



Europe for us

This time we are
voting!



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us (pages 27 to 38).

“Europe for us” is available in:

- English
- French
- German
- Italian
- Hungarian
- Portuguese
- Romanian
- Spanish

Go to www.inclusion-europe.eu/europe-for-us to find the other language versions.

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And it is important for us to vote!"**
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Introduction



The **European elections** will be in May 2019.

The elections are a very important topic for **Inclusion Europe**.

This year Inclusion Europe will talk about how to make voting **accessible** for people with **intellectual disabilities**.

We will also talk about why it is important to **vote**.

In this issue of Europe for Us, you can find many articles about

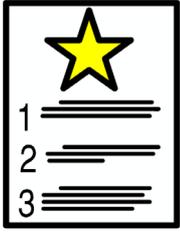
- the European elections
- voting rights
- accessibility for elections.

If you want to know more, have a look at our website!

We recently launched a new website.

It has a lot of information in easy-to-read (in English).

This is the address: www.inclusion-europe.eu



You can find Inclusion Europe's elections **manifesto** in **easy-to-read** here (in English): bit.ly/IEelect

You can also read it in

- Czech
- Dutch
- Finnish
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Slovene
- Spanish
- Swedish

here: bit.ly/IEelectLanguages

You can also read about what we do for the European elections on **social media**.

This is our **hashtag**: #ThisTimeWeAreVoting

You can also watch two videos we did (in English):

- on the right to vote: bit.ly/LetUsVoteVideo
- why voting is important: bit.ly/ThisTimeWeAreVoting

We hope you like this issue of "Europe for Us"!

"We are all able to vote. And it is important for us to vote!"



Inclusion Europe had an event at the **European Parliament**.

During this event, we spoke about the **European elections** and **accessibility** for people with **intellectual disabilities**.

The Belgian **self-advocate** Jean Molynas talked about his opinion on the topic.

"It is not fair that people with intellectual disabilities cannot vote.

If **politicians** want to be elected, they should make sure that everyone can understand what they say."

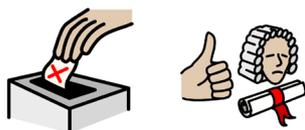


We also talked about a document that was published by the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights**.

This document talks about the right to vote for people under **guardianship** in the countries of the **European Union**.

Sylvie Guillaume is a vice-president of the **European Parliament**.

Sylvie Guillaume said that the **European Commission** should do more things to make sure that people with intellectual disabilities can have full voting rights.



We also talked about getting elected.

Self-advocate Jean Molynas said that next year he wants to be a candidate at the local elections.

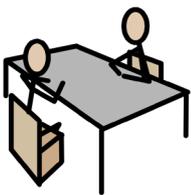
André Burger said that parents of people with intellectual disabilities should try to be elected, because they also know what needs to be changed.

Our Voting Champions

Every month we talk with one of our “**Voting** champions”.

Voting champions are people who talk about the right to vote.

They also want **governments** to make voting **accessible** for people with **intellectual disabilities**.



Read here interviews with two voting champions: László Bercse and Andreas Zehetner.



“It is important that we are all represented in the European Parliament”

Andreas Zehetner is a member of the steering group of the **European Platform of Self-Advocates**.



He is a **self-advocate** at **Inclusion Europe**'s member Lebenshilfe Austria.

Andreas talks to people about **accessibility** in many areas of life.

He has been doing this for a long time.



In Austria people under **guardianship** have the right to vote since 1988.

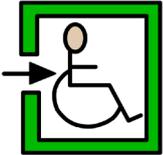


“The Disability Equality Act” talks about having information in **easy-to-read**.

What needs to be done to make voting more accessible in Austria?

Some things still need to change.

For example:



- voting stations need to be more accessible for people who cannot climb stairs
- information about voting needs to be in easy-to-read.

What do you say to people with an intellectual disability to make them go to vote?

In Austria the European elections will be on 26 May 2019.

I talk about the elections to people with intellectual disabilities who I know:

- the people I live with
- my colleagues
- other self-advocates

We talk about why voting is important.

You went to a conference discussion called “Voting and Political Participation for People with Learning Disabilities.” What did you talk about there?



For me voting means that I have a say about things that are important for my life.

Voting rights are also part of the **European Disability Strategy**.

At the conference, we talked about this strategy.

These are the important things:

- Be there.

This means having accessible rooms and support for people with disabilities.

- Be informed.

Information must be in easy-to-read and translated in other languages. For example, sign language.

