

# Autism-Europe's Campaign Manifesto

## Break Barriers Together for Autism: Let's Build an Accessible Society

March 2018 marks eleven years since the opening for signature of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and its optional protocol. However, despite the fact that it has been ratified by the EU and almost all Member States, its implementation is still lacking in many areas.

On the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day (April 2), Autism-Europe is calling for policy-makers across the EU to take a strong commitment to removing the many barriers still preventing people on the autism spectrum from enjoying their human rights.

Our 2017-2018 campaign focuses particularly on accessibility, carrying the title “**Break Barriers Together for Autism- Let's Build an Accessible Society**”.

Autism affects one in every one hundred people, meaning that in Europe there are currently around five million people on the autism spectrum. Despite growing awareness of what autism is, far too many autistic people and their families consider that the condition is not understood.

It is crucial that decision-makers across Europe, as well as society as a whole, gain a better understanding of autism, and act to remove existing obstacles preventing the full inclusion and participation of autistic people.

To foster an accessible and inclusive society for all, Autism-Europe thus calls on policy makers to:

### **1. Adopt a strong and effective European Accessibility Act, in which the needs of people on the autism spectrum are addressed**

In line with the obligations set out by the UNCRPD, on the 2 December 2015 the European Commission published a proposal for a [European Accessibility Act](#). Once this proposal is adopted, it should lead to common accessibility requirements covering certain products and services across the EU, making them accessible for EU citizens with disabilities.

**Autism-Europe calls on policy makers at the EU and member state level to ensure that a strong and effective Accessibility Act is adopted, in line with the [recommendations of the disability movement](#). This is essential in order to have a real impact on the lives of millions of people with disabilities across the European Union. The Act should notably include a comprehensive set of accessibility requirements, also addressing the range of cognitive and sensory needs of people on the autism spectrum.**

### **2. Work alongside the autism community to identify and remove the specific barriers faced by people on the autism spectrum**

With this campaign we aim at highlighting the specific barriers to accessibility faced by people with autism. In order to respond to their accessibility needs, it is essential to consult and cooperate with autistic people and their families to gain a sound understanding of their experiences and foster innovative solutions.

For example, to promote access to the labour market, accommodations can be made to adapt



inaccessible recruitment procedures and workplace structures, allowing people on the spectrum to join the world of work, and in turn allowing employers to benefit from their skills and talents.

**We urge decision-makers, professionals, business leaders and the general public to consult and to cooperate with people on the autism spectrum and their representative organisations to make society more autism-friendly in all areas of life to ensure compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.**

### Break Barriers Together for Autism- Let's build an Accessible Society



The slogan “Break barriers together for autism- let’s build an accessible society” is both a call for action, and an invitation to work on improving accessibility in cooperation with people on the autism spectrum and their representative organisations.

Breaking barriers to inclusion requires the guidance and experience of people with autism and their families, and they must be involved in the development of solutions for accessibility at every stage, according to the motto of the disability movement “nothing about us, without us”.

The campaign is transnational, and Autism-Europe works side by side with its association members to spread awareness of what barriers exist for people with autism, and what needs to be done to overcome them.

**To get involved in the campaign, contact our Communications Officer at:** communication[at]autismeurope.org or call us at +32 2 675 75 05



**About Autism-Europe:** we are an international association whose main objective is to advance the rights of people with autism and their families and to help them improve their quality of life. You can find out more information on our activities by [going to our website](#).

**About autism:** You can find out more information about autism itself by [going to our website](#).