Europe for us

Covid-19 report: impact on people with disabilities and families

Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe For Us on pages 33 to 45.

"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.

Contents

Editor's note

Hello everyone

Just wanted to wish everyone a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In this Europe for us newsletter you will find out different articles written in easy to read.

Hope 2021 is better than 2020 was.

Again from the easy to read editor
Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Speach of László Bercse during the European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2020.

László Bercse is the Chair of the **European Platform of Self-Advocates** and the Vice-President of **Inclusion Europe.**

László is also the Co-Chair of the Hungarian organisation **ÉFOÉSZ.**
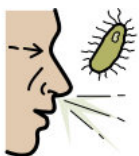
During the Corona crisis, persons with intellectual disabilities had to adapt, like everybody else.

Our families had to adapt.

Our service providers had to adapt.

You really have to admire the people with intellectual disabilities, the family members supporting them, the staff in-services.

As a **self-advocate**, I was able to do a lot of tasks.

I was in contact with other self-advocates across Europe.

This was different for many people with
intellectual disabilities in Europe.
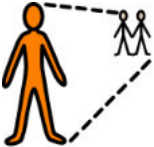
Many thousands have faced complete isolation,
especially those **segregated** in residential care **institutions.**

The pandemic means losing our support networks.

Not being able to see our family and friends.

Not being able to go to work.

In some countries, people were left without support.

Students with intellectual disabilities were left out of
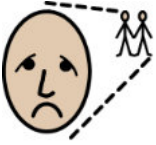school, online classes were not accessible to them.

It was hard to stay connected and working.

Online meetings or calls are not for all people.

Sometimes, we do not have computers
or phones to do it.

Sometimes, we do not have internet connections.

Many people with intellectual disabilities
have lost their jobs.

Many of us feel that we were left out.

Our needs were often not considered
when preparing the measures and solutions.

Information was mostly not accessible to us,
provided only in difficult language.

We often could not understand what was going on.

What do we need to do and why?

Many people with intellectual disabilities were denied
proper health care when sick with Covid.

Many people with intellectual disabilities died
from the Coronavirus.

In England, they died at 3 times higher rate
than the general population.

How is it in other countries?
Especially where there are a lot of people
in residential care institutions?

We don't know,
because other countries do not report this information!

It is important to understand that the bad things
happening during the pandemic are not new to us.

The pandemic made existing problems,
discrimination and **segregation** worse**.**

It made this easier to see – I hope also for the
governments.

What needs to be done now?

Governments must learn from these experiences.

They must listen to us when preparing the measures.

Our lives have the same value as everyone else's.

Governments and the **European Union** must investigate
properly the things that happened to people with
intellectual disabilities.

How many died?
How many died because they did not receive proper medical care?

Governments must provide
easy-to-understand information.

Some have been doing that,
others can learn from their example.

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.

The money must go into
community-based services.

People with intellectual disabilities must be able to move out of the segregated residential care institutions.

Speech by Commissioner Helena Dalli on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities European Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli said:
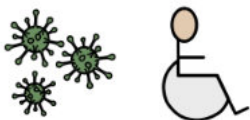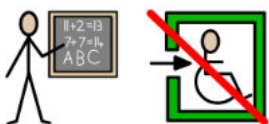
This year, we mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at hard times with Coronavirus.

While the pandemic has affected us all, people with disabilities were affected even harder.

Also, those living in **institutions**.

Community services and access to **healthcare** were harder to organize.

Online schooling and working from home were not always accessible to all.

COVID-19 has bought a lot of barriers that
people with intellectual disabilities are facing.

We must remove these barriers.

The **European Union** is promoting
the **rights of people with disabilities**
but there is still a long way to go.

At the beginning of 2021,
The **European Commission** will present the new
**European Strategy on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities.**
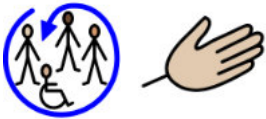
The European Commission will
shape inclusive societies
and they will do their
best to continue to help.

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020
has done a lot of good work but there is still
a long way to go.

Ending violence against women and girls with disabilities

Even before COVID-19, women and girls experienced violence.

Women and girls with disabilities make 16% of the total population of women in the European Union and 60% of the overall population of 100 million persons with disabilities.

Data show that women with disabilities are 2 to 5 times more likely to experience violence than other women and girls.

In the European Union, 34% of women with a health problem or a disability have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime.

Women and girls with disabilities receive limited support due to lack of awareness, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation.

Several policies of the **European Commission** have the potential to end violence against women and girls with disabilities.

Policies like the Gender Equality **Strategy** and Strategy for Victims' Rights adopted earlier this year, and the **European Disability Strategy** to be adopted in 2021.

Read the Life after Violence report in easy-to-read.

Effect of Covid-19 on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families

Inclusion Europe published a report about how Covid-19 affected the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Read the [Covid-19 report](#).

Inclusion Europe wants people to know what happened to people with **intellectual disabilities** and their families during the Covid-19 crisis.

