

Advocating with and for persons with intellectual disabilities: key findings of FRA projects



Equality Bodies tackling discrimination against persons with intellectual disabilities

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FRA's work on the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities

- Fundamental rights of persons with intellectual disabilities and persons with mental health problems
 - Right to vote
 - Independent living
 - Legal capacity
- Political participation of persons with disabilities
- Violence against children with disabilities
- Right to independent living of persons with disabilities
- Mainstreaming in other FRA work
 - Multiple and intersectional discrimination in access to healthcare

Key findings: impact of the CRPD

- CRPD demands new approach to key issues concerning persons with disabilities
- Cross-cutting equality and non-discrimination provision creates new opportunities for law and policy (and Equality Bodies) beyond employment
- Major changes are underway in national law and policy

Key findings: persons with intellectual disabilities

- Persons with intellectual disabilities face particular discrimination and stigmatisation
- The specific barriers faced by persons with intellectual disabilities are often not factored in to law and policy
- Self-advocacy is essential in achieving the promise of ‘nothing about us, without us’

Key findings: political participation

- **Legal capacity:** people deprived of legal capacity may sometimes or always be deprived of the right to vote
- **Accessibility:** often thought of in terms of physical accessibility of the built environment, excluding accessibility of information and communications
- **Rights awareness :** people don't know their rights so don't claim them, particularly when complaints procedures are inaccessible

Key findings: independent living

- **Limited opportunities for inclusion:** segregation in education and employment reduce opportunities to be included in community life
- **Lack of choice and control:** over where and with whom to live due to persisting institutionalisation, limited housing and support options, and financial restrictions
- **Absence of adequate support services:** lack of suitable, freely-chosen and individualised support, particularly personal assistance

Key findings: violence against children with disabilities

- **Type and degree of disability:**
 - children with intellectual disabilities at higher risk of violence
 - children with multiple and severe impairments, and children who communicate in non-traditional ways are particularly vulnerable
- **Intersection with other characteristics:** creates multiple layers of risk
 - girls with intellectual disabilities particularly at risk of sexual abuse
 - poverty increases vulnerability to violence
 - minority ethnic/migration background increases risk of violence
- **Self-advocacy/capacity building:** exclusion from opportunities to build self-confidence and communicate problems means abuse less likely to be reported

What next? Improving the accessibility of information and communication materials



What next? Complaints as an advocacy tool

- Making complaints mechanisms accessible:
 - only 6 EUMS provide information about how and where to complain about voting problems on accessible websites
 - EU child helpline is not accessible in all Member States
- Ensuring legal capacity is not a barrier to making a complaint
- Support people with intellectual disabilities to lodge complaints
- Training for staff involved in complaints procedures

What next? CRPD monitoring

- Addressing the specific needs of people with intellectual disabilities
- Systematically engaging with self-advocates and organisations of people with intellectual disabilities
- Making use of FRA and other research on the situation of people with intellectual disabilities

For more information

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