

Autism-Europe

Making Communications Easy-to-Read

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Our strategy to promote accessible communication

Website



- In 2017, Autism-Europe created a new website.
- The new website offers greater all-round accessibility. The website adheres to accessibility criteria. It is compatible with technology to allow non-seeing people to listen to the text.
- People can also adjust the visual element of the website to suit their sensory needs (cognitive and sensory overload is a common difficulty for people on the autism spectrum).
- Developed with **WordPress**, which adheres to the WCAG 2.0 guidelines, covering a wide range of recommendations to make the **web content more accessible**

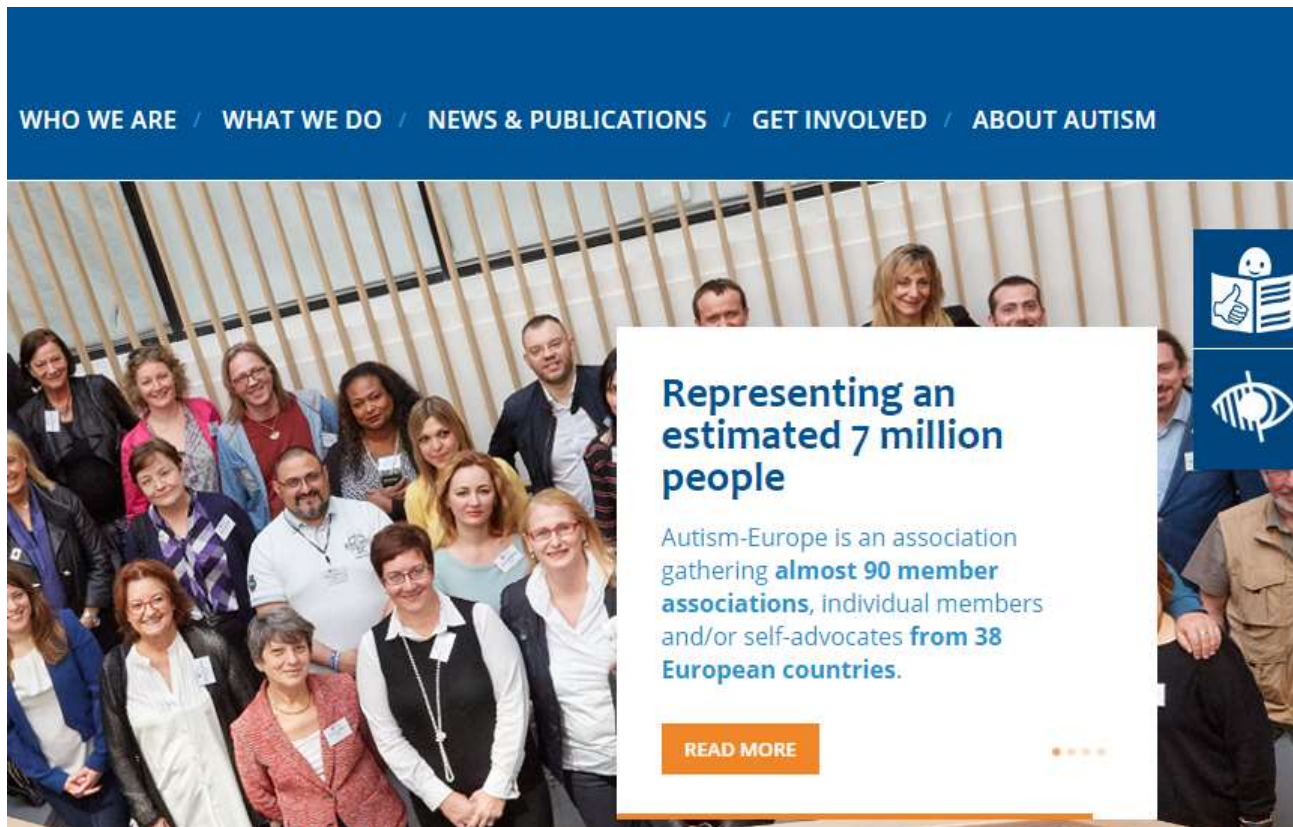
Website

- Most importantly, we created an interface in easy-to-read language (English and French).
- The easy-to-read interface boosts the involvement of autistic people in our activities.
- We have started editing our newsletter (issued 6 times each year) in an easy to read version. This has been a great success and has seen more people actively reading the newsletter.
- We will soon launch an online forum for people on the autism spectrum to discuss issues important to them.

