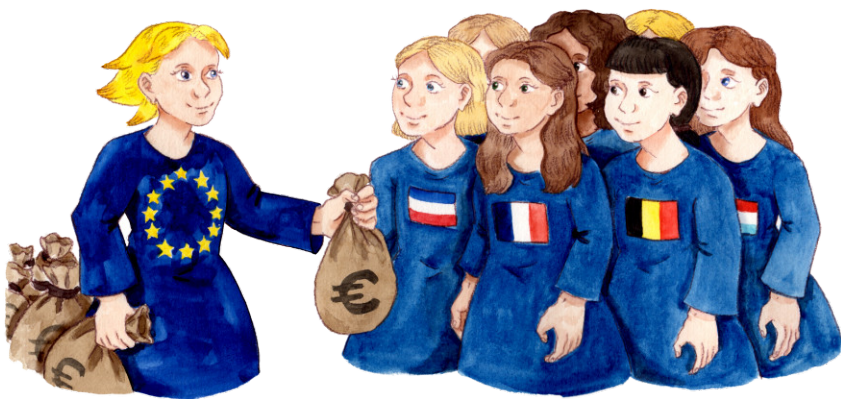




Europe for Us

European funds and de-institutionalisation



Find explanations for words in **bold** at the end of Europe for us on pages 23 to 30.

Europe for us is available in:

- English
- French
- German
- Hungarian
- Italian
- Dutch
- Romanian
- Spanish

Go to inclusion.eu/europe-for-us-magazine to find the other language versions.

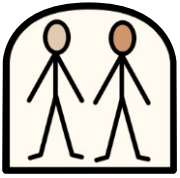
Illustrations by Caroline Portal

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People with disabilities in institutions





There are 1.5 million people with disabilities
In the European Union
that live in institutions.

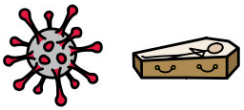


People with disabilities face many
problems in institutions.

For example,
the institution decides about what the person
will do every day.



Institutions don't allow people to have many friends,
and to do the things they want.
Many people may experience
abuse and violence in institutions.



During COVID-19, many people
with disabilities died in institutions.



The European Union needs to
support deinstitutionalisation.

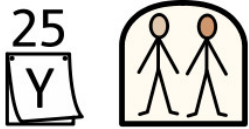
A story from Romania by Elisabeta Moldovan

Elisabeta Moldovan

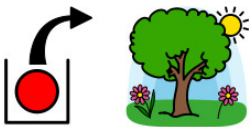




I'm Elisabeta Moldovan from Ceva de spus.
Ceva de spus is a self-advocacy association
with people with different kinds of disabilities,
not only intellectual disability.



I was abandoned when I was six weeks old
and I grew up for 25 years in different institutions
for persons with disabilities.



When I was 25 years old,
a group of Americans came to our institution
and they took me out of the institution
for a summer, for three months.



Then I started to have a sense
of what the community feels like.
Before that moment I didn't know
what is living in community.



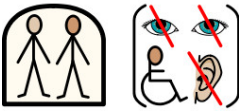
I didn't know what a family is.
I didn't know what friends are.
Because in an institution you only
meet the employees and the colleagues
who are living there.



In the institution where I lived,
there were around 500 or 600 persons.



So, when I was 25 years old,
I decided that I must run away.
For one month, the police searched for me.



And I decided to go to a foundation,
an organization for people with disabilities.
I found one. And they started to work with me.



In there, I learned things that I never learned before.
For seven years, I lived in that foundation.
And in 2012, I decided that I want to be an independent
woman.

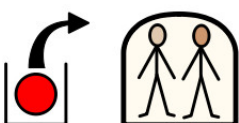


And I started to know more organizations.
I heard about EPSA and Inclusion Europe.
EPSA is the European Platform of Self-Advocates.
I've been a member in EPSA for eight years.

And I learned a lot about what it means
to be a self-advocate.



Since I became a self-advocate,
I learned a lot about my rights and
how to work with people that still live in institutions.



For many people, it is very hard
to get out of an institution
at a certain age.



In 2019 Ceva de spus started a project to help people get out of the institutions.



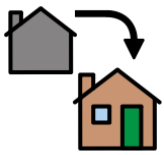
We started with six people who came out of the institution.



Slowly we started helping other people. One or two persons got out of institutions every year.



Some of them saw me as an example, They were inspired and they decided, after a year, to live independently also.



Some people would then move out of the sheltered houses, and they moved into their own rented apartments.



Everybody has a job and there is a team that still offers them services in the community.

At the beginning, they had services for 24 hours, but now only when they need it.



I have five jobs right now.

One of my jobs is to be a self-advocate.



I go to different meetings, and I do advocacy.
Today, I've been a speaker in three places
before this one, where I had to speak about my life,
for children or for adults in companies.



And I believe that each self-advocate can speak about
himself.



What is important is that a person
with a disability is allowed to talk,
even if that person makes mistakes.
Because we learn from mistakes.
Parents should let their children be self-advocates.



