**Questionnaire on participation in decision-making**

On behalf of Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe, an organization who is committed to the idea of self-help and is the biggest representative of the interests of people with intellectual disabilities, I would like to point out a specific problem for people with intellectual disabilities in participation.

People with intellectual disabilies have special needs which have to be fulfilled in order to enable them to participate in legislative, policy and other decision-making processes. However, their special needs are almost always completely ignored.

People with intellectual disabilites need all the information concerning the process in “Leichter Sprache” (a special language with certain rules, which is easy to read and understand). The information has to be given to them well in advance of a scheduled day, since they need more time and often the help of their supporter in order to fully understand the matters involved and to decide which is important to them. These requirements are not fulfilled.

In hearings and other political events there is no adequate possibility for people with intellectual disabilies to participate, since no one else uses the “Leichte Sprache”. This makes it very hard for people with intellectual disabilities to understand the matters discussed and take part, especially because most people with intellectual disabilities need more time as other people to reflect on the issues involved.

Summing up it has to be said that even then when people with disabilities are invited to participate in legislative, policy and other decision-making processes the participation of people with intellectual disabilities is not ensured, because their special needs (leichte Sprache, the help of a supporter, enough time) are not fulfilled.

In addition I want to point out that even the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is not aware of the special needs of people with disabilities. Mr. Busch, a self-advocate for people with intellectual disabilities, was invited to present an oral statement as part of the German CRPD ALLIANCE on the Thematic Briefing on Germany on 26 March 2015. He had to speak English and had very little time for his speech. Although he is one of the fittest persons with intellectual disabilities engaged as self-advocate at the Bundesvereinigung Lebenshilfe, this was a big problem. His supporter had to write the translation for him. He could not express himself as he would have liked to. In consequence, most of the information which he would have liked to communicate to the Committee was lost. Therefore we would appreciate very much if the Committee too could take action on behalf of the participation on people with intellectual disabilities.

Kindest regards,

Bettina Leonhard

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