- Say your opinion.

This means I should be able to say what I think in discussions and meetings. Or as an expert on intellectual disability.

- Vote.

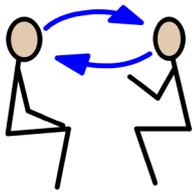
Every adult should have the right to vote in all **elections**.

- Decide.

This means that when we vote we decide who makes the rules.



At the end of the conference we talked about this question:



“What do you need to be able to have a say?”

As a self-advocate, it is important that you can listen to others.

It is also important that you can speak up and say what you think.

You also need people and organisations to work with.

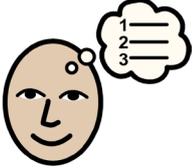
In May there will be the European elections. Why is it important for you to vote?

There are 7 million people with intellectual disabilities in Europe.

It is important that we are represented in the **European Parliament**.

In December 2017 some **self-advocates** visited the European Parliament.

They wanted to make sure that we get the European Disability Strategy.



Now we have the European Disability Strategy.

And we must make sure now that it is used in the countries in the **European Union**.



“For me it is very important to vote at the European elections”

László Bercse is a member of **Inclusion Europe** and of **EPSA**.

László works with our Hungarian member ÉFOÉSZ.

He wants **accessible elections** for people with **intellectual disabilities**.

We asked László some questions.

**You have the right to vote.
But you know many people who cannot vote.
Can you tell me more about it?**



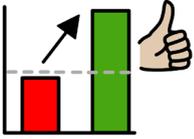
In Hungary, when you are under **guardianship** a judge can take away your right to vote.

I know many people under guardianship who do not have the right to vote.

I know self-advocates who are sad because they cannot vote.

One self-advocate said that he feels like he is less important than other people, because he cannot vote.

Another self-advocate said that he really wants to vote because his vote can make a difference for people with intellectual disabilities.

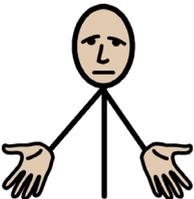


When you go to vote, what are the things that work well?

When we have elections in Hungary, we can ask to the **government** to send us an **easy-to-read** letter on how to vote.

This is a good thing.

When you go to vote, what are the problems that you find?



We need easy-to-read information on the different **political parties**.

With easy-to-read information people with intellectual disabilities can decide who they want to vote for.

We also need easy-to-read voting papers.

ÉFOÉSZ wrote an easy-to-read document about European elections.

What does this document talk about?



I think it is a very good document!

It explains many things in easy-to-read:

- What is the **European Parliament**?
- Why are the **European elections** important?
- How can you vote?
- How can **politicians** help us if they get elected?

We want all people with intellectual disabilities to be able to vote.

We want to be supported when we go to vote.

With our **self-advocacy** group we talk a lot about the right to vote for people with intellectual disabilities.



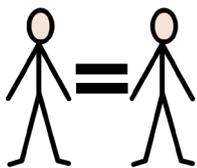
ÉFOÉSZ is doing a campaign on the right to vote for people with intellectual disabilities.

Why are you doing it?

What do you do for this campaign?

We started the campaign at the end of 2018.

With this campaign we want to ask politicians to give the right to vote to people with intellectual disabilities.



We want to tell other people that people with intellectual disabilities are like everyone else.

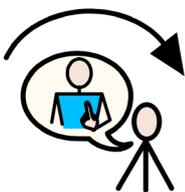
And they should have the right to vote.

We use social media to talk about this topic.

We organise conferences on the right to vote and we talk to politicians about it.

We talk to the media and we organise events and trainings for self-advocates.

Why is it important for you to vote at the European elections?



For me it is important to vote at the European elections because I care about who represents me in the European Parliament.



I want the European Parliament to make decisions which are good for me and for other people with disabilities.



“It is very bad that many people do not have the right to vote”

We interviewed Sylvie Guillaume.

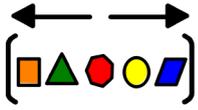
Sylvie Guillaume is a vice-president of the European Parliament.

We asked her about her work at the **European Parliament**.

We also asked her about what the European Parliament is doing to become more accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.

Here are Sylvie Guillaume’s answers:

How does a normal day look like for you?



I do many different things.

I travel a lot for my job.

The European Parliament works at 2 places:

In Brussels, Belgium.

And in Strasbourg, France.

So I am often in Brussels and Strasbourg.

I also travel home to my region to talk to the people who live there.