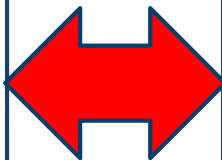


Website

The easy-to-read interface can be easily accessed when you enter our website. You simply need to find the easy-to-read logo, and click on it:



Website



Simplified menu with pictograms



Autism-Europe



Who we are



What we do



News




Get involved



About autism

Home page

	Welcome to Autism-Europe's website.
	Autism-Europe is a European organisation.
	We work to protect the rights of autistic people.
	On this website you can learn about our work.
	You can choose a subject from the menu above.
	Just click on what you want and you can read more.

The home page of the easy-to-read website is simple in design.

This avoids too much visual stimulation.

It allows users to focus on the text, and to easily navigate without getting lost.



Other areas where Autism-Europe uses Easy- to-Read communication



For learning purposes


We often translate text about our EU-funded projects into easy-to-read language.

We did this, for example, for our project TRASE on sexual education for person with learning difficulties.

TRASE

Training in Sexual Education for People with Disabilities



This information is easy to read !

What is the TRASE project?

TRASE is a European project. It will explain how to teach people about sex and relationships.

The project will last for two years.

How will we teach people?

We will create objects and activities for learning.

We will show people how to teach others About sex and relationships.

Why is this project important?

People with disabilities feel love and sexual feelings just like everyone else.

All people need to know about sex and relationships to stay safe.

Human rights are about being treated in a good and fair way.

Every disabled person has the same rights as everyone else.

It is a right to know about sex and relationships.

Who can take the TRASE course?

People who want to teach about sex and relationships.

Who are we?

Seven partners work on the TRASE project. Each partner comes from a different country.


We come from:

- Germany
- Austria
- Belgium
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Portugal
- United Kingdom

Some partners know a lot about sex education. Some partners know a lot about disability.

Visit the website: www.traseproject.com

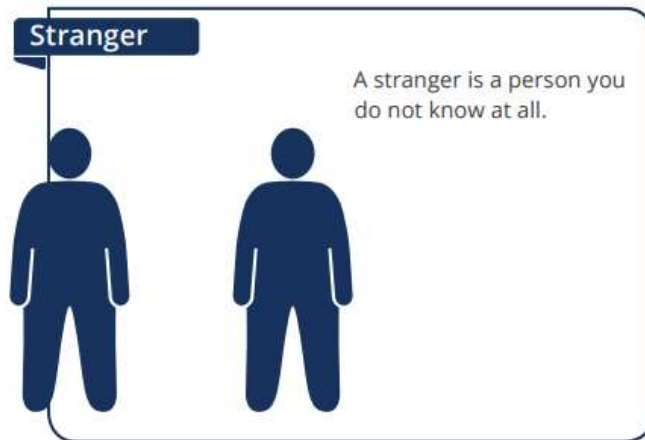
This project has been funded with support from the European Commission, under the Erasmus+ programme. This publication reflects the views only of the author and not the Commission. The Commission cannot be held responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



For learning purposes

We also used our knowledge to help project partners develop tools in easy-to-read language that can be used by persons with learning difficulties.

Here are two examples from a “Word Bank” on sexual education created for the TRASE project. It defines key terms related to sexuality.



Why is Autism-Europe using Easy-to-read communication?



Informing people with high support needs

- Autism-Europe is the representative body of autistic people and their families in the EU
- We need to ensure we can communicate with as many of the people we represent as possible
- We want to keep people with learning disabilities informed and involved in the work we do
- We want to keep them informed about what the EU is doing
- We want them to know what rights they have, and to be able to demand that these rights are respected.



