

LEGAL CAPACITY AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Ladies and gentlemen,

People deprived of legal capacity
can not make independent decisions concerning themselves and their lives.

In the Association for Self-Advocacy we believe this to be unfair.
All people should have the right to decide about things concerning
themselves and their life.

Deprivation of legal capacity takes a number of rights away from people.
For example, those deprived of legal capacity in Croatia can not participate
in elections or decide by themselves to get married.

Many persons deprived of legal capacity
can not decide for themselves where to live.
Their guardians make that decision for them.
Guardians often decide that it is best for the people under their care to live in
an institution.
A great number of people in Croatia are forced to live in institutions because
their guardians feel that it is in their best interest.
We believe that this is not right and that people should decide by themselves
where they want to live.

The members of the Association for Self-Advocacy struggle
to enable each person to decide as much as possible about things
concerning him or her, as well as his or her life.
That is precisely why legal capacity is an extremely important issue to us
and why we talk about it so often.

We have decided that it would be good to inform the public
about the difficulties encountered
by people deprived of legal capacity.

The Association for Self-Advocacy has already done a lot
in order to inform the public about the difficulties encountered
by those deprived of legal capacity.

This year we are working on a project titled "Together against barriers"
Along with the members of the Association for Self-Advocacy, other
members of self-advocacy groups from other Croatian towns also participate
in this project.

In the framework of the project “Together against barriers“ we plan to organise workshops for self-advocates.

During these workshops the issue of legal capacity will be discussed. We plan to talk about all the problems encountered by persons deprived of legal capacity.

We will talk about the ways in which this situation could be improved. We would like to change the law in order to permit people deprived of legal capacity to realize the rights currently denied to them.

By the end of 2007 we will organise a round-table conference. At this conference we will present the Declaration on Legal Capacity. The Declaration will state the points upon which all the self-advocates that participated in the workshops agree.

We will invite politicians, the media and the general public to this conference. We would like to present our Declaration to the greatest number of people possible.

We hope that many people will support our Declaration. This would help us demand the change of the legislation on legal capacity.

Finally, I would like to invite all people to try to work together on finding a solution for the problem of legal capacity deprivation.

Together we could influence the politicians and help solve the problem of those deprived of legal capacity. This way we would show that we can make decisions about our lives and fight for our rights.