When I am in Brussels I have a lot of meetings. I meet different people.

This helps me make good decisions.

Why is the European Parliament important for the people living in the European Union?



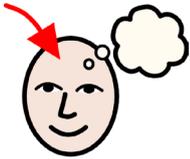
The Members of the European Parliament speak for the people who live in Europe.

The European Parliament protects the rights of these people.

Here are some examples of the things we do:

- we voted for a law that gives free assistance to people with a disability who travel
- we voted for the **European Accessibility Act** that makes things more **accessible** for people with disabilities.

**We did an event in the European Parliament
on the European elections.
You decided to host our event.
Why?**



I think the event is very important.

We learned about how to make elections accessible for people with **intellectual disabilities**.

I wanted my colleagues to know about that.

It is very bad that many people do not have the right to vote.

This is an important right, and all people should have it.

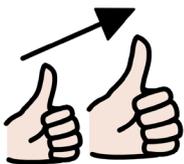
**What does the European Parliament do
to be more accessible
to people with intellectual disabilities?**

There is a law on the accessibility of websites.
We followed this law.



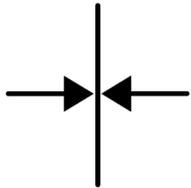
Now it is easier to find information on the website of the European Parliament.

We also added subtitles to videos.
This makes videos easier to understand.
But we still need to do more to make information accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.



I have asked the people who work on this to make more improvements.

People under guardianship in Germany will be allowed to vote



Judges in Germany have finally said that taking away voting rights from people under **guardianship** is against the law.

In Germany, more than 85.000 people were not able to **vote**.

Now Germany has to change the law.

People will be able to vote at the **European elections** in May.



This is a great victory for our German member Lebenshilfe.

Lebenshilfe pushed to change the law.

Inclusion Europe's president Jyrki Pinomaa said that Germany is a great example for other countries in Europe. Things are finally getting better for people under guardianship in Europe.

But even in countries where people under **guardianship** have full voting rights elections are often not **accessible**.



This is a problem, and it must be changed.



There are positive examples.

For example:

- In Sweden, **politicians** got trained in easy language. Then the politicians met people with **intellectual disabilities**.
- Afterwards, in Sweden they added the logos of the **parties** to the voting paper. This helps people understand who they want to vote for.
- In Scotland, politicians also met with people with intellectual disabilities.

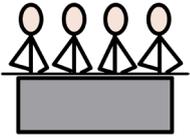


Self-advocate Maribel Cáceres got back her right to **vote**.

Maribel says:

“Everyone has the right to vote. We should not be **discriminated** against because we are disabled.”

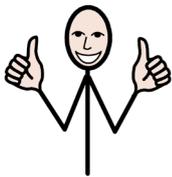
Director's meeting in Hungary



The directors of all the member organisations of **Inclusion Europe** have met in Budapest.

They talked about these topics:

European elections in May 2019

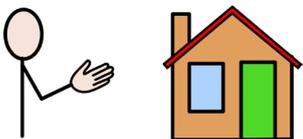


Inclusion Europe's members are already doing many things for the European elections in their countries.

The **European Parliament** is also doing a lot to encourage people to vote.

Some people from the European Parliament came to our meeting and they told us about it.

People who help people with disabilities



Some people with disabilities have people who come to their house and help them with different things.

For example, cooking and cleaning.

The **European Union** gives money to cities and towns to pay these people.



More and more cities and towns use the cheapest person.

But this doesn't always mean that the person does a good job.

This needs to change.

Work for people with intellectual disabilities

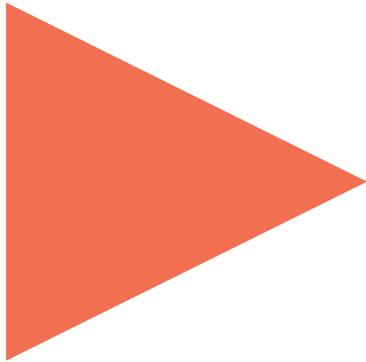


Our Danish member LEV told us about a project they do.

With this project they found work for many people with **intellectual disabilities**.

A big thank you to everyone who came and to our Hungarian member ÉFOÉSZ who hosted us!

5 new videos



Inclusion Europe has published many new videos!

The videos are all in English.

One video is about how Inclusion Europe supports **self-advocacy**.



You can watch it here:
bit.ly/SelfAdvocacyVideo

Another video is called “My inclusion story”.

In the video, self-advocates talk about what inclusion means to them.