Encouraging participation

- We also want to be able to represent the needs and interests of all autistic people
- We therefore need to provide a platform for people to tell us their thoughts
- We must make the information and consultation process as accessible as possible
- We can therefore use what they say to form the way we advise policy makers
- We can then represent the wider interests of the autism spectrum



It is core to our values

- Our current awareness campaign is called “Breaking barriers together for autism: Let’s create an accessible society”.
- We are trying to convince decision-makers, companies, and individuals to take action to make our society more accessible for autistic people.
- We decided to lead by example in making our website and communications accessible.



The methodology for writing easy-to-read phrases

Writing simply

As our methodological basis we use the European standards drawn up through the work of Inclusion-Europe.

You can find the guide online: <http://easy-to-read.eu/>



Information for all
European standards for making information easy to read and understand

The graphic features a 2x2 grid of icons: an open book with a pen, a computer monitor with an @ symbol and keyboard, a boombox with an ear icon, and a computer monitor with a camera and an eye icon. A small icon of a person with a speech bubble is in the top right corner of the graphic.



 Lifelong Learning Programme


 Inclusion Europe

Produced in the framework of the project
Pathways to adult education for people with intellectual disabilities

Key rules to obey: words

- Use easy to understand words that people will know well.
- If you need to use difficult words, make sure you always explain them clearly.
- Use examples to explain things. Try to use examples that people will know from their everyday lives
- Use the same word to describe the same thing throughout your document



Key rules to obey: words

- Do not use difficult ideas such as metaphors.
- Do not use words from other languages unless they are very well known
- Avoid acronyms, put the whole name instead (i.e. “United Nations” not “UN”)
- If the acronyms are very well-known you can exceptionally use them, but should still explain them first (i.e. European Union – EU)
- Try not to use percentages and big numbers. Instead, use words like “few” and “many” to explain what you mean



Key rules to obey: Sentences

- Always keep your sentences short.
- Speak to people directly. Use words like “you” to do this
- Use positive sentences rather than negative ones where possible.
- Use active language rather than passive language where possible.

i.e. The boy was seen by the girl



The girl saw the boy



- Where possible use simple sentences the with one single subject, and avoiding subordinate clause:

i.e. The boy, whose hat was red, went to the supermarket.



The boy had a red hat.

He went to the supermarket.



Key rules to obey: Structure

- Always put your information in an order that is easy to understand and follow.
- Group all information about the same topic together.
- It is OK to repeat important information. It is OK to explain difficult words more than once



The layout

And, if your communications fully follow the European guidelines, don't forget to put the easy-to-read logo on your communications. This way people can easily find them, and will know that they offer simplified information:



**What other techniques
does Autism-Europe use?**

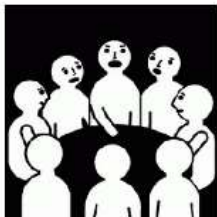
The layout

We separate every sentence by a line. This shows clearly where one sentence starts and another finishes. It also means that readers are not intimidated by the amount of text and can process it one square at a time.

It also helps clarify to which sentence the pictogram refers.



The conference happened in the city of Brussels, in Belgium.



At the conference people talked about many different subjects.

The layout

Other than the text and the pictogram, we try to keep each page clear from other visuals.

