**Europe for us**

Number 2 / 2018

# What is the European Platform of Self-Advocates?

“Self-advocacy is all about getting stronger   
and making our voices heard.”

The European Platform of Self-Advocates is made up of organisations   
of **self-advocates (definition page 21)**   
from different countries in Europe.

We call it **EPSA** **(definition page 16)**.

It is part of **Inclusion Europe (definition page 17).**

EPSA has been representing self-advocacy organisations in Europe since the year 2000.

* EPSA tells people about the rights and needs   
  of people with **intellectual disabilities (definition page 20)**.
* EPSA also tells people about all the things   
  that people with intellectual disabilities can do.
* EPSA speaks for self-advocacy groups in Europe.
* EPSA speaks to people who make decisions

that impact self-advocates.  
 For example, they speak to politicians.

* EPSA publishes **accessible (definition page 15)** information

about important European issues.

EPSA works to make the European self-advocacy movement stronger.

* EPSA trains self-advocates in speaking up for themselves.
* EPSA organises conferences where people can exchange experiences.
* EPSA works to make self-advocacy known everywhere in Europe.
* EPSA has a list of self-advocacy organisations in Europe.
* EPSA writes about topics that are important for self-advocates.

For example:

* The EPSA recommendations   
  on **legal capacity (definition page 20)**
* Rules to help ensure good support.
* Rules for meetings and conferences.

Europe needs more self-advocates to work towards

making a better life for people with intellectual disabilities.

We need your help!

Learn more about EPSA:

* Go to the EPSA website to find out more about self-advocacy and   
  why it is good to be part of EPSA.

You can view the website here: [www.self-advocacy.eu](http://www.self-advocacy.eu)

* Get the EPSA newsletter “Europe for Us!”  
    
  You can read the newsletter here: [bit.ly/ReadEuropeForUs](http://bit.ly/ReadEuropeForUs)   
    
  You can get the newsletter in 6 languages:   
    
  English, French, German, Spanish, Hungarian and Romanian.  
    
  You can subscribe to the newsletter here: [bit.ly/EuropeForUs](http://bit.ly/EuropeForUs)
* Or simply send us an e-mail at [self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org](mailto:self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org)

Read our articles about self-advocacy here: [bit.ly/SelfAdvocacyArticles](http://bit.ly/SelfAdvocacyArticles)

# Self-advocates meet in Peniche

**Self-advocates** **(definition page 21)** from [**EPSA**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#EPSA)**(definition page 16)** have met in Peniche.

Peniche is a town in Portugal.

At the meeting, they talked about different things.

Here are some of the things they talked about:

They talked about the Life after violence project.  
The project is about violence in [**institutions**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#SeparateInstitutions) **(definition page 19)**.  
Women with disabilities are often victims of such violence.

Juultje Holla and Ellis Jongerius told EPSA members about the project.  
Juultje is a researcher from the Netherlands who works on the project.

Ellis Jongerius is a self-advocate.  
She helps Juultje with the research.

EPSA members talked about different kinds of violence.  
They also talked about what to do when they see violence happening.

They heard about how the police in Portugal have been trained   
by [self-advocates](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#SelfAdvocacy) to deal with violence   
against people with **intellectual disabilities (definition page 20)**.

EPSA members also talked about the **Global Self-Advocacy Summit** **(definition page 18)**at the **World Congress (definition page 21)**.

EPSA is preparing some calls to action that can be shared at the summit.

A call to action is when you ask someone to do something   
to make things better.

In a call to action, you tell them about a problem.  
Then you tell them what they can do to help you solve the problem.

EPSA members also talked about their General Meeting in May.

At the EPSA General Meeting members will talk about   
the work they have done.

They will also talk about the European **elections (definition page 16)**.

The elections for the **European Parliament** **(definition page 17)**will be next year.

Inclusion Europe is writing a [**manifesto**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#Manifesto) **(definition page 21)**for the elections.

EPSA will contribute to Inclusion Europe’s manifesto.

EPSA’s calls to action will be used to help make the manifesto.

4.

They also talked about which self-advocate should stand for Europe at **Inclusion International (definition page 19)**.

This person is called the European representative.

At the moment, the European representative is Sara Pickard.  
Sara Pickard is a self-advocate from the United Kingdom.  
Sara Pickard said she would like to continue doing this job.

The EPSA members agreed that she should remain   
the European representative.

At the **World Congress (definition page 21)**,   
members of Inclusion International   
can **elect** **(definition page 16)** Sara to continue her role.

From now on, the European representative will take part   
in all EPSA meetings and events.

Participants really liked being in Peniche.  
They found the meeting useful.

