

The cover features a blue background with a circle of yellow stars, similar to the European Union flag. Two white hands are shown: one on the left and one on the right, both with a yellow star on the index finger. A large black circle is centered on the page, containing the text:

Europe for us

**We want  
to vote**

News for self-advocates  
Number 5/2018

Find explanations for words in **bold**  
at the end of Europe For Us (pages 25 to 33).



“Europe for us” is available in:

**English**

**French**

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**Hungarian**

**Romanian**

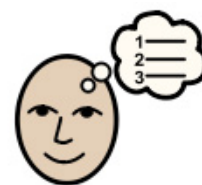
**Spanish**

**Italian**

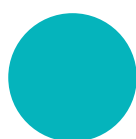
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to find the other languages versions.

# Topics



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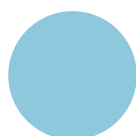
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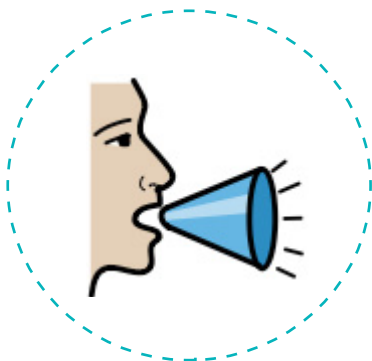
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# ▶ The Leadership Training in Brussels



Like every year, **Inclusion Europe** hosted a leadership training in Brussels.



It is a training where people can learn how to stand up for their rights.

The Leadership Training is a 3-day meeting where **self-advocates** and family members meet from all over Europe.



This year they talked about the **elections** for the **European Parliament** and the right to vote for people under **guardianship**.



Voting is very important.  
When you vote, you can have your say  
on how your community works  
and on what changes should be made.

If the right to vote is taken away from you  
it means you're treated differently  
from others.  
This is not fair.



László Bercse is part  
of the board of **Inclusion Europe**.  
He said that one of his friends  
once told him he felt different from other people  
because he wasn't allowed to vote.



Right now,  
the right to vote is a very important topic.  
It is important because:

- There will be elections  
for the **European Parliament** next year.  
Everyone should be allowed to vote.
- Different European countries  
have changed their national laws.  
So now people under guardianship  
are allowed to vote in these countries.  
You can read more about this on pages 21-24.

Because this topic is so important,  
many participants  
came to the Leadership Training  
to talk about the right to vote.



They came from different European countries. There were self-advocates, family members, support people and people who work on the right to vote.

In many European countries, people under **guardianship** are not allowed to vote. This is wrong.

In many European countries people can vote, but voting is not **accessible**.

Why?

For many reasons:

- because there isn't any **easy-to-read** information on how to vote, on who the candidates are, on what the candidates want to do,
- because there are no support people at the voting places.

These problems must be solved. This is written in the **manifesto** of Inclusion Europe.

Self-advocates and family members talked a lot about the manifesto during the training.



They also talked about other things, such as:

- how can the **European Parliament** include people with intellectual disabilities in their meetings for the elections?
- What can **politicians** do for people with **intellectual disabilities** in the European Parliament?



On the last day of the Leadership Training the participants met politicians and people who work at the **European Union**:

- Typhaine Morillon  
from the European Parliament,
- Katja Vatter  
from the European Parliament,
- Júlia Boada Danés and Vesna Jusup  
from the European Green party,
- Andrew Burgess  
from the European liberal party.

Self-advocates and family members told them that we still need many changes to be sure that people with **intellectual disabilities** can enjoy their right to vote.





Participants were happy to share their experiences and concerns during these talks. In their countries, they will continue to demand that voting becomes accessible and that people under **guardianship** can vote.

You can read more about the right to vote in this issue of Europe for Us.

On page 10-15, you can read about Maribel Cáceres. Maribel is from Spain. She fought hard to get her right to vote back.

On page 21-24, you can read about Denmark and Spain. In these two countries, people under guardianship will now be able to vote.









▶ “Fighting for your right to vote can be hard, but it’s worth it!”



When Maribel was 18 years old her **legal capacity** was taken away by a judge. For this reason she was told that she was not allowed to vote.



Then, she worked hard to get back her right to vote. She reached her goal.

Maribel is also a **self-advocate** who does many things.



Here you can read our interview with Maribel:

**A judge took your legal capacity away when you were 18 years old. For this reason, you were told you cannot vote. What did you do to get your right to vote back?**



It took a lot of time.  
I had a lot of support from Plena Inclusión. Plena Inclusión is a Spanish organisation that represents people with intellectual disabilities.