Many parents fear that their children
will not be able to do this.

That's why it's important that
people with disabilities have support,
so they can start to know their rights.



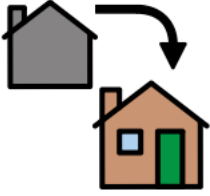
This is how they learn how to be a self-advocate.
And it's important that their voice should be heard.

What is deinstitutionalisation





To end segregation of people with disabilities in institutions, governments need to support moving people out from care institutions to their own home and with a support they can rely on.



That process is called deinstitutionalisation.



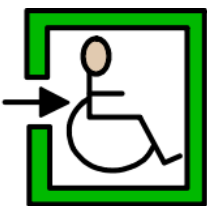
The European Union has improved the lives of people with disabilities by setting up different ways to support deinstitutionalisation.

Independent living



Independent living means that persons with disabilities can make their own decisions.

Who they live with and organise their lives.



Persons with disabilities need accessibility to be independent.



Persons with disabilities need accessibility of the environment and the transport.



The information and communication about community-based services needs to be easy to understand.

Community based services

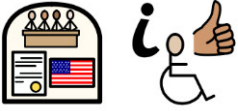


Community-based services mean that persons with disabilities must have access to various services that enable them to live and be part of the community.

Services that need to be accessible for people so that they can live independently are housing, health care, education, employment, culture and leisure.



End segregation of persons with disabilities



To achieve full inclusion and end the segregation of person with disabilities governments must work closely with organisations of people with disabilities.

Governments need to work closely with self-advocacy organisations.



Support services need to be organised around what the person wants and needs to do.

Not on what the organisation decides.

This is sometimes called person centred support.



People with disabilities have the right to

- live independently
- make their own decisions
- be part of the community
- and enjoy their full rights.





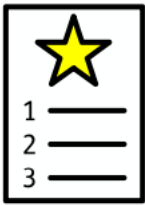
In the European Union,
some persons with disabilities
have their rights violated because
they are still segregated in institutions.



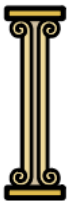
Especially people with intellectual disabilities
and with complex support needs.



Complex support needs means when someone needs
help with many things, for example with talking with
others, taking care of themselves, getting around etc.



The European Disability Rights Strategy
is the main way of the European Union
to implement the UN CRPD.



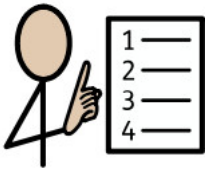
The European Pillar of Social Rights
promotes accessibility and independence
in education, work, housing,
and person-centred care.



European funds (money) help some people
get out of institutions.
European funds also help paying for some services for
people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)

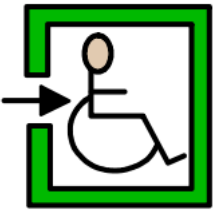




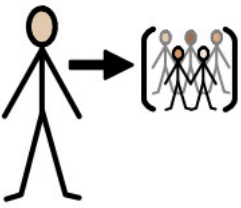
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) says that every person with disability has rights.



Rights to live independently and to be included in community.



Rights to have access to education, health, work and employment.



Rights to fully participate in political and public life. And many more rights.



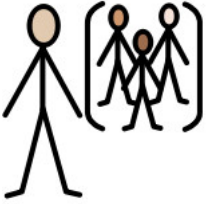
Every country of the EU and the EU have signed the CRPD.

The European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based care (EEG)

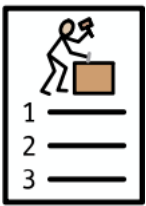




EEG is short for the “European Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care”.



The EEG is a group of organisations who work on getting people out of institutions and into the community.



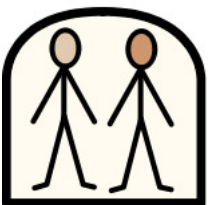
Inclusion Europe is an active member of the EEG. EEG develops reports, guidelines and trainings to support people with disabilities.

Paper from (EEG) about EU funds

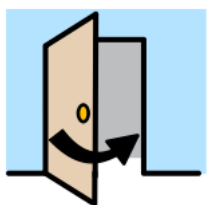


Read the paper [here](#).

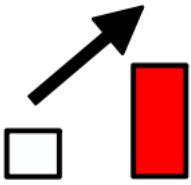
Everyone has the right to live in the community, to make choices about their life, and to get support when they need it.



Keeping people in institutions goes against these basic human rights.



Even though most EU countries promised to close institutions and support people to live in the community, the number of people in institutions has not gone down.



It has gone up in the last 10 years.



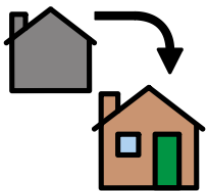
What does EU funding have to do with this?



The EU gives money to member countries.

This is called EU funds.

Read more about the EU in easy to read [here](#).



