



Europe for us

**Employment is the way to
inclusion**



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 23 to 36.

“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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Editor's note

Soufiane El Amrani: Europe in Action reflection



I thought this year's Europe in Action turned out to be very interesting and everyone had a lot of good things to say about the many different topics that we talk about over the last few days.



I think it is important as a person with intellectual disabilities to have a job and earn their own money.

On the second day I like the session on public service employment for people with intellectual disabilities.



All companies need to hire people with intellectual disabilities and give them a chance.



I did a session on the final day called How Europe Union supports employment of people with disabilities.

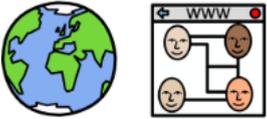
I interviewed Lucie Davoine
from European Commission.

I thought in my session there
was a lot of good questions
and I really enjoyed interviewing Luice Davoine
from the European Commission.

There were a lot of people who
asked good questions in the session I held.



It gives everyone the chance to see old friends
and make new friends.



The conference is great because it brings
people from all over the world together online.



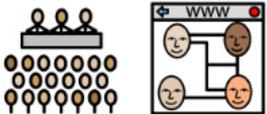
Also, I think it is a good idea to have a Inclusion Europe
podcast because it means we share with other people our
own experiences about our lives.



Jyrki Pinomaa at Europe in Action 2021 conference

The president of Inclusion Europe Jyrki Pinomaa had this to say.

Jyrki thanked the host of this year Europe in Action who are Inclusion KVTL who turned 60 years old.



It was the first time that that the Europe in Action was held online because of Covid-19 but it was a great success.



We heard from Inclusion Europe Vice-President Laszlo Bercse who is also the Chair of the European Platform of Self-Advocates.

He said that employment is the way to inclusion.



Companies need to give a chance to people with intellectual disabilities and let people with intellectual disabilities have a job.



During the four days of the Europe In Action online conference we heard many different stories.

We heard of a man who is 51 years coming out of an institution and getting a job.

A huge step for a museum and a hotel who are employing people with intellectual disabilities.

Governments hiring people with intellectual disabilities.

Job being made easier for people with intellectual disabilities.



We also learnt about people with intellectual disabilities being able to get a job like everyone else.



There is a saying and that saying is Inclusion means that nobody is left behind.

People with intellectual disabilities feel like they are treated differently due to the disabilities but that is not the case at all.

We had a lot of different speakers during the 4 days of Europe in Action who talked about different things.



Speech from László Bercse at Europe in Action 2021 conference



I am László Bercse from Hungary.

I am the chairperson of EPSA,
which is the European Platform of Self-Advocates.

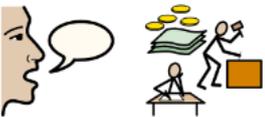


I am also the Vice-president of Inclusion Europe.



Let me welcome you to Europe in Action 2021 conference.

I am glad that at least this way
we can meet each other.



Today I would like to talk about
why employment is important for self-advocates,
why employment is needed in order to achieve inclusion
and how the coronavirus pandemic affected
the employment of people with intellectual disabilities.



Self-advocates want to live independently.

We want to live like anyone else.



We need money to be able to do this.

We also like to go to the movies
to the theatre, to have fun.



This is only possible,
if we have a job and a fair salary.



At the same time, we might need support
to live independently.

Good support and good quality services cost a lot.



If we work, we get an opportunity
to learn new skills
gain new experiences
and to meet new people.

So, it is clear:

We need to make sure,
that people with intellectual disabilities can work.



We want real work, in the open labour market.

We want to do something useful!

We want a normal salary, not pocket money.



Employment is also crucial for inclusion.

We want to contribute to society.



It is better for everyone if we can work too.

Although, we must not forget:
We shouldn't just value people
according to their ability to work.

People who are not able to work
are valuable as well.



There are people who cannot find work
due to lack of right jobs
or lack of the right skills.

Or, most likely, they've never had
the right support to find a job.



Self-advocates might need support
to find a job and to do the job.



In order to find a job,
we also need to access vocational training.

We need to make sure,
that people with intellectual disabilities
can work together with other people.



To make this happen,
we need employers and colleagues
who are prepared and open.

They need to know us, include us
and to adapt to our skills.



I must emphasise:
Family members need support in employment as well.



Many family members cannot work,
because they need to care for their relative
with high support needs.



As a result, many families face discrimination,
exclusion and poverty.

If we want the full inclusion
of persons with intellectual disability,
we need to work for the inclusion of their families too.



I am lucky because I have a job, which I enjoy.



I have support to do my job.

I have been able to work from home since last spring.

Unfortunately, not everyone is that lucky.



The coronavirus affected our lives,
and employment as well.

The pandemic made existing issues even more visible.



Last year, EPSA did a questionnaire.

We asked our members,
how the pandemic effected their lives.

