

Europe for us!

The Newsletter of the European Platform of Self-Advocates

Oct-Dec 2007



Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of Europe for Us. In November I was very happy to be part of an EPSA project called 'Our lives, our policies' in Scotland. We had visitors from Norway, Ireland, Finland, Austria and Hungary. We visited the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and shared our experiences and ideas about how we can have a say in policies that affect us. You can read more about it in this newsletter. You can also read about Zdenka Petrović's visit to Geneva.



With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Andrew Doyle
President of EPSA



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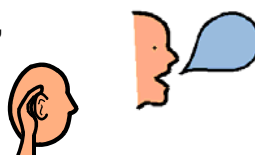
A Study Visit to Scotland for Self-Advocates

In November, EPSA organised a Study Visit to Scotland. The title was "our lives, our policies".

The topic was about policy engagement.

Policy engagement means to be able to

- meet decision-makers;
- influence policies and programmes;
- have a say about things that concern us, even in terms of policy;
- be listened to.



6 associations participated in this event:

- ACE ENABLE from Scotland
- The NFU Self-Advocacy group from Norway
- The Union on the Hill Self-Advocacy group from Ireland
- The Platform of Self-Advocacy from Hungary
- Selbst und Direct, atempo from Austria
- Me Iste ry from Finland



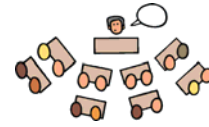
With support of the European Commission and Inclusion Europe

A Study Visit to Scotland for Self-Advocates

The programme was very interesting.
Participants met several leaders of ACE ENABLE.
These leaders explained
how they were successful at being involved
in the policies of Scotland.



Participants visited the Scottish Parliament.
They met with a member of the Scottish Parliament.



They also visited the Glasgow City Chambers and met with one of its member.
This person is very important for ACE ENABLE
because ACE is based in Glasgow.

Finally, the participants also presented their best successes
in terms of policy engagement.
Each of them stood up and spoke in front of the group.



At the end of the last day, participants had to answer the following question:
How could self-advocacy organisations be more engaged
in the policies of their country?



Here are some of the answers:

- Do not stay alone!
- Create your own group
- Get trained because training is the key
- Get involved in everything you can!
- Be visible!
- Contact the right person
- Make sure you are understood... and make others understand as well
- Check and circulate your information
- Work at all levels: National and local
- Be ready to never give up

A full report will soon be written and sent to all EPISA members.



Meetings of the International Disability Alliance (IDA)

My name is Zdenka Petrović.
I am the President of the Association for Self Advocacy from Zagreb, Croatia.
I am also member of the Steering Group of EPSA.
I am responsible for all international things.



In September, I attended several IDA meetings.
I was there with Diane Richler, president of Inclusion International.
I represented Inclusion International and EPSA at these meetings.

IDA is the short word for International Disability Alliance.
IDA is a network of 8 organizations of disabled people.
IDA gathers different people with different disabilities.
For example people with intellectual disabilities, hard of hearing people, blind people or people with mental disabilities.



IDA organized several meetings in September in Geneva, Switzerland.
Those meetings were very important for us.
On every of these meetings, participants spoke about the new UN Convention on the rights of the Persons with Disabilities.
IDA had a big role in the writing process of the new UN Convention.



We had meetings with some very important persons.
We met Dr. Margareth Chan.
She is the Director General of the World Health Organization.
The World Health Organization is an agency of the United Nations which takes care of peoples' health.



I told Dr Chan that people with intellectual disabilities have great expectations from the Convention.
I also introduced her with the big problem of deprivation of legal capacity for people with intellectual disabilities.
I explained that many people with intellectual disabilities who are deprived of legal capacity do not have the same human rights as other people.



Other IDA participants told to Dr. Chan that disability must be consider as a part of human diversity and not as a disease.

Dr. Chan recognized the big role of IDA.
She promised to work more in cooperation with IDA on the implementation of the Convention.



Meetings of the International Disability Alliance (IDA)

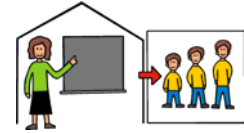
We also had a meeting with some people from UNESCO.

UNESCO is the Organisation of the United Nations which takes care of Education, Science and Culture.

Then we also met some people from the Disability and Rehabilitation team. With them we spoke about the big World report on disability, rehabilitation and inclusive education.