I needed to convince a judge to give me my right to vote back. I needed to collect a lot of documents for this meeting.



I had the meeting with the judge after some months.  
He told me I was right and I got my right to vote back.

**At what age did you stop going to school?**

I stopped going to school when I was 17. I was not able to continue my studies because I did not have enough support.

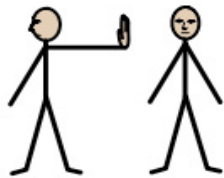


**Then you started to go to classes at Plena Inclusión. What did you study there and what kind of support did you get?**

My life changed when I started to go to classes at Plena Inclusión.

I took part in a class about basic rights. Basic rights are rights that everybody should have.

I learned through this course that I had the right to vote like everybody else. Then I decided that I wanted my right back.



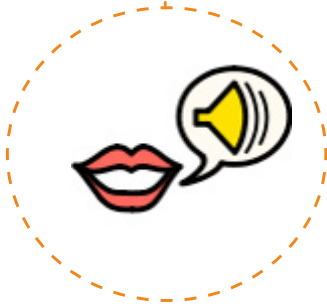
I also learned that people with disabilities have to deal with **discrimination**. I wanted to help people like me fight against discrimination.

The classes happened at a university in Spain. For me it was very important to be there because not many people with **intellectual disabilities** study at university.



**Now you are a trainer.  
A trainer is someone who teaches  
new skills to other people.  
You give many talks about this.  
What do you talk about?**

In 2015, I gave my first talk in schools for a campaign called “The value of difference”. For this campaign I also went to talk at universities.



And I gave talks to people who work with people with disabilities.

I talked about **easy-to-read** and other ways to make texts **accessible**.

In the last few months, I have also learned about other things. For example,

- **employment,**
- safety at work,
- becoming old.

**Last year you took part in the European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities.  
What did you do there?**

It was great!





I was part of a group of 5 people with **intellectual disabilities**.

We came from Spain to Brussels to take part in the event.

We spoke up for the right to vote for people with intellectual disabilities. These were two busy days. It was very important for us.

I was the first person from the place I come from to go to Brussels to fight for my rights.

**You will vote for the first time next year. What will you do to get ready?**

It will be a challenge because I have never voted before.

I will look for information about each **political party**. Then I will decide who to vote for.



**There are still lots of people  
who have lost their right to vote.  
What advice would you give them?**



I think they should fight  
to have their right to vote back.  
They can get help from organisations.

It may take a long time,  
but they should never lose hope.

Even if it can be hard,  
it's worth to fight to get your right to vote back!

On page 21-24, you can read  
about Denmark and Spain.  
In these two countries,  
people under guardianship  
will now be able to vote.



You can read more interviews  
with self-advocates and other people here:  
<http://inclusion-europe.eu/?tag=inclusion-heroes>



# ▶ Soufiane talks about easy-to-read

My name is Soufiane, I live in Belgium. I am a self-advocate.



I work at **Inclusion Europe** as the easy-to-read editor.

## What is easy-to-read?

Easy-to-read is information that is written in a clear and easy to understand way. For example, this newsletter.

Many people with an **intellectual disability** and other people find easy-to-read useful.

You can find out more on easy-to-read here: [www.easy-to-read.eu](http://www.easy-to-read.eu)





## Why is easy-to-read important?

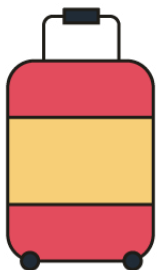
Easy-to-read information is very important for people with intellectual disabilities, because thanks to it we can:

- Learn new things.
- Take part in community life.
- Know our rights and stand up for ourselves.
- Make our own choices.

With my colleagues,  
I have worked on many different  
easy-to-read documents.

For example:

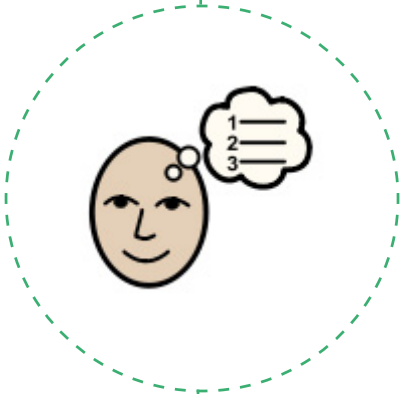
- presentations;
- articles;
- booklets for meetings.