Many self-advocates mentioned employment
in their answers.

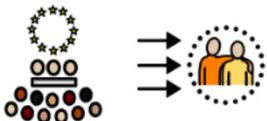


Self-advocates were worried
that they were going to lose their jobs
because of the pandemic.

And many unfortunately did.



So, governments must consider us,
when planning support measures for
unemployed persons.



They must consider us
when planning the protection
measures against COVID-19
and the recovery after the crisis.



The European Union and national money
for economic recovery must reach people
with intellectual disabilities and families.



The money must go into support,
especially in inclusive education and in employment for
people with intellectual disabilities.



Melanie Wimmer: Life and work with a disability

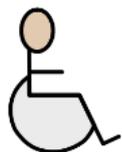


Inclusion Europe started a new project called Inclusion Europe Radio.

Inclusion Europe Radio is a podcast.

The podcast is about life and employment with a disability.

The second episode of the podcast is about Melanie Wimmer.



Melanie Wimmer has a disability.

Melanie also works at Atempo.



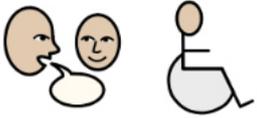
Melanie had difficult times in school and in life but now she is successful.



The interview for Melanie was done by Myrto Delkou.

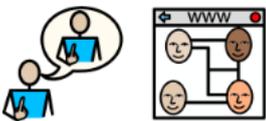
Myrto is the Communication Trainee at Inclusion Europe.

Myrto and Melanie talked about Melanie's disability and her life in Austria.



Melanie said that she has paralysis and she needs a wheelchair.

Melanie says that life in Austria is not hard when you need a wheelchair.



Melanie uses social media as a self-advocate.

The social media platforms Melanie uses are Instagram and Facebook.



Melanie posts about fashion, makeup, and lifestyle.



People can follow Melanie on Facebook and Instagram.

Melanie's Facebook is
Melanie auf 4 Rädern durchs Leben
And her Instagram is:
[@justagirl_onwheels](https://www.instagram.com/justagirl_onwheels)

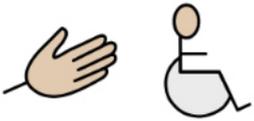
Melanie said
that one difficulty in her life
is people who stare at her in public.



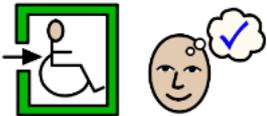
Melanie also had a difficult time in school because the other kids didn't want to be her friend and the teachers didn't think she would be able to be successful in life.



Melanie has a job at atempo.



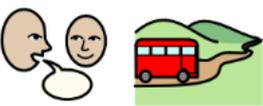
Atempo is a company that works for equality for all people.



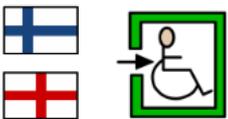
Melanie is the accessibility expert at Atempo.

Melanie enjoys her work very much.

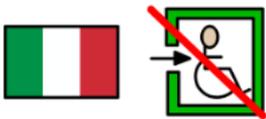
Melanie hopes that her work will contribute to the inclusion of people with disabilities.



Myrto and Melanie also talked about travelling and Melanie's experience in different countries.



Melanie said that she liked Finland and England because they are very wheelchair friendly.

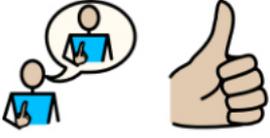


Melanie said that it was difficult to use her wheelchair in Italy.

Melanie wants to say to people with disabilities that they shouldn't give up when they want a job.



Melanie said, that people with disabilities, should represent themselves. Self-representation is important.



Melanie also said to people with disabilities who want to be self-advocates, that they should do it.

They should never give up because it is good if more people talk about disabilities.



Houston and Katie Vandergriff: Life with an intellectual disability



In the new episode of Inclusion Europe Radio our communication trainee, Myrto Delkou, interviewed Houston Vandergriff and his mother, Katie Vandergriff.



Houston is 23 years old and was born with Down Syndrome.



Houston is a travel photographer and has won awards for his photographs.

Myrto, Houston and Katie talked about what it is like to live and to work as a person with a disability.



Houston and his family have travelled in many countries.



Houston likes to take photos of cities, people and flowers.



Houston also makes a lot of friends in the countries he visits.

Houston is also on social media.



Many people follow Houston on Instagram and on TikTok.

There is a TikTok video on Houston's account that was seen by more than 10 million people.



In the video Houston says that because he was born with Down Syndrome the doctors told his parents that he would not be successful.



Houston is very successful now and his family is very proud of him.



Katie and Houston also told Myrto that the support of families is very important.

Katie said that having a family member with Down Syndrome can be very nice.



Houston recently started an online shop where he sells prints of his photography.



Houston also works at a thrift store and his coworkers love to work with him.



Houston and Katie want people with disabilities to know that they can do a lot of things and that they should not listen to people who don't believe in them.



