

# Europe for us!

The Newsletter of the European Self-Advocates Movement

Sept-Oct 2005

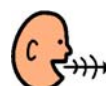


## Editorial

Self-advocacy is about taking decisions for yourself.  
Self-advocacy is also about expressing yourself.



“To express yourself” means “to say what you think”.  
To speak is one of the way to express yourself.  
But there are other ways.  
For example to draw, to do sport or to play theatre.



Expressing yourself is something really important for you life.  
You have the right to express yourself!

Ulla Topi, President of EPSA.

## The idea of « Impros-J'eux »

What are these « impro-j'eux » ?

It is a possibility to express yourself,  
to show what you are able to do.

It is a game (“jeu” in French)  
where people can show their abilities.

It is a show presented by persons with an intellectual  
or a physical disability.



There are actors: the persons with a disability.

There are training or rehearsal,  
generally once a week.

There are teams.

There are show, with an audience.



But mainly, people laugh!

There are music and dance.



There are lots of happy people  
because they can show  
what they are capable of!



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With support of the  
European  
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## How does it work?

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Every week, actors meet their team of “impros-j’ eux”.  
During 2 hours, everyone practices the “feat”  
that they have decided to do.



A feat can be lots of very different things.  
For example saying a poem out loud, dancing  
or playing a musical instrument.



But also simply making some coffee or making 10 “push-ups”.

The « Impros-j’ eux » are mixing lots of things:  
sport, culture, cooking, theatre...



When the actors make their feat, they show what they are capable of.

They choose something difficult for them,  
and they practice to do that properly, without mistakes.

They throw out a challenge to themselves.

They look for surpassing themselves, to make it better than before.

Then they present their feat to the others.

$$\begin{array}{r} 259 \\ \times 917 \\ \hline \end{array}$$


The team also has to practice together.

Actors prepare presentations together.

It can be team’s feat.

It can also be funny presentations,

Or small theatre play.

For example, to mime someone on the dentist seat  
whose tooth really hurt.



An « Impros-j’ eux » show is a meeting between 2 teams.

Actors show the feat that they have prepared.

They do their funny presentations and their theatre play.

But there are also “surprised game”!

These are games that the actors have not prepared.

We then say that actors are improvising, that they make “improvisations”.

From there comes the word « impro » in the name « Impros-j’ eux ».



Each team can also throw out a challenge to the other one.

The persons then have to work together

to succeed going past the difficulties of the challenge.

The audience is there to help the actors, not to make fun of them.

The audience participate by clapping their hands, dancing or singing.

They cheer on and congratulate the actors.

They also have to vote for the most original team.



There is also a “referee” who makes sure that everything is going on well. It is someone very funny, who moves a lot and who also cheers on the actors.



There is really great and joyful atmosphere at the “impros-j’eux”. People are having lots of fun during the “impros-j’eux” shows.



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## What are the aims of the « impros-j’eux » ?

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1. To realise that you are able
2. To show your abilities to others
3. To surpass yourself, which means choosing something a bit difficult and practice on doing it right
4. To meet other persons
5. To learn to work with a team
6. To see what the others are able to do... and to think that you would be able to do that too!
7. To express yourself, to communicate (with your team, with the other team, with the audience)
8. To be proud of yourself, to be more confident in yourself
9. To give everyone a place in the game
10. To make choices and to take decisions by yourself
11. To face unexpected situations, something to which you were not prepared
12. To face an audience and to deal with your stress
13. To develop your creativity, your imagination



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## The history and the teams

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The « Impros-j'eux » were created in Belgium in 1997.  
They were invented by Marc Legros.



Today, in Belgium, there are 14 teams.  
Every year, there are lots of shows.



The teams wrote the charter  
of the « Impros-j'eux ».  
It is a text that explains  
what the main values and aims  
of the « Impros-j'eux » are.



The Belgian teams would like to have  
partners in other countries.  
It would be great if they could organise  
international shows.



If you want more information,  
You can visit the website [www.improsjeux.be](http://www.improsjeux.be)  
You might need the help of your support person  
because it is not easy-to-read.