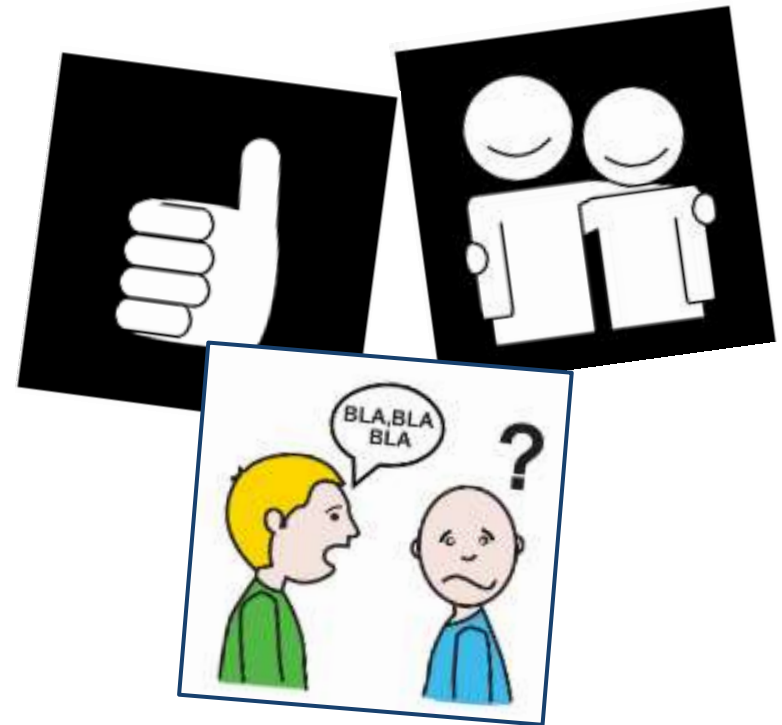
We keep the background a simple white colour to avoid visual overstimulation and confusion.

When we do printed materials, we avoid using multiple columns. We just use one column with the text going from top to bottom

	What is Autism-Europe?
	Autism-Europe is a European organisation.
	We work with the people who make laws in Europe.
	We ask them to respect autistic people.

The layout

- To make the text easily readable, it is advisable to use the font Arial, and to use a large font size.
- We also advise that you use pictograms to facilitate understanding wherever possible.
- We typically use one pictogram for each sentence.



Choosing pictograms

- When a specific person is mentioned we try to use a photograph
- Otherwise, we typically use simple drawn pictograms
- Sometimes these pictures contain easily recognisable symbols



The name of the Vice-President is Pietro Cirrincione.



He is from Italy.



He is autistic.

Choosing pictograms

- We take our images from Picto Selector, a free website for visual support: pictoselector.eu
- There is a database of images you can search for
- When we do not find an image that matches our needs, we adapt the image using photoshop.



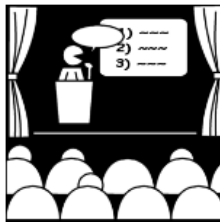
Welcome to Autism-Europe's website.



She is a mother with an autistic son.

Pinpointing terms that need explaining

- When possible we should avoid difficult words
- Sometimes, however, you cannot avoid them
- In these cases you must explain the term in the sentence after its use. For example:



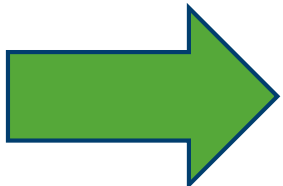
A conference is when lots of people come together to talk about a particular subject.



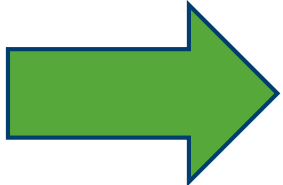
Decision makers are people who help make new laws.

Selecting information to include

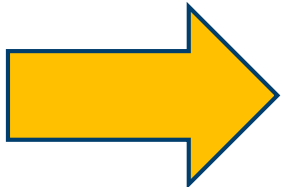
Too much information can prevent understanding. You should think carefully about what information you will keep in your writing.



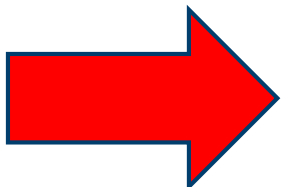
Your core idea: This is the main thing to communicate. This is the information you must keep in your writing.



Information needed to understand the context: For example explanations of words or concepts. This is necessary to facilitate understanding and cannot be left out



Information of interest to target audience: This is not really central, but might be interesting to the reader. You can keep this in if the information does not require lots of additional explanation



Complicated and non-essential information: Keeping this in will stop people understanding the main idea of the text. It is better to leave this out.

Questions?



Sponsors



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Thanks for your listening

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