These funds could be used to:

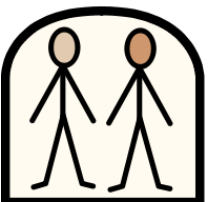
- Help people move out of institutions,
- Give families the help they need to stay together,
- Build accessible housing and services in the community.

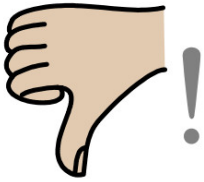


But sometimes, this money is used the wrong way.

In some countries, EU funds have been used to:

- Build or renovate institutions,
- Move people from big institutions to small ones that are still not part of the community,
- Fund services without involving the people affected.





This makes the problem worse for people living in the institutions.

What needs to happen?

The EEG says EU money must be used to:



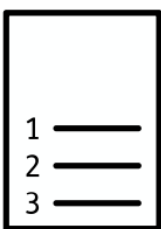
- Stop building or fixing institutions, even small ones.



- Support people to live in the community, with personal assistance, home care, and accessible housing.



- Help families, so children don't end up in institutions.
- Listen to the people affected, like people with disabilities, children, and people without housing, and include them in the decisions.

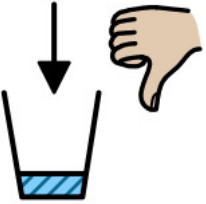


- Make sure countries show clear plans to close institutions and report how they are using the money.

Examples of countries using EU funds wrongly



Many Member States have failed to use EU funds to support people with intellectual disabilities.



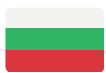
The CRPD Committee has criticised several Member States because their deinstitutionalisation strategies are inadequate or non-existent.



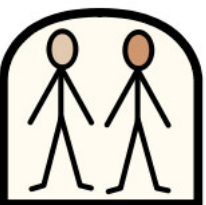
Austria



The Government of Austria has used the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to build six segregated living facilities and two sheltered workshops for adults with disabilities.



Bulgaria



The Bulgarian Government has used ESIF Funds. ESIF means European Structural and Investment Funds. They build many residential care facilities for people with disabilities and older people.



Hungary



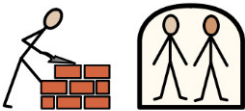
In a call of proposals, institutions providing social care services for more than 50 persons each were encouraged to apply for grants funded by the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF).



There are no plans for closing down large residential institutions.



Portugal



The ERDF was used to co-fund the building of a new institution for 16 persons with disabilities in Azores and in several other locations.



Romania



There was an ERDF for the opening of sheltered housing and daycare centres for adults with disabilities.

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



Charter of Fundamental Rights

A paper that says what basic rights every person has.
For example, the right to freedom, the right to education.



Commissioner at the European Commission

A Commissioner is a person who is responsible
for a field of work at the European Commission
and manages a lot of people.



Community

People that belong to something.

For example, neighbourhood community.

People who live in the same neighbourhood.

Or religious community.

People who have the same religion.



Community-based services

Support given by people from the community.



Convention

An agreement between countries or

organisations which talks about many topics.



Deinstitutionalisation

Deinstitutionalisation is helping people
to move out of institutions.

It is when the people who lived in institutions get help
so they can live independently in the community.



Educate

Educate means to teach.

It means to make sure people have access to training so they can learn new skills.



European Union

The European Union (in short, EU) is a group of 27 countries.

We call these countries “member states”.

They have joined together to be stronger politically and economically.

The EU makes laws on many important things for the people who live in those countries.

The EU makes laws in different areas.

Some examples are:

- laws to protect the environment
- laws for farmers
- laws to protect consumers

A consumer is someone who buys things.

The EU also makes laws that are important for people with disabilities.

It also made a law that gives people with disabilities more rights when they are travelling.

The EU also gives money to its member states.

Some of this money is used for people with disabilities.



Fund

To give money to someone or to an organisation which helps people or organisations.



Inclusion Europe

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

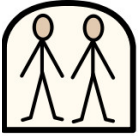
We fight for their equal rights and inclusion in Europe.

We also want to make a difference to the laws in Europe.

We started in 1988.

We have 79 members in 39 European countries.

We are based in Brussels in Belgium.



Institutions

Institutions are places where people with intellectual disabilities live with other people with intellectual disabilities.

They live apart from other people.

This is what we call “segregated”.

Sometimes this happens against their will.

People who live in institutions have to follow the rules of the institution and cannot decide for themselves.



Intellectual disability

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.

There are things that can make life easier for people with intellectual disabilities.

For example, information in easy to read language.

Some people say learning disabilities instead of intellectual disabilities.



NGO **Non-governmental organisations**

Non-governmental organisations, or NGOs are generally defined as nonprofit and independent of governmental influence.



Organisation

A group of people who work for the same thing.



Segregation

Segregation is when someone is set apart from others for an unfair reason.

For example, because of their disability.



Self-advocacy

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

These people are called self-advocates.



Services

Support for people with disabilities.



Training

A class often given at work where people learn new things.



Ambitions. Rights. Belonging.

Contact us and share your self-advocacy stories!



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