

# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE

#Autismday2023



## Conference at the European Parliament for World Autism Awareness Day

# Key Building Blocks for an Inclusive Society for Autistic People



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Autism-Europe's congress 'Hope is not a dream' in 1996 (Barcelona, Spain)

- Autism-Europe celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1983-2023)
- AE has 90 member organisations in 40 countries
- AE represents ~ 7 million autistic people across Europe

# Autism-Europe and the European Parliament

Autism Europe  Autisme Europe

## CHARTER FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM

People with autism should share the same rights and privileges enjoyed by all of the European population where such are appropriate and in the best interests of the person with autism.

These rights should be enhanced, protected, and enforced by appropriate legislation in each state.

The United Nations declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971) and the Rights of Handicapped Persons (1975) and other relevant declarations on Human rights should be considered and in particular, for people with autism the following should be included.

1. THE RIGHT of people with autism to live independent and full lives to the limit of their potential;
2. THE RIGHT of people with autism to an accessible, unbiased and accurate clinical diagnosis and assessment;
3. THE RIGHT of people with autism to accessible and appropriate education;
4. THE RIGHT of people with autism (and their representatives) to be involved in all decisions affecting their future; the wishes of the individual must be, as far as possible, ascertained and respected;
5. THE RIGHT of people with autism to accessible and suitable housing;
6. THE RIGHT of people with autism to the equipment, assistance and support services necessary to live a fully productive life with dignity and independence;
7. THE RIGHT of people with autism to an income or wage sufficient to provide adequate food, clothing, accommodation and the other necessities of life;
8. THE RIGHT of people with autism to participate, as far as possible, in the development and management of services provided for their wellbeing;
9. THE RIGHT of people with autism to appropriate counselling and care for their physical, mental and spiritual health; this includes the provision of appropriate treatment and medication administered in the best interest of the individual with all protective measures taken;
10. THE RIGHT of people with autism to meaningful employment and vocational training without discrimination or stereotype; training and employment should have regard to the ability and choice of the individual;
11. THE RIGHT of people with autism to accessible transport and freedom of movement;
12. THE RIGHT of people with autism to participate in and benefit from culture, entertainment, recreation and sport;
13. THE RIGHT of people with autism of equal access to and use of all facilities, services and activities in the community;
14. THE RIGHT of people with autism to sexual and other relationships, including marriage, without exploitation or coercion;
15. THE RIGHT of people with autism (and their representatives) to legal representation and assistance and to the full protection of all legal rights;
16. THE RIGHT of people with autism to freedom from fear or threat of unwarranted incarceration in psychiatric hospitals or any other restrictive institution;
17. THE RIGHT of people with autism to freedom from abusive physical treatment or neglect;
18. THE RIGHT of people with autism to freedom from pharmacological abuse or misuse;
19. THE RIGHT of access of people with autism (and their representatives) to all information contained in their personal, medical, psychological, psychiatric and educational records.

Presented at the 4th Autism-Europe Congress, Den Haag, May 10th, 1992.  
Adopted as a Written Declaration by the European Parliament on May 9th, 1996.

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In 1996, the EP adopts Autism-Europe's *Charter for Persons with Autism* as a Written Declaration

The EP adopts in 2015 the *Written Declaration on Autism*



2014 - 2019

27.4.2015

0018/2015

## WRITTEN DECLARATION

submitted under Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure  
on autism

Nicola Caputo (S&D), Enrico Gasbarra (S&D), Miriam Dalli (S&D), Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE), Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE), Renata Briano (S&D), Péter Niedermüller (S&D), Maite Pagazaurtundúa Ruiz (ALDE), Daniel Buda (PPE), Barbara Kappel (NI), Lampros Fountoulis (NI), Milan Zver (PPE), Ivo Vajgl (ALDE), Tibor Szanyi (S&D), Kostas Chrysogonos (GUE/NGL), Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE), Biljana Borzan (S&D), Marek Plura (PPE), José Blanco López (S&D), Ivan Štefanec (PPE), Dubravka Šuica (PPE), Eleftherios Synadinos (NI), Demetris Papadakis (S&D), Igor Šoltés (Verts/ALE), Eduard Kukan (PPE), Eva Kaili (S&D), Momchil Nekov (S&D), Marlene Mizzi (S&D), Laurențiu Rebegea (S&D), Mara Bizzotto (NI), Georgios Epitideios (NI)

Lapse date: 27.7.2015

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# Current challenges preventing full enjoyment of rights & inclusion

Autistic people face:

- Generalised lack of support
- Discrimination in all areas of life (ex: insufficient and delayed access to diagnosis and support)
- Exclusion from the education system
- High rates of unemployment across Europe (up to 90%)
- Denied access to healthcare

# The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Evelyne Friedel (Autism-Europe's former president and vice president) speaking at a United Nations briefing session on behalf of autistic people (2009)



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

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its Optional Protocol (OP) were adopted on 13 December 2006, as the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It entered into force on 3 May 2008.



The rights of autistic people protected by the UN CRPD are not being effectively translated into practice across the EU



# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE *MEANS ...*

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UNDERSTANDING AUTISM AND VALUING  
AUTISTIC PEOPLE

- Fighting harmful prejudices and discrimination
- Increasing understanding of autism in society
- Addressing biases: (delayed) diagnosis for girls, women and minorities
- Promoting public awareness campaigns
- Providing systematic training on autism



‘Maja’ from the ‘You don’t look autistic’ series, Joanna Musial (Poland)  
Autism-Europe’s WAAD 2023 photo competition, European Parliament

# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE *MEANS* ...

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## EMPOWERING AUTISTIC PEOPLE

- Empowering autistic people to make daily choices about their own life
- Ensuring autistic people are able to enjoy their legal capacity (art. 12 UN CRPD)
- Replacing substituted decision-making by supported decision-making
- Ensuring the upcoming European and national elections are fully accessible to autistic people



‘Gaming with empathy’, Giulia Manfroni (Italy)  
Autism-Europe’s WAAD 2023 photo competition, European Parliament



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GUARANTEEING THE RIGHT SUPPORT FOR  
AUTISTIC PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE IN THE  
COMMUNITY

- Ensuring autistic people have access to different types and levels of support depending on needs and strengths
- Ensuring principles for autism are translated into practice
- Adopting ambitious policies and sufficient funding to develop and sustain quality community-based services



‘Matei’ from the ‘Through the Looking Glass’ series, Florin Popa (Romania)  
Autism-Europe’s WAAD 2023 photo competition, European Parliament

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ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE  
ACROSS ALL SECTORS (art. 9 UN CRPD)

- Creating an environment and communication style that accommodates and is sensitive to the needs of autistic people
- Designing autism inclusive spaces and services
- Rolling-out the EU Disability Card
- Ensuring freedom of movement across the EU for autistic people



‘Yannis’ from the ‘Through the Looking Glass’ series, Florin Popa (Romania)  
Autism-Europe’s WAAD 2023 photo competition, European Parliament

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## FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION

- Adopting strategic and integrated European approaches to address the needs of autistic people across Europe
- Encouraging Member States to adopt cross-sectoral national strategies or action plans in line with the UN CRPD

'You've got this', Maxence Caillaud-Houël (France)  
Autism-Europe's WAAD 2023 photo competition, European Parliament

# Thank you!

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