

Inclusion Europe

The European Association of Societies of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families
L'Association Européenne des Organisations des Personnes Handicapées Mentales et leurs Familles

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Towards future action for the improvement of living conditions for people with severe disabilities and/or complex needs

Statement by Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe has been honored to have the opportunity to implement this important Study on the Specific Risks of Discrimination Against Persons in Situation of Major Dependence or with Complex Needs for the European Commission. It gave us the opportunity to reaffirm our strong commitment for the full inclusion of people with severe disabilities and complex needs in all relevant European and national policies.

Working in close cooperation with the relevant European disability organisations and the National Research Experts from twelve countries has been an enriching experience for our organisation. We therefore strongly believe in the need for creating a stronger lobby for people with complex needs in the form of the proposed **European Special Interest Group on Severe Disabilities and Complex Needs**. We are committed to continue our cooperation with our colleagues and to extend the network of people interested in this subject.

Despite the successful conclusion of the study, we are furthermore quite aware that still a lot of research and development needs to be done to achieve real change. Thus, Inclusion Europe in cooperation with outstanding experts in the field is presently preparing an application for the Call for Tender on a “**Study on challenges and good practices in the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**”. We believe that the implementation of the Convention must in all areas consider the situation of people with severe disabilities or complex needs – if we get it right for them, we get it right for all people with disabilities.

We are also committed to **reviewing different European policy areas** with a view to developing concrete actions on how to include the interests of this group in European policies. The resulting proposal on positive action for better inclusion of people with complex needs and severe disabilities in all European policies will be made available to all stakeholders.

Our other commitments to follow-up the recommendations of the Study are targeting Inclusion Europe and its members. We will already in 2008 start to organise **Study Visits** to outstanding examples of good practice. This year we will visit Sweden and continue with this in the coming years.

Awareness-raising and training for our member societies is another important aspect. We believe that a number of developments that could benefit this group of people are still not

known enough, e.g. techniques of alternative and augmentative communication, strategies for community inclusion or inclusive education, or the use of new technological devices.

A specific objective for Inclusion Europe concerns the **European Platform of Self-Advocates**. For them is a great challenge to be able to speak not only for themselves, but to represent also the interest of people with severe disabilities or complex needs. This will certainly be a Topic at our next Europe in Action Conference in Tampere, Finland, in 2009 that will focus on the theme "Self-advocacy and the UN Convention".

Looking far ahead, the same applies for the **World Congress of Inclusion International in 2010** that Inclusion Europe and Lebenshilfe Germany will organize in Berlin. Indeed, the European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion will be an excellent opportunity for us to raise the concerns of the full inclusion of people with severe disabilities and complex needs in society.