

Europe for us!

The Newsletter of the European Platform of Self-Advocates

July-Sept 2008



Editorial

There are 2 very interesting proposals in this issue.

The first one is a proposal to organise a training on the right of people with intellectual disabilities to choose their services.

Inclusion Europe can help you organise such a training. Inclusion Europe can send you a trainer and some material.

The second is the announcement of Europe in Action 2009. It will take place in June 2009 with the title "My Life".

It will focus specifically on self-advocacy.

It is a great opportunity for European self-advocates to meet. You should not miss it !

Andrew Doyle—President of EPSA



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The new EPSA work plan 2008-2010

EPSA held its 2008 General Meeting in April in Vienna. Many members of EPSA were there.



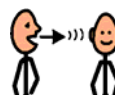
Once of the things they did is voting for a new work plan.

A work plan is a list of the important issues on which EPSA will work in the coming 2 years.



The new work plan 2008-2010 is made of 4 issues. The issues 1 and 2 are kept from the previous work plan. This is because EPSA thinks that they are very important.

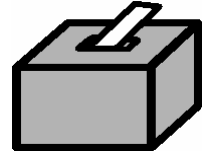
1. Tell to others about the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Help groups of self-advocates at local level.
3. Get more training for self-advocates and make them more accessible.
4. Promote the networking at European and national level.



With support of the European Commission and Inclusion Europe

2 New Steering Group members

During the General Meeting in April 2008, members of the European Platform of Self-Advocates elected 5 Steering Group members.



The Steering Group members are the self-advocates elected to represent EPSA. They have to work hard to implement the work plan.

3 of them were the same than for the years 2006 to 2008, which means

Andrew Doyle from ACE ENABE Scotland.
Andrew is the president of EPSA.
He is also vice-president of Inclusion Europe
and board member of Inclusion Europe.



Zdenka Petrovic from ASA, Croatia.
She is board member of Inclusion Europe
and also board member of Inclusion International.



Paul Alford, from Union on the Hill, Ireland.
He is a board member of Inclusion Europe.



The 2 new steering group members are

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

Fabrice Vanobel is 39 years old
and lives with his mother in a small town North of France.
He has a girlfriend and hopes to live with her one day.
He wants to take courses on how to drive a car
and then buy a car that you can drive without any license.



2 New Steering Group members

He works in a sheltered workshop and really likes it.
He had a training to work as a carpenter.
He likes to go to the movie and to go out with his friends.



He was one of the first members of Nous Aussi,
the French self-advocacy group.
In 2003, after the General Assembly,
they created a Nous Aussi local group in his town.
Fabrice is responsible of this local group.



This local group grew stronger and stronger.
Today, the voices of the people with intellectual disabilities
are listened to.
This is also thanks to the help of the volunteers.



Because they are doing such a good work,
Fabrice was elected in the national group of Nous Aussi.



Tommi Valli was born in 1977.
He lives in a house for supported living in a room on his own.
He works for the Finnish national bus company for four days a week.
He likes sports and to work with computers.



He has been a member of the board of Me Itse ry since January 2004.
He attends meetings and has given speeches in various places.
Also in his everyday life, he feels he has an influence on people
just by participating to the "normal" life and work amongst them.
This is practical everyday self-advocacy.



Since 2007 he is also the vice-member of the working group
focusing on the work security.
Finally, since the end of 2007, he also represents Me Itse ry
in a European project called Pathways.
This project aims at making life-long learning programmes
more accessible for people with intellectual disabilities.



Croatian self-advocates meet EU representatives

Croatia is not yet a member of the European Union (EU).



But they would like to become member.

To join the European Union, new members have to follow some rules. For example, they have to prove that they are fighting against discrimination. They also have to have good social policies.



In April 2008, there was a meeting of 6 people from the EU and 6 people from Croatia.



The aim was to discuss about employment and social policy in Croatia. The Croatian people represented employers, trade unions and civil society.

There were also some special guests invited.

One of them was Zdenka Petrovic.

She is president of the Croatian Association for Self-Advocacy (ASA). She is also a Steering Group member of EPSA and a board member of Inclusion Europe.



People talked about discrimination at work.

Not all disabled people have the same chance to get a job in Croatia.

Zdenka spoke about people with intellectual disabilities. She also stressed the importance of making sure that Croatia follows the new UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities.



Finally, Zdenka said that support services are need in Croatia. She said that these services should better match the needs of disabled people and their family.



At the end of the meeting, everyone agreed with Zdenka. The implementation of the UN Convention should be seen as a priority action for Croatia.



The right to choose a good service

People with intellectual disabilities have the right to good services.
They have the right to choose the service they want.



People with intellectual disabilities have the right to get good support.
They have the right to live in a place which match their needs and wishes.
They have the right to do things during the day which they really want to do.

People with intellectual disabilities have these rights
because they are paying for those services.



In the past, some people were helping disabled people for free.
This was called charity.



Today, this is not how it works anymore.

People with intellectual disabilities are paying for a service.

Therefore, they are consumers.

Therefore, they have the same rights as any other consumer.



However, many staff and people still see disabled people
as people getting some charity support.



This must be changed.

Everybody should understand

that people with intellectual disabilities are consumers of their services.



Thanks to a European project,

Inclusion Europe developed some training on this topic.

One of the staff of Inclusion Europe is a trainer on these questions.

Inclusion Europe could send you this person without asking for any fees.

You would simply have to pay for the travel and accomodation.



If you would like to organise

- a training of 1, 2 or 3 days on these consumer issues
- an information session of half a day
on the rights of people with intellectual disabilities as consumers
- or simply a speech on this topic during one of your conference



or if you want to know more about this European project,

you can contact Inclusion Europe

at self-advocacy@inclusion-europe.org



Europe in Action 2009—My Life

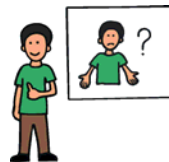
Everyone has the right to be included in society.



Everyone has the right to have a home that suits one's basic needs.



Self-Advocacy is a great tool. It can help build a society that takes into account one's individual needs.



Between 24 and 27 June 2009, a major European self-advocacy conference will take place in Finland.

We will discuss important topics, like

- Full participation and equality
- Access to information
- Participation in cultural life, leisure and sport
- Minority language issues
- Respect for home and the family
- Supported decision-making
- Self-advocacy in Europe



This conference will be a great opportunity to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the self-advocacy movement from Finland.



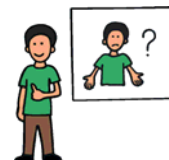
It will also be a good time to think together how to strengthen the European self-advocacy movement.



All EPSA members will meet in Finland and exchange information about what is happening in their country in terms of self-advocacy.



Together, they will discuss about a common strategy to develop further self-advocacy at European level.



This is a unique opportunity that you should not miss.

Get organised, find some funding and let's meet in Finland in June 2009 !

More information on www.europeinaction.org



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

Please contact us!

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