



Research into advocacy

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mdac  
Mental Disability Advocacy Center

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## Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC)

MDAC advances the **human rights** of children and adults with actual or perceived intellectual or psycho-social (mental health) disabilities.

Focusing on Europe and central Asia, we use a combination of **law and advocacy** to promote equality and social integration.

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## MDAC's approach



- Partnerships with disability and human rights NGOs
- Strategic litigation in domestic and international courts
- Monitor human rights
- Advocate at national and EU/CoE/UN level
- Make recommendations

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## Strategic priorities

1. Autonomy
2. Institutions and communities
3. Integrity



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## Contexts (1) – on the ground

- closed institutions
- low awareness of rights
- 'learned helplessness'
- remoteness of institutions
- lack of communications (phone etc.)
- side effects of medication
- retribution
- no advocacy services
- no complaints mechanisms
- ineffective inspectorate mechanisms
- lack of civil legal aid
- lack of willing lawyers
- judicial capacity



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## Contexts (2) – in the policy sky

- Languages
- Best and worst practices
- The 'science' of psychiatry
- Economics of community living
- Stigma and stakeholders
- Few DPOs
- No academic interest
- Corruption



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## On the margins of each page

- Psycho-social disability / disability
- Disability / human rights
- Mental health / law
- Psycho-social and intellectual disabilities / human rights
- Mental health / health
- Mental health of people with intellectual disabilities / mental health
- Human rights / mental health reform
- Institutionalised people / intellectual disability

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## Using research in advocacy

- Cage beds
- Inspect!
- Guardianship
- Institutional monitoring
  
- User involvement



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## Challenges

- We need research to pursue evidence-based advocacy
- We are not researchers
- Influencing research agendas
- Finding good academics
- Access to information
- Dissemination
- Accessible formats

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[www.mdac.info](http://www.mdac.info)

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