



Inclusion
international



PRESS RELEASE

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People with intellectual disabilities want rights, not favours!

Europe's self-advocates made their voices heard during the 2nd conference of the European Platform of Self-Advocates. Well aware of their rights, participants shared their experiences and discussed ways of breaking down the barriers faced by people with intellectual disabilities in everyday lives.

The conference brought together more than 130 self-advocates and supporters from all over Europe (and beyond) to talk about their lives, their rights, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For 3 days, numerous workshops dealt with the right to live independently and be included in the community, the right to get married and start a family as well as access to quality health care and importance of employment.

With an aim to strengthen the European self-advocacy movement, David Corner, a self-advocate from New Zealand, shared his personal experience of starting and running a self-advocacy group and Ciara Evans from Mencap (United Kingdom) explained how people with intellectual disabilities can use media to campaign for their rights.

All sessions were led by self-advocates, with an exception of several guest speakers including Irena Kowalczyk – Kedziora from the Council of Europe and Kasia Jurczak from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights who emphasised the importance of involving people with intellectual disabilities in monitoring the implementation of legal measures designed to safeguard their rights.

"Know that we are here to stay! Believe in us! We must take risks and make our own choices. Listen! We have something to say. We are the experts!" concluded the self-advocates in the joint message developed at the end of the conference.

The 2nd conference of the European Platform of Self-Advocates was organised in cooperation with Inclusion Europe, Fenacerci, Cercipeniche and Inclusion International and supported by the European Commission and National Institute for Rehabilitation of Portugal.

About the organisers:

The European Platform of Self-Advocates (EPSA) is the alliance of national, regional as well as local organisations of self-advocates working together to strengthen the self-advocacy movement in Europe. <http://www.inclusion-europe.org/>

Inclusion Europe (IE) is the European voice and representation of over 70 member organisations of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Founded in 1988, Inclusion Europe has more than 20-year track record of successful operation and defending the rights of its constituency. <http://www.inclusion-europe.org/>

Inclusion International (II) is a global federation of family-based organisations advocating for human rights of people with intellectual disabilities worldwide. It represents over 200 member federations in 115 countries throughout five regions: Middle East and North Africa, Europe, Africa and the Indian Ocean, the Americas, and Asia Pacific. <http://www.inclusion-international.org/>

FENACERCI (Federação Nacional de Cooperativas de Solidariedade Social) is the institutional interlocutor between Social Solidarity Cooperatives and government bodies, promoting dialogue and developing projects with national and transnational partners in order to promote the rights of people with intellectual disabilities and their families and ensure quality and dignity of relevant services. <http://www.fenacerci.pt>

Cercipeniche is a non-profit entity of public utility whose mission is to support disadvantaged groups, including people with intellectual disabilities, in order to guarantee the right to exercise full citizenship. <http://www.cercipeniche.pt>

For more information, please contact

Petra Letavayova
Communications Officer
Inclusion Europe

<http://www.inclusion-europe.org/>

Tel: +32 2 502 28 15

Fax: +32 2 502 80 10

E-mail: p.letavayova@inclusion-europe.org