

Europe for us!

The Newsletter of the European Platform of Self-Advocates

Jan-Mar 2008



Editorial

In this issues of Europe for Us, the main topic is women and disability. It important that people realise the difficulties faced by women with disabilities.



We will also speak about User Councils. Service are made for people. People should be in control of their services. User Councils is one way of giving the control back to the people.



I wish you a good reading!

Andrew Doyle
President of EPSA



Information

Editorial 1

Women and disability 2

Can you hear us? 3

User councils 4

Europe in action 2008 - Education for all 6

Women and disability

Dorota Nawrocka comes from Poland. She is one of the member of the Inclusion Europe Women Committee.



She attended a European conference on women and disability in Madrid last November.

Here is her report about this conference.

I am very pleased that I could take part in such important European conference on women and disability in Madrid.



It was an important event for me in many aspects. Especially because I could meet great people from so many countries.

They were all members or supporters of many different organisations which deal with women and disability issues.



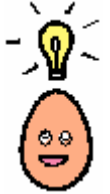
With support of the European Commission and Inclusion Europe

Women and disability

I am a member of the "Polish Women Council" and of the "Inclusion Europe Women Committee". So the knowledge I could gain from the conference is valuable in developing my activities.



I want to improve the situation of disabled women in Poland. But this is not easy to do alone. At the conference, we could draw ideas and solutions on how to cooperate with other local and mainstream movement organisations.



During the conference we could hear many interesting speeches. They enlarge our knowledge, especially of the situation of disabled women in different countries in Europe.



It was very supportive because we could become convinced that we all in Europe have similar problems, like the fact that

- disabled women are not visible enough among non-disabled ones
- or that there are still not enough publications in media about disabled women.



As a consequence, society forgets that disabled women have twice as much problems with realizing their basic human rights as non-disabled women have.

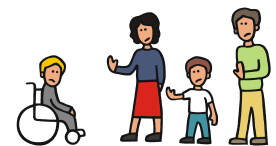


For example, disabled women have the right

- to be an equal member of society,
- to have family,
- to educate,
- to work.



Disabled women face multiple discrimination. And they face more problems than disabled men. Every day life shows us that we should also particularly emphasize the gender problem.



The important issue is to enlarge our knowledge about disability. We have to make the society aware of disabled women problems. There are different possibilities of supporting them and helping them changing their situation.



We are aware that a lot of huge changes are necessary. But we also know that we should start with very small steps. And that nobody will do that for us. We should be active, proud and shouldn't be afraid of the obstacles. We should look for as many supporters as possible.

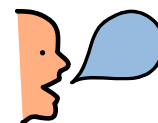
Women and disability

The conference was a great occasion to compare experience and share views and ideas about the topic.

It was also an excellent time to continue the creation of the European network with many different women organisation. It helped to become more powerful and to make our voice heard.



Individually, for me as an intellectually disabled woman, it was an occasion to take the floor and present my story, my every – day problems for example in finding a job.



I could tell how I try to overcome difficulties to become an independent woman, who can decide by herself and satisfy her needs.

But the most important result of this conference was the creation of the “Declaration on recognising the rights of girl and women wth disabilities”. This document is the right step to the right direction. And we can be very proud of that.



Can you Hear Us?

“Can you Hear Us?” is DVD made by people with intellectual disabilities from the United Kingdom.

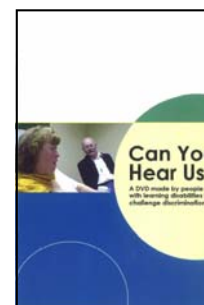
They are part of a group called “UR First”, which is a project run by United Response.

This DVD is a collection of drama stories. The stories cover different subjects, from getting engaged to buying a home.

The films are based on real life stories of people with disabilities. Each story is about a time when people felt they were not listened to, or were treated wrongly.

They hope that these films will make people think about how easy it is to change the way people are treated.

You can find out more about this DVD and the group who made it at www.unitedresponse.org.uk/urfirst



A draft document on User Councils

In April 2008, there will be the General Assembly of Inclusion Europe. We will ask all Inclusion Europe member if they agree with our paper on User councils.



Below, you will find the draft of this paper.

If you have comments, please write them to self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org

User Councils in Disability Services

What our members think about User Councils in services for people with intellectual disabilities

Services are there to help you.

You should have a choice of the service that you need.

You should have a say in how the service is run.

“Nothing about us, without us” also applies in your service.



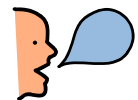
Inclusion Europe wants that you have more influence in your service.

We ask all services to make sure that users of services have more influence.

Users should say how the service should be run.

Users should say what services should be provided.

Good services give their users a lot of influence.



“User Councils” are one way to make sure that users have influence in services.

Members of User Councils are elected by all users of a service.

User Councils should exist in all services for more than 10 people.

User Councils should speak for all users of a service.

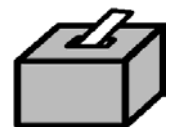
Sometimes the name for them may be different.



We tell you now how these User Councils should work.

General Duties of the Service

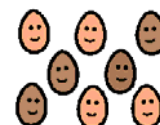
- All Services for more than 10 people should have a User Council. This should be done even if the law does not require it.
- All users of a service should elect the members of the User Council. The service should help users to run that election.
- The service and the User Council should agree how they work together. They should decide how the User Council works with the staff of the service. These rules should be written down.
- User Councils should have a say in all important decisions. User Councils should receive all necessary information in an easy-to-understand format.
- People with intellectual disabilities should get real paid jobs in the service. Services for disabled people should not only serve disabled people. They should also employ disabled people in real jobs wherever possible.



A draft document on User Councils

How User Councils should work

- User Councils should agree on rules of how they work.
They should agree which of their members is responsible for what.
They should agree who speaks for the User Council.
The service should make sure that these rules are given to all users of the service.
- User Councils should speak for all users of a service.
They should especially make sure to speak for people who cannot speak for themselves.
That means that User Councils should know what the users want.
User Councils should talk about this often with the users of a service.





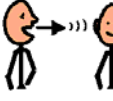
The Tasks of User Councils

- User Councils should be asked for their views on all questions of the service.
They should be asked about
 - * what kind of services are provided,
 - * for how many people are the services provided,
 - * how are the services provided.
- User Councils should be there to listen to complaints of the users.
They should help users when they have a complaint.
They should make sure that no user gets a bad treatment because of a complaint.
- User Councils should have a say about the staff working in a service.
One member of the User Council should be involved in all job interviews.
This includes all paid-positions, from the direct care paid-staff to the paid-Directors.
It is very important if the service provides close personal support.
- User Councils should help to train the staff of a service.
They know best what the users need.
They can tell new staff how to do their job right.
- User Councils should be asked if the service is of good quality.
Services should make sure that the opinion of their users is important.
Users should always be happy about the services they receive.
If users are not happy, the service should be changed.
- Services should try to find out about the personal needs of all their users.
They should help users to plan their personal future.
If a service user asks for the help of a peer in this, a member of the User Council should be available.



A draft document on User Councils

Support for User Councils

- The Service should provide a supporter for the User Council.
This person should have training and experience.
This person should not work for the service. 
- The Service should make sure that members of the User Council get training.
They should get training in all areas of work of a User Council. 
- User Councils should meet with User Councils of other services in the same city to talk about their work.
They should also help members of the User Council to go to meetings and conferences for self-advocates 



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

Please contact us!

Inclusion Europe

Galleries de la Toison d'Or
29 Ch. d'Ixelles 393/32
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Tel.: 0032-2-502 28 15
Fax: 0032-2-502 80 10
e-mail:
self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org

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!