



Podcast

Podcast is an audio file that anyone can listen to at any time either with a podcast app, website or youtube channel.



Policies

Actions or practices of governments and institutions.

Policies are trying to make the situation better.

Policies can be a set of rules or guidelines to follow in or to achieve a specific goal.



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.



Self-Advocacy

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

These people are called self-advocates.



Segregation

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

For example, because of their disability.



United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in short, UN CRPD) is an important document.

It tries to make sure that the rights of people with disabilities are respected.



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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[bit.ly/Inclusion Europe Newsletter](http://bit.ly/Inclusion_Europe_Newsletter)



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