# http://inclusion-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ETR-150x150.jpg**Click on a word which is in bold to read what it means,**

# **or have a look at the end of the text.**

# What are the European elections?

In May 2019, there will be the European elections.

In the European elections
we vote for
the Members of the [**European Parliament**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EP).
We call them MEPs for short.

**Why are the European elections
important?**

The European elections are very important
for people with [**intellectual disabilities**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability)
and their families.

MEPs make decisions about things like:

* Accessibility:
for example, they decide about how [**accessible**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Accessible)
companies must be
* Where [**EU**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) money goes to.
For example, so it doesn’t go to [**institutions**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#SeparateInstitutions).

****The [**European Union**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU)
has signed the [**UN CRPD**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#UNCRPD).

In the CRPD there are rules.

If the European Union follows these rules
it will become a better place
for people with disabilities.

[**MEPs**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#MEPs) check how many things the
European Union has already done.

There are also a lot of other things
that MEPs decide upon.

For example, how we protect our environment.
Or the rights of workers.

So it is very important
who will become an MEP.

**Why is it important to vote?**

When you go [**voting**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Vote),
you can have a say
on who will become an MEP.

You can vote for an MEP
who speaks up for the things
that are important to you.

**Everyone should be able to vote!**

Often, people with intellectual disabilities
and their family members
don’t go voting.

There are many reasons for this:

* Some people with intellectual disabilities
are not allowed to vote.
This is wrong and must be changed.
* Some people do not vote
because they do not have
[**easy-to-read**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#ETR) information
about the [**elections**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Election).
* Some people do not vote
because nobody helps them
to decide who to vote for.
* Some family members
of people with intellectual disabilities
have no time to go voting.
They are too busy with their care work.

**These things can be changed.**

To make things better
we need everyone to vote
in the [**European elections**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EUelections).

**Why is the European Union
important?**

The [**European Union**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) is important for many things.

For example, so we can live in peace.

Before the European Union was founded,
there were a lot of wars in Europe.

Now we don’t have wars anymore.

The European Union makes laws.

Every member state of the European Union
must follow these laws.

The European Union also makes laws
that can help people with disabilities.

For example, the [**European Accessibility Act**](https://inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Accessibility%20Act).

The European Union also gives money
so life can become better
for everyone.

**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**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#ETR).
* Information in sign language.

**Accessibility Act**

The Accessibility Act is a law
made by the [**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU).

Every country in the European Union
must respect the Accessibility Act.

The Accessibility Act says what companies need to do
to make their products and services more [**accessible**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Accessible).

For example:

* smartphones,
* computers,
* e-books,
* ticketing machines
* travels by bus or train.

The Accessibility Act is good for people with disabilities
and also for older people.

It is good because it makes things more accessible
to them.

It is also good for people with disabilities looking for a job.

It can get them a job in testing products and services
to say if they are accessible.

The Accessibility Act is also good for companies.

They do not need to follow different laws in different countries anymore.

Now there is one law for the entire European Union.

This makes things easier for companies.

**Easy-to-read**

Easy to read is information that is written in a simple way
so that people with [**intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability) 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.
You can read the European standards of easy-to-read information [here](http://easy-to-read.eu/).

 **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.

 **European Elections**

The European elections
are the elections to the [**European Parliament**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EP).

When you vote at the European elections,
you can have a say on who the new [**MEPs**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#MEPs) will be.

The MEPs speak for
all the people who live in the [**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU).

The European elections take place every 5 years.
The next European elections will be
from 23-26 May 2019.

 **European Parliament**The European Parliament is a place where important decisions
of the [**European Union**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EU) 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.

**EU**
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.

For example, the [**Accessibility Act**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Accessibility%20Act).

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.

**Institutions**
Institutions are places where people with [**intellectual disabilities**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#IntellectualDisability) 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**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/%26language%3Dfr#ETR)language.

Some people say learning disabilities instead of intellectual disabilities.

**MEPs**The members of the [**European Parliament**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EP)
are the [**politicians**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Politician) who sit
in the European Parliament.
We call them MEPs for short.

 **UN CRPD**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**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#Politician) 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**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#EUelections),
when you choose the new
Members of the European Parliament ([**MEPs**](https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-term/#MEPs)).