

Improving the lives of autistic people and their families through an autism strategy

THE CASE OF MALTA

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PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY AND ACTIVE AGEING

The Maltese Experience

Malta – a small country with a big heart

We pride ourselves on inclusion, making it our mission to eradicate exclusion



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Malta's Autism Strategy

Inclusion at its Core

Booklet with best-practice indicators

VS

Result of being ***active in the field, reaching out*** to a number of different stakeholders



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Leaving No One Behind

A *workable* strategy

Address the *real needs* of the people on the ground

Take stock of *contributions of all different stakeholders*

Appropriately *tailor to the specific situation* of a territory

Acknowledge the gaps in the system, while *being ambitious*



Leaving No One Behind

Meeting with Families & Autistic Persons

Trends and patterns: not just addressing the **what**, but also the **how**

Example: Need for early detection & intervention

generally documented reasons

vs

country-specific nuance



Leaving No One Behind

Contact with Schools

Sessions to meet with parents, teachers
and administrators

Discussing *structured trainings* over the
coming months



Leaving No One Behind

Reaching out to Service Providers

Acknowledging their role, in fields such as early intervention and provision of supports

Starting an equal dialogue with all of them

Ensuring that services delivered are beneficial, and delivered according to the highest standards possible



Leaving No One Behind

Empowering Self-Advocacy

Transitioning to adult life

Breaking past Overprotection

Increasing Services

Ensuring a Voice to Persons on the Spectrum

Right skilling and structures



Leaving No One Behind

Empowering Self-Advocacy

Specific Advisory *Working Group*

Autism Spectrum *Town Hall*

Participation in *Advocacy & Peer Support Conference* Abroad

Creating Multipliers – Seed for Civil Society Grouping



Real Inclusion

Inclusive *not just by providing services ensuring equality of opportunity, **but;***

Inclusive ***by removing any bumps on the road towards full inclusion***



Real Inclusion

Inclusion is not just about ensuring inclusive facilities

if we forgot about ensuring inclusive societies too



Real Inclusion

a more inclusive society would focus more on service provision, support and integration, and less on having to protect a group of citizens from the stares of other citizens

Real inclusion simply means meeting the other side half-way



Beyond Awareness

Awareness is Useless – if we don't do anything about it

Ethos of Autism Act & National Strategy

Awareness
Acceptance
Inclusion
Empowerment



Malta's Recommendations – Autism-Europe's Recommendations

All initiatives to be designed in partnership with autism organisations and civil society representatives

Holistic approach is needed to address the challenges faced by people on the autism spectrum, across the life-cycle

Nothing About Us, Without Us
– UN Convention Mantra



Responsibilities of Decision-Makers

Take heed of what the people we represent are asking us for

While *exercising wisdom and following advice* on best practices

Duty to *become more aware*

We have to lead the drive towards acceptance



Responsibility of Decision-Makers

We have to believe in inclusion, and promote this belief among the people we represent



Empowerment

It is for the whole of society

Empowered politicians are the key to empowered societies

National level - agenda for change through inclusive national autism strategies

European level - driving forward the efforts towards discussion of a European Autism Strategy



THANK YOU