



Equality and Non-Discrimination

Submission to the UN
Committee on the Convention
on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities: Key Issues for a
General Comment on Article 5



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@InclusionEurope

Rue d'Arlon 55
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium
Telephone: +32-2-502 28 15
secretariat@inclusion-europe.org
www.inclusion-europe.org



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Inclusion Europe is the association of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in Europe. We have **74 members in 39 countries**, and we represent more than 7 million people in Europe. Our members include organisations of people with intellectual disabilities and their families at national, regional and local level.

We fight for the recognition of equal rights and full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in all aspects of life. As a European association, we work in many different areas which our members have identified as important to them.

1.

Introduction

Inclusion Europe very much welcomes that the UN CRPD Committee is working on publishing a General Comment on Article 5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter UN CRPD, or Convention). **Equality and non-discrimination is a principle that has to be applied in all aspects of life through the rights enshrined in the CRPD.** The respect of this principle will ensure the full enjoyment of rights on an equal basis with others.

In European countries, **people with intellectual disabilities are particularly discriminated against because of the stereotypes attached to intellectual impairment.** These stereotypes result in discriminatory practices preventing people with intellectual disabilities from enjoying their rights on an equal basis with other in many life aspects such as education, legal capacity, employment, social protection, health, political life, family life, affective life.

The lack of knowledge by people with intellectual disabilities of their rights, of discrimination and how to lodge a complaint result in an underreporting of cases of discrimination affecting them. Inclusion Europe is especially concerned with the **discrimination faced by people with complex support needs, children and women with intellectual disabilities.** They very often face multi-discrimination or intersectional discrimination.

Family members of people with intellectual disabilities are also strongly discriminated against. They face a lack of support from the States. Families often have to compensate for the lack of inclusive support in the community provided by the States.

The lack of accessibility is another obstacle that seriously impairs their participation in society. There is a lack of accessible information in easy-to-read and to understand as well as improved and alternative communication. **Without general participation, there are no equal opportunities.**

2. Barriers

Inclusion Europe has identified the following barriers preventing persons with intellectual disabilities and their families to live with equal opportunities without discrimination:

- In many countries, people with intellectual disabilities remain the last group of people denied legal capacity (together with people with mental health problems).
- In many countries, people with intellectual disabilities are denied the right to vote and to stand for office in elections, as a result of them being denied legal capacity. Without voting, they will not be properly heard by politicians making decisions about their lives and the future of their country.
- People with intellectual disabilities experience discrimination in access to health services, leading to a worse health status and higher mortality than in the non-disabled population.
- Most of public bodies or private companies make no effort to make information, products or services accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.
- Family members of people with intellectual disabilities are too often expected to be the sole providers of support, leaving them isolated, exhausted and unable to fulfil and enjoy other family roles (being a mother or father, brother or sister...).
- People with intellectual disabilities and their family members often live in poverty.
- People with intellectual disabilities and their family members face difficulties in finding employment or being paid adequate wages for the work they do.
- Too many children and adults with intellectual disabilities can't attend mainstream schools because of discrimination, resulting in a lifetime of segregation.
- Too many people with intellectual disabilities are segregated in institutions; efforts on deinstitutionalization often overlook people with complex support needs.
- Children and adults with complex support needs are discriminated in access to full participation in all areas of society.
- People in the society do not have enough understanding of intellectual disability, resulting in stereotypes, prejudice and social isolation both for people with intellectual disabilities and their family members.

- Many countries do not recognise self-advocacy as essential, do not provide resources and support to its development.

Inclusion Europe has based its strategy and actions on these barriers faced by people with intellectual disabilities and their families. We really wish to see all these issues addressed in the future General Comment.