This was just part of the article.

You can read the full article here: <http://bit.ly/EPSAPeniche>

# Celebrating 30 years of European inclusion

This year, **Inclusion Europe** **(definition page 17)**celebrates its 30th birthday!

Our organization was set up in the year 1988.  
We are celebrating our birthday in different ways.

One way is to talk about the people   
who have worked towards inclusion in Europe.

Every month, we talk about someone different.

So far, we have talked about two **self-advocates (definition page 21)**:  
Elisabeta Moldovan and Aimée Richardson.  
Here you can read interviews with Elisabeta and Aimée.

Find out about our birthday on social media   
by clicking #30yearsofInclusion on Facebook and Twitter.

## Interview with Elisabeta Moldovan

Elisabeta has spent most of her life in **institutions (definition page 19)**.

In 2012, Elisabeta moved from an institution to living on her own.  
She started working at an organisation for [**self-advocates**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#SelfAdvocacy)in Romania  
called Ceva de Spus.  
Ceva de Spus is a member of Inclusion Europe.

She is also a member of the [**European Platform of Self-Advocates**](http://self-advocacy.eu/?page_id=18)  
**(EPSA**, **definition page 16)**.

A book was written about Elisabeta.

It is called **Becoming Eli.**

You can get it in Romanian and English.

We asked Elisabeta some questions:

**Why did you become a self-advocate?**

I became a self-advocate because  
I wanted to learn about my own rights.

I was treated badly in [institutions](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844).

I wanted to make sure other people are not treated badlly.

**How are people with**[**intellectual disabilities**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#IntellectualDisability)**treated in Romania?**

People with intellectual disabilities  
are often treated badly in Romania.

People with intellectual disabilities are starting to  
learn more about their rights in Romania.

But they still face **discrimination** **(definition page 15)** by many people.

**What have you learned and achieved when working at**[**EPSA**](http://self-advocacy.eu/?page_id=18)**?**

I have learned a lot.

For example, how to talk with others and speak in public.

I have learned about topics such as violence against women.

I have learned what [**discrimination**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#Discrimination) looks like.

**Who came up with the idea of writing Becoming Eli?**

Many people wanted me to make my story public.

My friend turned my story into a book with pictures.

I found it hard to share what happened to me.

But I want people to know about life in [**institutions**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#SeparateInstitutions) **(definition page 19)**.

I hope that parents will not leave their children in institutions any more.

I hope that people who live in institutions can get out of there  
and have a chance for a better life.

**How long did it take you to tell your story?**

It took 2 years to write the book.

I met my friend who drew the pictures  
once every month in a coffee shop.

We worked on 1 story at a time,  
and then put all the stories together.

**How did it feel to hold the book in your hands for the first time?**

I was happy and felt proud.

**What changes would you like to see in Europe?**

I would like people with intellectual disabilities  
to be able to [**live** **independently**](http://inclusion-europe.eu/?page_id=2844#IndependentLiving) **(definition page 19)**.

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

You can find out more about the book **Becoming Eli** and where to buy it here: <http://bit.ly/BecomingEli>

## Interview with Aimée Richardson

Aimée Richardson is from Ireland,  
and has done a lot of great things.

She plays 6 instruments and  
has done the voice for a famous Irish cartoon.

She is part of a group in a talent show on TV.

Her work shows what people with **intellectual disabilities  
(definition page 20)**can do when they are fully included.

## We asked Aimée about her work,

and what needs to change so more  
people with disabilities can do work like her.

**What instruments do you play?**

I play lots of instruments, including

* the harp,
* the ukulele,
* and the flute.

I also play some traditional Irish instruments, such as:

* the tin whistle
* the low whistle
* and the bodhrán, which is a sort of drum.

**What do you like about your instruments?**

I love all of them for their different sounds.

The harp is beautiful.

It is hard to play but I want to learn.

I find the tin whistle is the easiest to play.

I love it.

It is small, so it can be played anywhere.

It has a strong sound.

It gets people dancing.

**You did the voice for the TV series Punky.**

**Punky is the first cartoon with a main character who has   
Down’s Syndrome.**

**What was it like when Punky got so famous in Ireland?**

It was great!

I did a lot of interviews for the radio, TV, and newspapers.

I went on a Saturday night TV show twice.

People knew who I was in public!

**You are studying acting at college.**

**You are doing a course for young adults with learning disabilities.**

Yes, I am in my 2nd year.

I love it!

**What do you learn at the drama college?**

I learn many different things.

For example,

* how to warm up my voice,
* perform long speeches,
* and dance.

We also study old theatre.