I have also travelled to a few places  
and trained people on how to write  
in easy-to-read.

When I put an article in easy-to-read  
I have to understand what the article is about.  
I also check the layout and the format of the text.



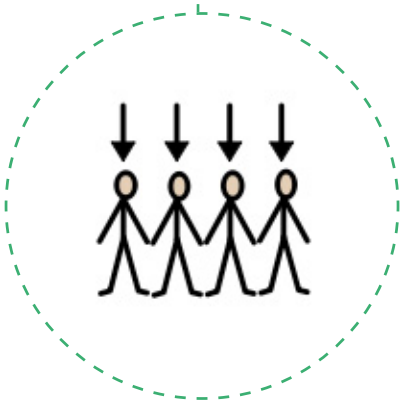


Each time I look at a text,  
I follow a checklist.  
The checklist reminds me  
of all the things I need  
to put into an easy-to-read document.

For example, the text must be  
at least in Arial 14 as a font.

Easy-to-read text must use  
clear and short words.  
Sometimes there are pictures too,  
to help explain what is written.

For me, it is important to be able  
to read information  
that is written in a way  
easy to understand.



I feel part of the community  
because I get the same information  
as everybody else.



There have been many times when easy-to-read was useful to me. For example:

- When I was looking up train timetables;
- When I took part in a conference at the **European Commission** and they gave us an easy-to-read programme.



Part of my job is to help create this newsletter. It is a fun challenge because I learn new things every time.

It is challenging to put texts into easy-to-read because they are usually way too long and not easy-to-read.



But I love my job!



## Short news

There are good news  
from Spain and Denmark  
on the right to vote.

You can read about it on the  
next two pages.



# In Spain people under guardianship will vote in the next elections



In Spain there will be a change in the law about **elections**.

The change will give back to a lot of people under **guardianship** the right to vote and to stand in elections.

Until now, they could not vote. This is unfair, because voting and standing for elections is an important right for everybody.



This change came thanks to the work of organisations such as Plena Inclusión.



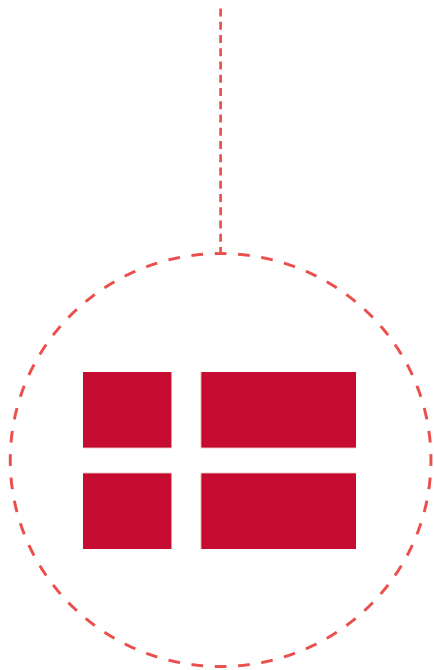
Plena Inclusión is  
a member of **Inclusion Europe**.

Plena Inclusión spoke up many times  
and also talked on social media  
about the right to vote.

Congratulations to Plena Inclusión  
and to the other organisations  
who worked to change the law in Spain!



# In Denmark more people under guardianship will vote for the elections of the Parliament



The **government** in Denmark wants to let more people under **guardianship** vote and stand for **elections**.

Some people in Denmark who are under a special kind of guardianship cannot vote.

Now there will be a new law.

When the new law will be in use, people under this special kind of guardianship will have their **legal capacity** back.





And they will be able to vote  
in national elections  
and also take part in referendums.

A referendum is when you give your opinion  
on an important topic for your country.  
You do it by going to  
the voting place,  
like for the elections.



LEV is a member of **Inclusion Europe**  
in Denmark.  
Together with other organisations,  
LEV worked hard  
so people with **intellectual disabilities**  
can vote in Denmark.

Congratulations to LEV for their great work!





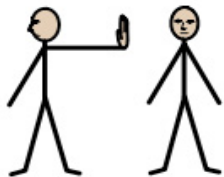
# Explanations



## Accessible

Something that is easy to use for people with disabilities, such as:

- Ramps to get into a building.
- Information in easy-to-read.
- Information in sign language.



## Discrimination

Discrimination means that you are treated unfairly or that you do not get the chances you deserve.