The report shows people with intellectual disabilities were **segregated** and **discriminated** against once more.

Numbers

Numbers are important to see how Covid-19
changed the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities.

For example, to know how many people
died in institutions or hospitals.

The **European Union** and countries
need to investigate.

Health
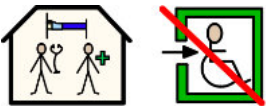
The Covid-19 pandemic showed that accessibility
of health and emergency services is bad.

Accessing treatment in hospitals was not sure
for persons with intellectual disabilities sick.

Sometimes, the medical personnel did not know
how to behave with people with intellectual disabilities.

People working in **institutions** did not have enough
protections (masks, gloves).

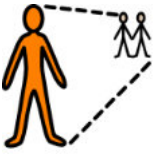# Institutions

Persons with intellectual disabilities
were isolated from their families and friends for months.

They were at high risk of infection.

It is proof that institutionalization is harmful
and is a violation of European values and **human rights**.

Support services
and the role of families

Because of lockdown, daycare centre
and support services closed.

Many persons with intellectual disabilities
got no support.

This had a big impact on families
having to take care.

This led to panic and worry for everyone.

Some countries supported to families.

Several countries are letting parents take paid
leave so that they can stay home
and look after their children.

Education

Schools had to close and be online.

People with intellectual disabilities were left behind,
because they did not have support,
or the material was not accessible.

When schools reopened,
some did not allow
children with intellectual disabilities.

Many families were afraid.

Access to information and consultations

Information was not in **easy-to-read.**

Some people did not understand the situation.

Disability organisations talked to governments
to tell them to consult people with intellectual disabilities.
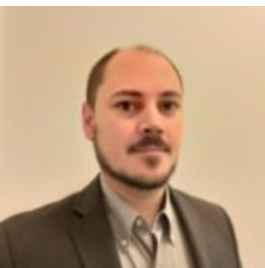
Employment

Because of Covid-19, many people lost their jobs.

The situation was very uncertain.

People with disabilities are afraid to lose their jobs.

EU instruments to foster employment of people with intellectual disabilities

Tim Ghillan works at the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities.

Tim talked about **employment** of people with **intellectual disabilities**.

People with intellectual disabilities have the right to have a job like everyone else.

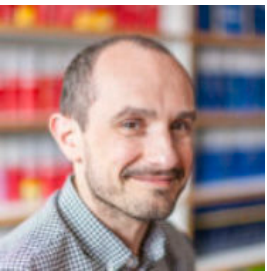People with intellectual disabilities also have the right to get help from their community.

But Tim said that there are barriers that stop people with intellectual disabilities from finding a job.

He presented two important documents that can be used to encourage employment of people with intellectual disabilities:

- The European Disability Strategy

- The European Pilar of Social Rights

Tim said we need to make education, housing and transports more **accessible** to encourage employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

Mark Bell is Head of the
School of Law of Trinity College Dublin.

Mark talked about reasonable accommodation.
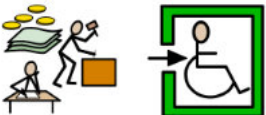
He said that employment needs to be made accessible for all people with intellectual disabilities.

Mark gave some examples of reasonable accommodation:

- Employers can provide information in easy to read format

- Employers can provide support to employees with intellectual disabilities

- Employers can adapt the tasks of the job to make

sure employees with intellectual disabilities can do the job.

Anouk Van Hoofstadt works at the Antwerp Management School in Belgium.

Anouk talked about employment of people with intellectual disabilities in the regular economy.

Anouk introduced Thibeau who works with her.

Thibeau has an intellectual disability.

Thibeau works at the Antwerp Management School.

Thibeau has made a great impact on the team that he works with.

"We help people with disabilities to live a normal life" – Online meeting with Rytmus

Rytmus is an organisation that supports **employment** of people with disabilities in Czechia.

In 2019, Rytmus helped 40 people with disabilities to find a job.

How does Rytmus support job seekers with disabilities?

Rytmus organises meetings with people with disabilities where they can share their job preferences.

Rytmus helps people with disabilities creating their CV and answering job offers.

Rytmus uses social media to make first contacts with companies and to publish short articles presenting job seekers profiles and preferences.

Martin Lubojacký said that companies are afraid to employ people with disabilities.

Rytmus meets with companies to learn more about their business and hiring practices.

Rytmus sets up meetings between companies and employees to personalise **working conditions**.
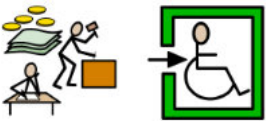
Jobs must meet preferences and needs of each employee with disability.

Rytmus implements "job shadowing".

Job seekers can work from 1 to 3 days in the company before starting their new position.

Job seekers can also meet self-advocates that are already working in the company.

Once employees start their new job, Rytmus supports and coaches them during their inclusion in the company.

How employment should be covered in the next EU Disability Strategy?

Soufiane El Amrani

"I have been working at
Inclusion Europe for a long time.

