

European Platform of Self-Advocates

Report 2017

What happened in 2017?

We have successfully organized our General Meeting and Hear our Voices.

EPSA has grown with new members.

We were represented in several working groups.

We were involved at the Leadership Training, in Brussels.

We were advocating for deinstitutionalisation in our own countries and also at the European Commission and the UN.

Our Steering Group member, Elisabeta Moldovan, has published a book about her life.

Our members from Austria and from Croatia are involved at National level and abroad with other self-advocates to help start new groups and organisations.

More and more, we see self-advocates being involved at political and social level.

What EPSA did in 2017

General Meeting of EPSA

The General Meeting took place in June,
during the Europe in Action Conference.

More than 30 people attended, most of them self-advocates.

The activity report was approved, and new members were presented.

We had elections for the Steering Group.

We now have 5 Steering Group members.

They are:

- Senada Halilčević, Chair, from Croatia
- Elisabeta Moldovan, from Romania
- László Bercse, from Hungary
- Harry Roche, from England
- Andreas Zetner, from Austria

During the General Meeting we had also the opportunity to learn about the work that Inclusion International is doing at self-advocacy level.

Leadership training

In 2017 the EPSA Steering Group was involved at the leadership training.

This year we talked about violence and abuse towards people with intellectual disabilities.

The Steering Group worked with Inclusion Europe staff so self-advocates had a leading role at the event.

Self-advocates shared and listen to real life stories about how violence and abuse affect people lives and how can we prevent and fight against it.

12 self-advocates from 10 different countries took part in the leadership training.

Getting New Members

One of EPSA main concerns is to keep the members we have and to get new ones.

In 2017, we have “gained” 2 more members - Selbstvertretungszentrum für Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten from Austria and LFB from Netherlands.

We also had several contacts from other organisations.

Plena Inclusion, from Spain, have worked closely with the Steering Group, although they are not EPSA members yet.

Hear our Voices 2017

Hear our Voices theme this year was:

Hear our Voices: Strong, Loud and Clear!

This year the event had a different format compared to previous conferences.

We have worked together with European Disability Forum – EDF.

in order to attend the Parliament of People with disabilities.

Because of this, the event was smaller than in other years.

We had 69 participants, more than 40 were self-advocates.

We had workshops on issues identified as important by the Steering Group, and participants took part at the European day in the Parliament.

Self-advocates took the floor and demanded that their governments and also the European Commission respected and implemented the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,



namely articles 19 – Living independently and included in the community - and 29 – Participation in political and public life.

Harry Roche, one of our steering group members,
delivered a speech about the importance to vote.

Representation of self-advocates

EPSA Steering group members attended several meetings, conferences, debates and trainings.

This was at national and international level.

Self-advocates are represented in the European Disability Forum women's committee by Luminița Căldăraș.

Self-advocates from Europe are represented in the Council of Inclusion International by Sara Pickard.

What will EPSA do in 2018

EPSA General Assembly will happen in Birmingham, 30 May 2018.

From 9 to 13 April 2018, self-advocates will meet in Peniche, Portugal, to talk about the future of self-advocacy in Europe

Leadership Training 2018.

Some activities of EPSA Steering Group

ÉFOÉSZ, Hungary

ÉFOÉSZ was involved in the review of the implementation of the CRPD in Hungary.

They have also provided trainings on supported decision-making and self-advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities and their supporters.

They have held workshops in mainstreaming schools to raise awareness about people with intellectual disabilities.

They also went to 2 universities for special education teachers and held classes on easy-to-read and self-advocacy.

ÉFOÉSZ organized a Self-Advocacy Conference for 80 people – self-advocates, family members and supporters from all around Hungary.

They have also organized several meetings and forums to talk about how to advocate for your rights, supported decision making and relationships.

They have also talked about self-advocacy, self-determination, independent living and accessible communication at local radios and national TV.

Ceva de Spus, Romania

Ceva de Spus worked in many areas at national and international level.

They have been advocating for deinstitutionalisation, and Elisabeta Moldovan launched a book about this.

It's the first graphic novel in Romania that dares to address a tough topic – abandonment, isolation, abuse and its consequences.

Written and illustrated by Dan Ungureanu, the book introduces us into the world of Eli – in fact, abandoned in residential institutions, later becoming adults,

most of them with disabilities.

They have also been working on accessibility issues, and met with the Timis Territorial Branch of the Romanian Order of Architects, regarding the Upgrade My City Project. This project aims to identify, promote and implement ideas that can improve the quality of urban life.

In 2017 the focus was on inclusive education.

They have also organized their annual Conference of self-advocates at Băile Herculane.

For 3 days, 30 self-advocates from Deva, Oradea, Timisoara and Bucharest participated in teambuilding activities and workshops on different topics like peer support and the right to vote.

They have a project called “I want to be independent!” and they took part at the Timotion, a fundraising sport event.

They had several awareness raising activities all over Romania. One of the most important is the ROvinHUd Wine Show. Here, Ceva de Spus self-advocates worked with volunteers at organizing the Salon and they have raised a good amount of money.

Lebenshilfe, Austria

Lebenshilfe Austria was involved on the changing of legislation regarding legal capacity. They also worked with the social

ministry on the new easy-to-read version of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Intellectual Disabilities.

Andreas Zetner is a member of the self-advocacy council of Lebenshilfe Austria and worked in small groups to discuss inclusive education and health.

The Forum for Austrian self-advocates had a petition for the implementation of article 19 of the UN Convention signed by 665 persons.

-ASA-, Croatia

Our member from Croatia -ASA- have helped to start a new self-advocates organization in Croatia, in Karlovac.

They trained self-advocates on self-advocacy and how to start and manage a self-advocacy organization.

ASA was in Ljubljana, Slovenia, at a meeting organized by self-advocates from Društva skupaj zmoremo and Draga Centre.

ASA was also in Macedonia, on a project named “Together”, to provide training and support to the project partners Association Solem, from Skopje.

ASA took a political position and supported LGBTIQ groups, by taking part at the protest Love Is and Remains Stronger than Hatred.

They also took part in the One Billion Rising global campaign to address the issue of violence against women across the world.

Senada Halilčević, EPSA chair and Vice-President of Inclusion Europe, held a speech and a workshop on discrimination against persons with intellectual disabilities at the Equinet - the European Network of Equality Bodies on a two day seminar organized by Equinet and the Ombudsman Office in Croatia.

Senada Halilčević was elected to an Advisory Council of the Disability Ombudsman, in Croatia.

ASA worked with the Ivan Meštrović Museum on the adaptation of a book into easy-to-read. There will be more books done under this cooperation.

ASA produced a lot of material in easy-to-read format, like:

Brochure „I have the right to know! Human sexuality 1: Intimate relationships and privacy“; 3 issues of easy-to-read newsletters „Voice of Self-Advocates“.