

Europe for us!

The Newsletter of the European Platform of Self-Advocates

Apr-June 2008



Editorial

In April, Inclusion Europe organised its annual congress Europe in Action in Vienna.

As the president of EPSA, I attended the congress and gave a speech.

It was a really good congress.

I think that the participants will now know how to make inclusive education better in their country.

This is something very important for all children with intellectual disabilities: to be able to go to school with all the other children.

I hope that this becomes real everywhere very soon.

Andrew Doyle
President of EPSA



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Europe in Action 2008—Conclusions

In April, more than 250 people from across Europe met in Vienna for the Europe in Action conference.



They exchanged their views on inclusive education.

They spoke about actions to advance inclusive education.



One of the most important ideas is diversity. Everyone should feel unique, competent and valued.



Children, parents and teachers should receive professional support.



Inclusive schools allow everyone to participate, to grow individually and within the society.



With support of the European Commission and Inclusion Europe

Europe in Action 2008—Conclusions

Teacher's education is key to the success of inclusive education.
Teachers have to have an open and positive attitude
towards teaching different pupils.
Teachers assistants have to play a crucial role.



The idea of inclusive education has to be promoted on all levels.
We should develop networks and look for allies in this process.
Everyone has a role to play in making inclusive education happen.
Everyone should have their own education plan.



TV, radio and newspapers can promote the work of educational experts.
Changing the policy and legislation is good but not enough.
It is the attitudes within the schools and communities
that make inclusion happen.

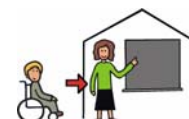


Europe in Action 2008— Speech of the EPSA president

On behalf of Inclusion Europe, Lebenshilfe Austria
and the European Platform of Self-Advocates,
I welcome you all to this conference.

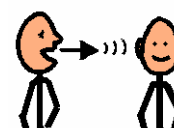


It is really important
that all children in our communities grow up together.
An important part of growing up is going to school.
So we must all go to school together.

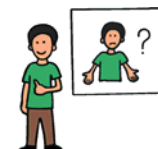


And our schools and teachers must welcome all of us and value all of us.

At this conference you will hear ways that this can be done.
At this conference, there are self-advocates,
parents and professionals.
We also come from many different countries.
So this conference is a great opportunity.
Please speak with other people, listen to each other and learn.



To the self-advocates who are here
I wish to say you have an important part in this conference.



You have valuable things to say.
Please speak up. We need to hear what you have to say.



Europe in Action 2008— Speech of the EPSA president

Work hard, but have a good time. Enjoy yourselves.
It will make a good conference.



The schools in our communities are all different.
But when we go home,
we can all use the things we will hear about at this conference
to get better education for people with intellectual disabilities.
We must use what we hear about, to make people's lives better.



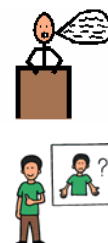
Report on the work of EPSA in 2007

Here is a summary of what EPSA has done in 2007.
To have a full report about the work of EPSA,
you can write to Gengoux Gomez
at self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org



1. Tell people about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities

In October 2007, Andrew Doyle went to a conference in Greece.
He gave a speech for parents and professionals.
He told them about the importance of self-advocacy.



Zdenka Petrovic from Croatia
spoke in Geneva at the United Nations.
She spoke about the problems of legal capacity in some countries.



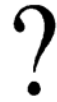
EPSA also participated in 2 training sessions for self-advocates
during the year 2007.



Report on the work of EPSA in 2007

2. Help groups of self-advocates at local level

To help self-advocacy groups at local level, we need to know what their problems are.



Therefore, the Steering Group made a questionnaire. This questionnaire was given to the members during the General Meeting 2007.

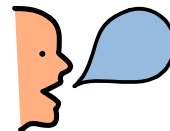
The results show what kind of problems self-advocacy groups are facing at local and national level.

The Steering Group will base the Work Plan 2008-2010 on these results.

3. Promote accessible information

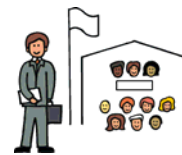
To tell people how to speak with decision-makers, we published a training pack in 2006.

This training pack was distributed and used by many self-advocacy organizations in 2007.



Moreover, EPSA organised a study visit to Scotland in November 2007.

Participants learned how to speak with politicians.



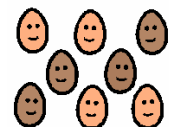
More and more parents associations have part of their website in easy-to-read language.



4. Promote EPSA and raise EPSA membership

At the General Meeting 2007 EPSA welcomed 4 new members.

We use our publication to keep the link between all our members. 4 issues of "Europe for Us" were written in 2007.

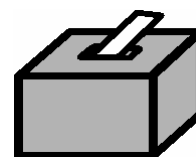


EPSA was also very well represented at International level. Zdenka Petrovic participated at some very important meetings, for example with the World Health Organisation or with the International Disability Alliance.



A new work plan and 2 new Steering Group members

During the General Meeting in April 2008, members of the European Platform of Self-Advocates voted for a new work plan from 2008 to 2010.



They also elected 5 steering group members.

3 of them were the same than for the years 2006 to 2008:

- Andrew Doyle from ACE ENABE Scotland.
- Zdenka Petrovic from ASA, Croatia.
- Paul Alford, from Union on the Hill, Ireland.

2 others are new:

- Fabrice Vanobel, from Nous Aussi, France
- and Tommi Valli, from Me Itse Ry, Finland.



We will present you the new work plan 2008-2010 and the 2 new Steering Group members in our next issue of “Europe for Us”.

Change—A journey to Inclusion

Inclusion Europe has published a new book. It is called « Change—A journey to inclusion ». It shows some examples of good practice in Bulgaria.



It shows how situations can change. People with disabilities should not live in institutions anymore. They should have services included in the society.



This book is made mainly of pictures. It is in English, German, Russian and Bulgarian. If you want to order it, you can write to self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org



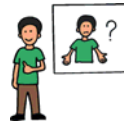
An international gathering of self-advocates



On 17 and 18 November 2008, Inclusion International organises a big event for self-advocates.



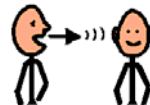
It is called an « international gathering of self-advocates ».



It will take place in Toronto, Canada.

It aims at giving the possibility to self-advocates to:

- share experiences and information
- review the UN Convention
- identify common issues
- and look at ways to strengthen a global self-advocacy movement.



Self-advocates from all over the world will join this congress. So you should not miss this unique opportunity to be part of the global self-advocacy movement.



For more information and to register for this congress, visit the website www.inclusion2008.com



You will also find on this website some information on



- Inclusion International General Assembly
- the international gathering for families



- and the international conference on the UN Convention.



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

Please contact us!

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