I am happy with my job.

But I know not all people with
intellectual disabilities have the
opportunity to have a job."

Soufiane El Amrani is the Easy-to-read and
Advocacy Officer at Inclusion Europe.
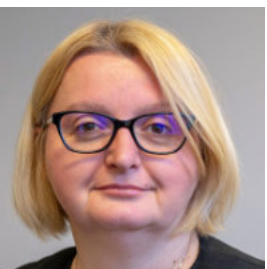
Katarina Ivanković-Knežević

Katarina Ivanković-Knežević works
at the Directorate-General for
Employment, Social Affairs and
Inclusion of the **European Commission.**

Katarina Ivanković-Knežević presented positive outcomes of the previous EU Disability Strategy:

- In 2018, 110 000 young people with disabilities were supported by the Youth Employment Initiative that help young people to have a job.

- In 2019, the European Commission published a guide presenting good practices of reasonable accommodations put in place by employers.

Katarina Ivanković-Knežević said that
a lot of work remains to be done
to make sure people with disabilities
can have a job.

She presented some priorities about employment for the 2020-2030 EU Disability Strategy:

- The labour market should be accessible for people with disabilities.

- Employment services should work with and for people with disabilities.

- All the Member states of the European Union should recognise the disability of a person the same way.

Haydn Hammersley

Haydn Hammersley works at the
European Disability Forum (EDF).

Haydn Hammersley presented some
ideas that EDF has about employment
for the 2020-2030 EU Disability Strategy.
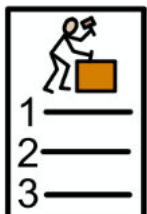
For example:

- Making sure the workplaces can adapt to the
  needs of each person with a disability.

- Making sure no people with disability who has a
  job is paid less than the minimum wage of their
  country.

Milan Brglez

Milan Brglez is
a **Member** of the **European Parliament.**

Milan Brglez explained that
people with disabilities are at greater risk
of poverty and social exclusion.

For Milan Brglez, every law should consider
the most vulnerable people of the society.

Milan Brglez explained that the
COVID-19 crisis impacted employees with disabilities.
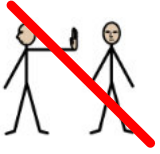
Milan Brglez said that the Member states of the EU
must increase their commitment to deal with the
discrimination in access to employment.

Supporting employment and inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market

KLAPjob is a project of **Lev**.

Lev is an association in Denmark.

Lev believes that people with
intellectual disabilities have the right
to decide where and how
they want to work.
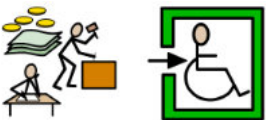
KLAPjob promotes **inclusion**
of people with intellectual disabilities
in the labour market.

KlAPjob works with many different companies.

KLAPjob helps companies prepare
for employing workers with disabilities.

KLAPjob helps job seekers
with intellectual disabilities to find a job.

Claus Hansen is the Head of KLAPjob.

Claus explained that KLAPjob employees
receive 495 Euro per month.

Claus also said that in Denmark
people with intellectual disabilities
receive disability pensions of 2.500 Euro per month.

Bjørn Burkal is a **self-advocate**
and KLAPjob ambassador.

Bjørn is finishing school.

He wants to be a graphic designer.

Bjørn found a job thanks to the help of KLAPjob.

Bjørn is very happy with his current job.

Bjørn works 16 hours a week
and earns a lot of money.

Bjørn said that "when you have a job,
you get a social life".

It is really important to have strong self-advocacy groups
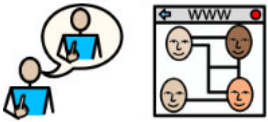
This year, because of the COVID-19 situation, training for self-advocates was done online.

By doing this we were able to reach more people.

We had 93 registrations for the events and 71 attendees.

The participants were self-advocates and professionals supporting them.

The aim of these online meetings was to collect some ideas on how people were affected by the COVID-19 situation on their ability to advocate for themselves and exercise rights.

We had online events in 7 languages and the participants were from 11 different European countries.

What have we learned that it's important?

- It is really important to have strong self-advocacy groups. When we have them, they can help to decide on good measures.

- It is also important to teach self-advocates on how to use mobile phones and the internet to stay in touch.

- Governments should involve persons with disabilities and their representative organisations when they think about measures to respond to events like the pandemic.

- It is easier to protect ourselves against the virus and to live an independent life if we have community-based services.

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.
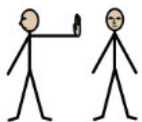
Discrimination

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 Pilar of Social Rights:

The European Pilar 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
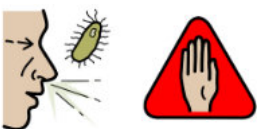often need support in learning or at work.

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,
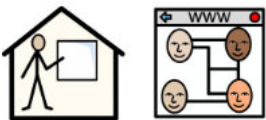the countries have lockdowns to
stop the spread of the virus.

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.

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.

inclusion europe

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

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