You can watch the video here:
bit.ly/MyInclusionStory

Another video is called “Let us **vote**”.

In the video, self-advocates explain why everyone should have the right to vote.



You can watch the video here:
bit.ly/LetUsVoteVideo

Another video is called “This time we are voting”.

For the video, we asked self-advocates:

“Why is voting important to you?”

You can see their answers in the video:



bit.ly/ThisTimeWeAreVoting

The last video is about the **United Nations**.

The video explains what the United Nations is and why it is important.

You can watch the video here:



bit.ly/VideoUnitedNations

Register now for Europe in Action!



Every year for 3 days,
self-advocates, support persons, family members and
professionals
meet in a city in Europe.

They meet for a conference called “Europe in Action”.

In 2019, Europe in Action will take place
from 5-7 June in Vilnius in Lithuania.

We will talk about making decisions
and **living independently**.

Register here: www.europeinaction.org/register

EPSA organises a bi-annual conference for self-advocates called "Hear our Voices".

At this conference, people with an **intellectual disability** come together to talk about and share ideas and experiences about intellectual disability.

In 2019, Hear our voices will take place from 18-20 September in Graz, Austria.

Please put this date in your calendar.

Hear our voices!

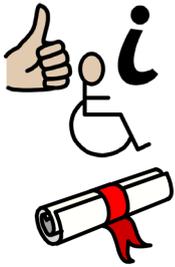
Explanations



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



Accessibility Act

The Accessibility Act is a law
made by the **European Union**.

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**.

For example:

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

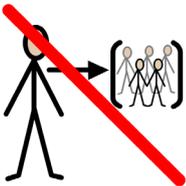


Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union is where the national ministers from the countries of the **European Union** meet.

They meet to adopt laws and talk about politics in the European Union.

The Council of the European Union is also called Council of Ministers.



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 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.



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.

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**.

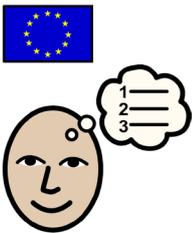


European Commission

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 Disability Strategy

The European Disability Strategy is an important text.

It says what the **European Union** has to do to make sure people with disabilities in Europe get the same rights as everyone else.



European elections

The European elections are the elections to the **European Parliament**.

When you vote at the European elections, you can have a say on who the new **MEPs** will be.

The MEPs speak for all the people who live in the **European Union**.

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** 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.

For example, the **Accessibility Act**.

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 Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is an organisation working for the **European Union**.

We call it FRA for short.

FRA makes sure that the rights of all people living in the European Union are respected.



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.



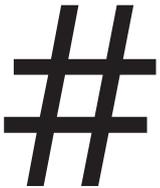
Guardianship

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.



Hashtag

On **social media** you can use the symbol #. This symbol is called hashtag.

You can write a word after the hashtag symbol.

If you click on that word, you will be taken to all the messages that have to do with that word.

For example:

- If you write #inclusion and you click on it, you will be taken to all the messages that have to do with inclusion.
- If you write #EuropeanUnion and you click on it, you will be taken to all the messages that have to do with the **European Union**.
- If you write #HearOurVoices and you click on it, you will be taken to all the messages that have to do with **Hear Our Voices**.

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 75 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.



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.

Intellectual disabilities

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.



Manifesto

A manifesto is a text that explains the goals of a person or an organisation. It is often made before an election by a person or organisation that wants to be elected.

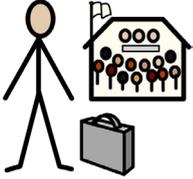
Some manifestos are also done by organisations to tell the candidates for the elections about what they think is important.

Everyone can read a manifesto.



Political party

A political party is a group of people who think the country should be run in a certain way.



Politician

Someone helps run the country or part of the country. Or someone who would like to do this.

Politicians, for example, are

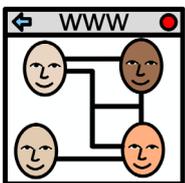
- mayors
- ministers
- candidates in the **elections**



Self-advocacy

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

These people are called self-advocates.



Social Media

Social media is made up of websites and apps that let you create and share content.

For example, photos, videos and information.

Apps is short for applications.

These are tools that let you use social media on a mobile phone or tablet.



United Nations

The United Nations is an international organisation.

It works for peace and security everywhere in the world.

We call it the UN for short.

The UN is based in different places.

For example, it is in New York, in the United States of America, and in Geneva, in Switzerland.



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**).



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



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