**What do you think needs to change so more**  
**people with intellectual disabilities can be actors?**

First, there needs to be more support  
for people with intellectual disabilities to study acting.

Teachers need more training  
to know how to work with people with intellectual disabilities.

More film roles need to be made for people with disabilities.

More people with disabilities should get roles.

People with disabilities have lots of talents!

This was just part of the interview.

You can read the full interview here: <http://bit.ly/AimeeETR>

Timeline

This year, **Inclusion Europe** **(definition page 18)**celebrates its 30th birthday!

Our organization was set up in the year 1988.

**Self-advocacy** **(definition page 21)** has been important   
for Inclusion Europe for a long time.

Here you can find a timeline with some important events:

**1997**:

First European meeting of Self-advocates organized by Inclusion Europe.

**2003:**

First Conference organised by the **European Platform of Self-Advocates** **(EPSA, definition page 17)**

on "Empowerment. Together against discrimination!".

**2011:**

Second conference of EPSA with the title "Hear our voices".   
This has been the title of the self-advocacy conferences ever since.

**2012:**

"Europe for Us" is published for the first time.

**2017:**

"Hear our voices" is organized for the 5th time.

Self-advocate Harry Roche speaks at the  
**European Disability Parliament (definition page 16)**.

There is a record number of people with intellectual disabilities  
at the European Disability Parliament.

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.

**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 given.

The text needs to be clear to see.

For example, black writing on a white background is good.

It needs to 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.

You can read the European standards of easy-to-read information here: [www.easy-to-read.eu](http://www.easy-to-read.eu).

**Elections**

An election is when people can decide about who should speak for them and make choices for them.

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.

**European Disability Parliament**

The European Disability Parliament is a meeting of people with disabilities who live in Europe.

It takes place in Brussels in Belgium.

It has taken place 4 times so far.

Last time it happened in 2017.

**EPSA**

See **European Platform of Self-Advocates**

**European Parliament**

The European Parliament is a place where important decisions   
of the European Union are made.

For example: laws and budgets.

The Members of the European Parliament (in short, MEPs)   
make these decisions and represent 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 Platform of Self-Advocates**

The European Platform of Self-Advocates (for short, EPSA)   
is made up of groups of **self-advocates** from different countries in Europe.

EPSA has spoken for self-advocacy organisations in Europe   
since the year 2000.

EPSA meets at least once every year.

**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.  
The EU makes laws on many important things for the people   
who live in these 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.

**Global Self-advocacy summit**

The Global Self-Advocacy Summit is a big meeting  
for self-advocates from all around the world.

The meeting will take place on 31st May.  
It will take place as part of the Inclusion International **World Congress**.

The Inclusion International World Congress will be in Birmingham   
in the United Kingdom.

**Independent living**

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

They also can:

* Choose with whom and where to live.
* Decide how they want to spend their time.
* Have the same experiences as all other people.

**Inclusion Europe**

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

We fight for their equal rights and inclusion in Europe.  
We also want to make a difference to policies in Europe.  
We started in 1988.  
We have 71 members in 38 European countries.  
We are based in Brussels in Belgium.

**Inclusion International**

Inclusion International is an organisation for  
people with **intellectual disabilities (definition page )** 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 UK.

**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.

**Institutions**

Institutions are places where people with **intellectual disabilities (definition page )** 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.

The people who live in institutions must follow the rules of the institution and cannot decide for themselves.

**Intellectual disability**

Intellectual disability means being less able than others to understand information and to use new skills.

This makes it more difficult to manage some parts of life.

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 (definition page )**language.

**Legal capacity**

Legal capacity means that people with intellectual disabilities can do things on their own.

This is what they can do:

* Make choices about their lives.
* Get married, start a family and raise children.
* Sign contracts (also working contracts).
* Have a bank account.
* Control their money and property.
* Make decisions about their health.
* Take part in politics and have the right to vote.

**Manifesto**

A manifesto is a text that explains the goals of a person or an organisation.

It is often made before an **election (definition page )**  
by a person or organisation that wants to be elected.

Everyone can read it.

**Self-advocacy**

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

**World Congress**

This year, the World Congress of **Inclusion International** **(definition page )**will take place in Europe.

The World Congress will be a big event for **self-advocates (definition page )**, their families  
and for people who work with people with **intellectual disabilities (definition page )**.

The title of the event is Learn, Inspire, Lead.

It will happen in Birmingham in England,  
from Wednesday 30 May to Friday 1 June.

Summary

You have read a lot of important things today.

Maybe you would like to let others know about them.

Tell your friends what you read:

Contact us, and share your self-advocacy stories!

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