It is discrimination when it happens because of your disability.

It can also happen to other people. For example people who have a different skin colour. Or older people.





## Easy-to-read

Easy-to-read is information that is written in a simple way so that people with intellectual disabilities can understand.

Easy-to-read documents often have this logo, so it is easier to find them.

There are rules on how easy-to-read should be done. You can read the European standards of easy-to-read information here: [www.easy-to-read.eu](http://www.easy-to-read.eu)



## Election

An election is when people go to vote. Voting is when you choose someone to be a leader and make big decisions for you.

Elections happen in different areas. For example, when you elect a new mayor in your town, or when you elect a new president in your country.





## European Commission

The European Commission works with the **European Parliament**. The European Commission suggests laws for the European Parliament and the **Council of the European Union** to discuss.

It also makes sure that the laws that have been decided upon are being followed by the member states.



## European Parliament

The European Parliament is a place where important decisions of the **European Union** are made. For example, decisions about laws and budgets.

The Members of the European Parliament (in short, MEPs) make these decisions and represent all the people who live in the European Union.

Every 5 years, the people who live in the European Union vote for their country's MEPs. The next **elections** are in 2019.



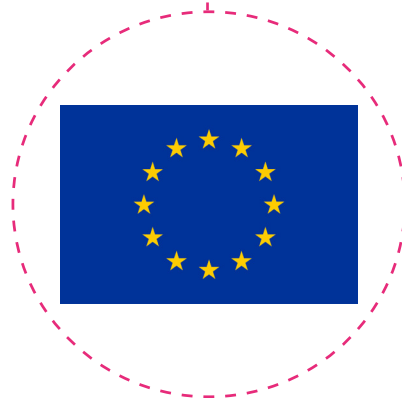


## European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities

The European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities is a big gathering of people with disabilities from all over Europe.

At this event, they talk about what they want in life. They talk about the problems they have as people with disabilities.

The European Parliament of Persons with Disabilities takes place in Brussels in Belgium. It takes place every five years.



## European Union

The European Union (in short, EU) is a group of 28 countries. We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together so that people in Europe can live in peace, have jobs and a good life.



## Government

A government is a group of people that make decisions on how to run a country.

For example,

- about where the money is spent,
- about public transports,
- about schools,
- about hospitals.

Every few years there are **elections** to vote for a new government.



## Guardianship

Guardianship allows some people to make life choices for others.

The person who makes choices for you is your guardian.

Your guardian has **legal capacity**.

They can decide things for you, like where you live.

Sometimes, people under guardianship are not allowed to vote, get married or take care of their kids.





## Inclusion Europe

Inclusion Europe is an organisation for people with **intellectual disabilities** and their families.

We fight for their equal rights and inclusion in Europe.  
We also want to make a difference to policies in Europe.  
We started in 1988.  
We have 75 members in 39 European countries.




We are based in Brussels in Belgium.

## Intellectual disabilities

If you have an intellectual disability, that means it is more difficult for you to understand information and learn new skills than it is for other people. This makes some parts of life harder.





People with intellectual disabilities often need support in learning or at work.

Intellectual disability often starts before you are an adult. It affects you for your whole life.

## Legal capacity

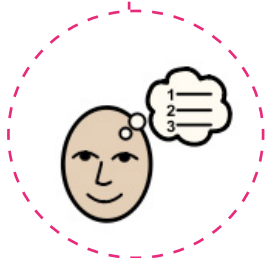
Capacity means being able to make a decision or choice at one point in time.

There are laws about how to decide if someone has capacity. Then it is called legal capacity.





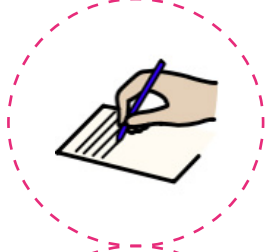
Having legal capacity means that people with intellectual disabilities can do things on their own. For example, they can:



- Make choices about their lives.



- Get married, start a family and raise children.



- Sign contracts (including work contracts).



- Take part in politics and have the right to vote.

When there is a **guardianship**, the guardian has legal capacity.





## Manifesto

A manifesto is a text that explains the goals of a person or an organisation. It is often made before an **election** by a person or organisation that wants to be elected. Everyone can read it.



## Politician

Someone whose job is to help run the country or part of the country.

## Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is when people with intellectual disabilities speak up for themselves and for other people with intellectual disabilities.



**Supported by the  
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Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!

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