

## Inclusion International European Report 2013.

### Europe in Action Meeting in Slovenia



Earlier this year the Inclusion Europe 'Europe In Action' meeting took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The meeting looked at ways to support older aged people with intellectual disabilities to make sure that they are included in everyday life.

The Conference Ageing People with Intellectual Disabilities and their Families (Ljubljana, Slovenia) to talk about the challenges facing older adults with intellectual disabilities and their aging family members who are supporting them.

## Hear Our Voices Meeting in Zagreb



On the 4th to the 6th of October self advocates from Europe met for the Inclusion Europe 'Hear Our Voices' meeting.

Self advocates are people with learning disabilities who speak up for themselves and for other people with a learning disability.

There were 130 self advocates at the meeting. The meeting was called 'Citizens First'.

It was held in Zagreb in Croatia.

The meeting was about how people with learning disabilities should be a part of their community and included in politics.

There were self advocates from Finland, Slovenia, Romania, Norway, France, Wales and Scotland. I spoke up for the UK at the meeting.

People with a learning disability gave workshops at the meeting. The workshops were about different subjects like closing institutions and the right to decide.

I was asked to give a workshop about the rights of people with a learning disability to have a family.

I talked about the rights of people with a learning disability to have relationships and children.

I talked about the work I do at Mencap for parents with a learning disability.

My workshops went well. They were very busy and everyone took part.

Lots of the people didn't speak English so the self advocate's supporters translated what I said into different languages.

New members of the European Platform of Self Advocates (EPSA)

At the EPSA General Meeting in Zagreb, we had presentations for 2 ladies from Romania.

We voted for 2 ladies from Romania to join our European Platform of Self Advocates group (EPSA).

One of the ladies is called Luminita Caldaras who is from a self-advocacy group called Pentru Voi.

The other lady is called Elisabeta Moldovan and she is from a group called Ceva de Spus.

We are now a powerful all girl group!



## EPSA Activity plan

At the European Platform of Self Advocates General Meeting we talked about the activity plan and the work proposal.

In the activity report we talked about the following things.

We published 4 copies of Europe for us, we organised the Hear our voices conference in Zagreb which was a success. We have helped groups of self advocates at local level, and we have also helped to get accessible training for self-advocates

## **Some of our main successes**

### **UK**

In England, we lobbied for better health care, hate crime advice and relationships advice for people with intellectual disabilities.

We also had successes around the changes to benefits that the English government has introduced.

Mencap ran some events called Know Your Rights. The events were for people with an intellectual disability and their family members. We told them about the changes in benefits that were being decided by the government. Lawyers were at these events to give legal advice on how to fight cuts to their services.

Mencap have also been part of a group called the London Parents Network group which is part of Mellow Parenting. The group tell their stories and experiences of parenting to help create training for professionals that will be working with parents with intellectual disabilities.

### **France**

Our French member Organised 1 national meeting.

They have talked about easy-to-read and self-advocacy at meetings organised by the Fundamental Rights Agency and by the European Commission.

They organised an event to celebrate their 10th anniversary.

There are almost 400 members and 22 local groups all around France.

The Ministry for people with disabilities contacted them to have major speeches from the Government translated in easy-to-read.

They did a lot of work for the accessibility of the elections. It was in the news.

### **Estonia**

In Estonia, our member put together 2 national meetings for self-advocates.

### **Germany**

In Germany, people with intellectual disabilities were at their Parliament and talked to politicians.

### **Czech Republic**

Our Czech members had meetings every week to talk about self-advocacy and other things that are important for self-advocates.

Their group has easy-to-read experts and also trainers and peer supporters.

The members organised a meeting for parents of people who have an intellectual disability

### **Croatia**

Croatia has succeeded to realize the right to vote for persons deprived of legal capacity and that this year, on European Parliament elections and local elections this group of people had the opportunity to vote for the first time in their lives.

## European Platform of Self Advocates - Main problems

Because of money issues, we have had challenges .

Our members have difficulties to spread the word about self-advocacy.

One challenge is because of having less information in their national languages.

Some members say that EPSA needs to work better with them and give them with more support.

Our members want opportunities to get together, but they do not have money to do this.

Our members want materials about EPSA about self advocacy in their own languages.

They want EPSA to provide for this because they do not have the resources to do the translations.

## European Platform of self advocates - Work proposal 2012 - 2014

This is the work that EPSA are going to do over the next year.

- We will make 2 more issues of the newsletter Europe for Us
- We will set up a mailing list of groups that should know about our work
- To send out regular information about our work every 2 months

- We will help groups of self-advocates at local level
- We will continue to work to help make national networks
- We will put together regional events for Self-advocates
- We will need to find sponsors for these events
- We will translate information about EPSA in more languages
- We will need our members to help work with us
- We will get more training for self-advocates
- We will make the training more accessible
- We will continue to talk about Easy-to-read rules and the Pathways project
- We will need to be included at the New Paths to Inclusion project. This project is about person centred planning
- We will continue to tell people about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- We will continue to tell people about the Council of Europe's advice on how people with an intellectual disability can take part in Political and Public Life
- We will continue to meet politicians to tell them about our rights

## **Inclusion Europe's 'Europe In Action' Conference**

Next year, Inclusion Europe's 'Europe In Action' Conference will be in Belfast in May.



The dates are 15th, 16th and 17th