Houston and Katie say that if we include everyone in our society, then everyone wins.

Houston is very close with his family.

His dad is his best friend.



Before the interview ended, Katie said that she hopes we can make a change in the world by talking about disabilities.

People can follow Houston on social media.



Houston has an account on TikTok:

[@downsandtowns](https://www.tiktok.com/@downsandtowns)



Houston also has an account on Instagram:

[@downsandtowns](https://www.instagram.com/downsandtowns)



Houston's website is

downsandtowns.com

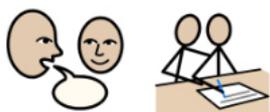


Valerie Van Hees: Inclusive Mobility



This time Myrto Delkou Interviewed Valerie Van Hees.

Valerie works for the support centre for inclusive higher education.



Valerie and Myrto talked about inclusive mobility in higher education.



Mobility is when a student goes abroad to study in another university for a few months.



There are many programmes that give students this opportunity, like the Erasmus programme.

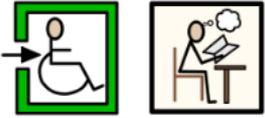


People with disabilities can also participate in mobility programmes.

This is called inclusive mobility.

Valerie said that a lot of students with disabilities don't know about this opportunity.

Students with disabilities also face barriers that can make the mobility harder.



Valerie works to make the mobility opportunities more accessible to students with disabilities.

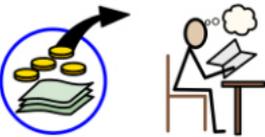


Valerie said that it is very good for students with disabilities to participate in mobility programmes.



They can learn new skills, new languages, and they become more confident after they go to study abroad.

Valerie also said that students can receive support for their mobility.



This support is usually financial.

Students with disabilities can receive more support that will help them with their daily life and the life at the university.

Students with disabilities are supported according to their needs.



Students with disabilities can find more information about mobility opportunities on the website inclusivemobility.eu and the website of the [support centre for inclusive higher education](#).



Soufiane El Amrani: Barriers faced by passengers with disabilities

Soufiane El Amrani,
self-advocate and easy-to-read expert
from Inclusion Europe shared his experience
as a person with disability in accessing trains in Belgium.

Soufiane needs to give a 48-hour
notice in advance for assistance.



Soufiane also said that many stations
in the EU do not have services for
persons with intellectual disabilities.



Soufiane made concrete
recommendations for improvement.



Train timetables and ticketing machine information
must be written in easy-to-read and in Arial 14.

Soufiane shared that there are issues
when trying to get to a train station.



Soufiane was once discriminated by a bus driver who didn't allow him to enter the bus.

It was because the driver was new and did not have proper training.

There are even barriers when using a private taxi, because you need to call a few days in advance to reserve it.



All these barriers stop persons with disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, from being able to travel by rail spontaneously and independently, like everyone else.



Johann Stadler: My path to independence

My name is Johann Stadler
and I am 55 years old.



I live in Graz in Austria.



I have been employed by atempo
in self-advocacy since 2007.



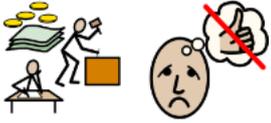
I live in my own flat and am
supported there by residential
assistants twice a week.

The road to this independent
and autonomous life has not always been easy.

There have been ups and downs,
but I have been well supported along the way.



In my younger years,
I was in a full-time supported living facility
and worked in various sheltered workshops.



Back then I was often promised a job,
but the promise was never kept after the placement.

I was sometimes taken advantage
of at internships or not treated well.



Because I don't put up with anything
and stand up for my rights,
I often changed sheltered workshops or internships.

When I came to atempo,
I found out that this quality is one of my strengths.

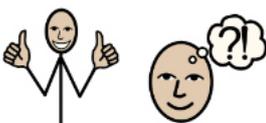
I can use it well as a self-advocate.

I have been working at atempo for 15 years now.



I have achieved a lot as a self-advocate.

For example, I also give talks
about my path to independence.



This way I can encourage other
people with learning disabilities.



If you believe in yourself and
don't let yourself be distracted
from your goals, a lot is possible.

Explanations



Accessible

Something that is easy to use for people with disabilities.

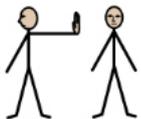
Such as:

- 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.

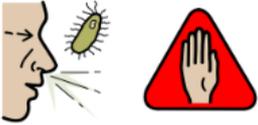
Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult.

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

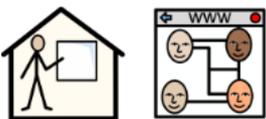
The members of the **European Parliament** are the **politicians** who sit in the European Parliament.

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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Sign up to get Europe for Us when it comes out:
[bit.ly/Inclusion Europe Newsletter](https://bit.ly/Inclusion_Europe_Newsletter)



Co-funded by
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