On the website, you can read the charter of the “Impros-j'eux”.  
You can see when are the next shows.  
You can see pictures of the Belgian teams.  
You can download the document to subscribe.



If you are interested,  
If you want to create a team with your friends,  
You can contact Marc Legros  
By e-mail at [marclegros@skynet.be](mailto:marclegros@skynet.be)



Or by mail at  
Route de Remouchamps, 49  
4141 Louveigné  
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+32 498 10 13 98



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If you have something to say about this idea of “Impro-j'eux”,  
If you have other examples of activities helping self-advocacy,  
If you want to tell us the experiences of your country,  
You can write to Gengoux Gomez, self-advocacy officer,  
at [self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org](mailto:self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org)

NAMHI is an Irish parent organisation.

They organised a conference in Ireland on the 6 and 7 September.

Over 300 persons with an intellectual disability took part in the conference.



In the beginning Stephen Kealy, the president of NAMHI, welcomed everyone.

In his speech he said the following things.

- The main purpose of the conference is to make the voices of the people with a learning disability heard
- This is a big conference
- Self-advocacy is the work of the national organisation
- The voices of the people haven't always been heard
- The voices have been left unheard
- A self-advocate makes the decision on important things for himself
- Self-advocacy means, that you listen to others on what they need
- Self-advocacy means, that you can decide where you want to live
- Self-advocacy means, that you have contacts to other people, share things
- Everyday matters don't always come true
- I think about tomorrow and how I want to spend my time
- It's important to listen when someone asks you what you want to do and what is important to you
- It's important to learn, listen to what you need to do
- Stephen said, that this is a very good experience



Then Christine Burke read the rules for a good meeting

After that, I brought greetings from EPSA and Inclusion Europe.

I also welcomed the Irish self-advocacy organisations to become members of EPSA.



It's difficult to explain the costs of the services.

The law changed in Ireland in the summer of 2005.

From December 2004 to July 2005 was no reasons for the service providers to claim expenses from persons with a learning disability.



Who makes the decisions about your money?

It's no one else's money, besides the persons himself.

Even if you have a caretaker/trustee (the one who takes care of your money), it doesn't change the fact that it's your money.

Who decides how the money is used?

You decide!

It's a common interest to make clear,

whose money it is and to whose best it's used.



## My voice — My choice

Christina Burke and Maria Wolfe talked about their living conditions and how they moved in together. We also watched a video about housing. Then Thomas O'Grady talked about when he moved in together with his wife.



The information pack "My Voice My Choice" was launched.

The second conference day were workshops about the topics on the information pack.

The conference was very good and interesting.



If you want more information on this conference or on the information pack "My Voice My Choice" you can contact NAMHI

5 Fitzwilliam Place—Dublin 2—Ireland

Tel.: (353) 1-676.60.35

<http://www.namhi.ie>



- To get information
- To tell us about news and meetings

Please contact us!

### Inclusion Europe

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[self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org](mailto:self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org)

## Other conferences

Lebenshilfe is a German association.

They organise a conference called « Barrier free world ».

It will be in Berlin from 15 to 16 February 2006.

To receive more information about this conference, you can contact Lebenshilfe

Raiffeisenstraße 18, 35043 Marburg

Tel.: (0 64 21) 4 91 – 0, Fax: 4 91 – 1 67

e-mail: [fachfragen@lebenshilfe.de](mailto:fachfragen@lebenshilfe.de)

Internet: <http://www.Lebenshilfe.de>



On 1 and 2 December 2005, the European Commission and the Disability Unit organise conferences for the European Day of Disabled People.

They are making great effort to make it accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.

Unfortunately, there are no more places to attend this conference.

But the self-advocates who attend will write a report.

We will publish this report in the first Europe for Us of 2006.



And then of course do not forget « Europe in Action 2006 ».

It is Inclusion Europe annual congress.

It will take place in Brussels between 18 and 20 May 2006.

There will be important meetings for EPSA.

We will elect a new president and new Steering Group members.