I said that education is very important for people with intellectual disabilities.

People with intellectual disabilities must go to the same schools as other people.



IDA organized side events at the UN headquarter on the topic of the Convention.

I was very proud to do a presentation at the United Nations.

I spoke in front of delegates from the Human Rights Council.

I think that the new UN Convention is very important.

We all must work on its implementation.



Zdenka Petrović

Conference on access to culture and quality of life

My name is Jacqueline and I work for Inclusion Europe.

During my free time, I go twice a week to « Le Silex ».

« Le Silex » is a Belgian association.

On Thursday 11 October 2007, they organised a conference on « Culture, leisure time and quality of life ».

There were more or less 200 people.

They were parents, self-advocates, teachers and professionals.



Several members of « Le Silex » spoke.

Anne explained what she does at the office.

She mainly takes care of sorting files.

Jean-Claude explained the problems he has with his daughter Christelle.

She has Down Syndrome and goes everyday to the Day Centre.

When she gets home, she only wants to listen to music.

She never stays downstairs with her parents.

Michel explained what kind of work he does at the sheltered workshop.

He wraps up chocolates and soaps.



A man in wheelchair explained the problems he is facing in his everyday life.

For example when he goes into town or wants to go to the cinema.

A mother complained that the doors of the meeting room are too small.

Her daughter in wheelchair had to go through the back entrance.

Conference on access to culture and quality of life

She explained the difficulties her daughter had when going to the cinema. She was not able to get in because the rooms were not accessible.

Another mother explained what happened to her daughter. Her daughter went to a sheltered workshop. She did not understand the explanation of what she had to do. She could not get a second explanation. She had to go back home.



I found this conference very interesting. People who are different were able to express themselves without the fear to be judged.



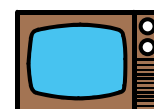
I just found it a bit of a shame that some speakers spoke too fast. They should have distributed the accessibility cards. I also found it bad when people sit while talking. Then you cannot see them and you do not know who is talking.



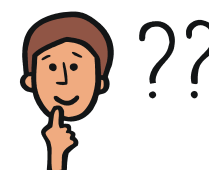
Jacqueline Pareys

A TV show made by people with intellectual disabilities

In Spain, some people with intellectual disabilities are doing a TV Show. It goes on TV the last Sunday of each month.



This programme is called “Nosotros Tambien” (We as well). It is fully realised and presented on TV by people with intellectual disabilities. They receive some support from volunteers and from professionals from the TV sector.



During the show, they speak about different subjects like

- independent living,
- sport
- attitudes and bullying
- leisure time

In September, this show won a very important Prize in Spain. It is called the Prize “Imsero Infante Cristina de Communication”.



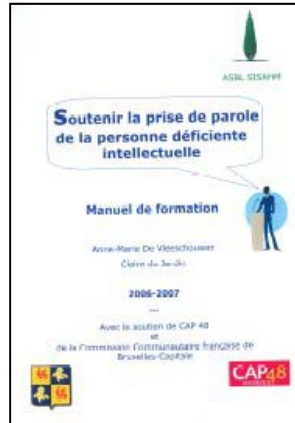
It has been a hard work to put on this show and this Prize is great reward. Congratulations to all the actors and staff!

Getting support to speak up

SISAHM is a Belgian association. They are supporting a group of self-advocates. They wrote a brochure with this group. It is called "Support for people with intellectual disabilities to speak up". It is available only in French.

It is nearly like a training pack. It gives you tools, tips and tricks on how to improve the speaking skills of people with intellectual disabilities.

For more information or to order this pack, please write to self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org



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

Please contact us!

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Europe in Action 2008—Education for All !

Like every year, Inclusion Europe will organise a congress called Europe in Action. In 2008, it will take place in Vienna, in Austria from 10 to 12 April. The title will be "Education for All! - The European Conference on Inclusive Education for young people with intellectual disabilities".

We will speak about the importance of Education for all. We will speak about the importance of inclusive schools. This means that all children should be able to go to the same schools. There should not be some special schools for children with intellectual disabilities.



This is something that is also written in the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. All countries should make sure that their schools are inclusive.



We will see how they should do this. We will listen to examples of good practices. It will be a great opportunity to exchange with self-advocates from other countries.

If you want more information or if you want to register, visit the website www.europeinaction.org



This congress is planned to be accessible, so register quickly and join us!