

#AutismDay2024

European Awareness-Raising Campaign Toolkit 2024



**Not
invisible.**

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Funded by the European Union.

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1. Introduction

- [Autism-Europe's long-running awareness campaigns](#)

[Autism-Europe](#) (AE) is an international organisation based in Brussels focused on advancing the rights of autistic people and their families as well as helping them improve their quality of life. It ensures effective cooperation among almost 90 member autism organisations from 40 European countries, including 26 Member States of the European Union, governments and European and international institutions.

AE plays a key role in raising public awareness and in influencing European decision-makers on all issues relating to the rights of autistic people. Every year, around **World Autism Awareness Day**, AE works alongside its member organisations to carry out a campaign raising awareness about autism and the rights of autistic people across Europe.

This campaign toolkit brings together materials, strategies and recommendations on how you too can contribute to building momentum by conducting a successful awareness-raising campaign.

We hope that this year you will join us in spreading the word and that together we will foster positive and inclusive actions to build an inclusive society for autistic people.

- [What is World Autism Awareness Day?](#)

On 18 December 2007, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution 62/139, which declares that every **2 April** will mark World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD). This Day aims to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of autistic people so that they can lead full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society.

[More information here.](#)

2. The campaign

- The new multi-annual campaign

Starting in 2024, Autism-Europe is running a multi-annual awareness-raising campaign under the motto “**Not invisible**”. This new theme has a double objective:

1. It seeks to draw attention to the fact that autistic people’s needs are often made invisible in many areas. We want to raise awareness of the barriers and discrimination that autistic people face to advocate for their human rights to be upheld and supported in all areas of life, in line with the UN CRPD. We call for a society where autistic people are fully recognised and get the understanding, acceptance, and full enjoyment of the rights they deserve.
2. It aims to highlight that while autism is often described as an “invisible” disability, autistic people, their representative organisations and their support networks should be empowered and visible in all spaces and matters that concern them. Nothing about autistic people should be done without autistic people.

In 2024, the campaign will have a special focus on autism visibility in the European elections (taking place in June), while spreading key messages covering a wide range of topics – from access to employment to the European Disability Card. Through these messages, we aim to raise awareness of autistic people’s struggles and strengths, which remain often invisible in most parts of our societies.

Go through this toolkit to learn how to engage in our #AutismDay2024 campaign!

- Campaign pledge

Elections for the European Parliament will take place in June 2024. It is therefore important to seize this opportunity to influence future EU decision-makers and to encourage people to vote in the elections. As part of our campaign, we have drafted a pledge to encourage candidates to the European Parliament to uphold and promote the rights of autistic people.

We encourage you to reach out to your local candidates for the European Parliament and share the pledge with them. If they wish to support our campaign, ask them to take a photo signing the pledge, making the infinity gesture (see section “Photos with the infinity symbol gesture” on page 5), or holding our campaign poster.

[DOWNLOAD PLEDGE HERE](#)

[DOWNLOAD POSTER HERE](#)

- [Engage with public figures through events](#)

To raise awareness, why not reach out to politicians to organise an event?

You can involve a range of autism stakeholders in your country – and create a photo opportunity where national policy-makers could show their support for our 2024 campaign (as well as the pledge, more information above).

Photos could then be sent to media outlets in your country (or region) and shared on online communications channels, such as social media.

A similar approach could be taken with well-known public figures to spread the campaign messages.

- [Activities at the European Parliament](#)

On 2 April, Autism-Europe will have a stand at the European Parliament where current Members of the European Parliament who are up for re-election will be able to sign our pledge. In doing so, they will be pledging their support for autistic people and their rights in their future mandate.

We will provide more information about our stand soon, so stay tuned for the details!

- [Engagement with the media](#)

You can use our sample press release for the 2024 campaign. This document is designed to promote the campaign among your network and local media outlets. If you support our campaign, feel free to use it as a sample and adapt it to your organisation's own needs.

[DOWNLOAD THE PRESS RELEASE HERE](#)

- [How to support the campaign online?](#)

For this **#AutismDay2024**, we encourage the autism community and its stakeholders to join us online to support the **#AutismNotInvisible** campaign throughout April and beyond.

- [Photos with the infinity symbol gesture](#)

We want to amplify the voice of autistic people to share their experiences and vision to continue building a society where autistic people are visible and empowered! We would particularly like to highlight the day-to-day experiences of autistic people and their families/support networks.

So, we invite the autism community to share their pictures and messages on social media photos throughout April 2024, using our “Not Invisible” logo.



In these pictures, members and supporters could reproduce the infinity symbol using their hands, or for example, by forming the infinity sign with a group of people. There are multiple ways to recreate it in a creative and artistic manner!

The infinity symbol is a popular symbol among autistic people and autism rights advocates, symbolising a broad and varied spectrum of experiences. This symbol also represents the unity and strength of the autistic community.

This campaign gesture enhances the visibility of the campaign and encourages everyone to participate. To gain visibility, please use the hashtags **#AutismDay2024** and **#AutismNotInvisible**

- **Social media**

We prepared some messages and visuals to be shared on your social media channels **from 2 April through April 2024 (and even beyond)**, adapted in different formats.

[DOWNLOAD SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES HERE](#)

[DOWNLOAD VISUALS HERE \(English version\)](#)

[DOWNLOAD VISUALS HERE \(Translations\)](#)

The social media messages table contains also the text of the visuals: please reach out to us at secretariat@autismeurope.org if you would like them translated into your language. Feel free to adapt the captions we suggest to your local or national context and add extra resources.

[DOWNLOAD THE TRANSLATION TABLE HERE](#)

If you wish to make stories on social media, we can provide you with some templates to fill with your own messages.

[DOWNLOAD STORY TEMPLATES HERE](#)

Download one of the below options to add banners to your social media channels.

[DOWNLOAD SOCIAL MEDIA BANNERS](#)

Please use the hashtags #AutismDay2024 and #AutismNotInvisible, and tag us in any post related to our campaign you'll create.

Here's the list of our social media handles:

- Twitter - @AutismEurope
- Facebook - @autismeurope.AE
- Instagram - @autismeurope
- LinkedIn - @Autism-Europe aisbl

If you don't have time or resources to create your own social media posts, shares from AE's channels are always appreciated!

We highly recommend adding **alternative text (Alt text)** to your social media posts. Alt text can be added after the text, at the bottom of the post. Learn more on how to make your posts accessible [here](#).

● [Visual identity](#)

The "Not Invisible" campaign visual identity was developed by an external creative agency using [Canva](#), a free online design platform. While the focus of the campaign will still change each year, the visual identity (as well as the "Not Invisible" overarching theme and logo) is meant to stay for years to come, so our campaign can be visually impactful and easy to recognise.

Therefore, to maintain consistency, please use these features for any visuals associated with the campaign.



Public Sans - Regular

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!"£\$%&/()=?'

Public Sans - Bold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!"£\$%&/()=?'

Public Sans - ExtraBold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxy
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNPNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
0123456789!"£\$%&/()=?'

To show your support for our campaign, please feel free to use the “Not Invisible” logo (available in various colours to suit your needs and preferences) on your communications outputs.

[DOWNLOAD THE CAMPAIGN LOGO HERE](#)

3. Acceptable language

Autism-Europe operates on the principle of respect for diversity. We feel that it is important to use language that people are comfortable with. However, there are some terms that are likely to cause offence and that it is advisable to avoid using.

In 2016 the National Autistic Society (NAS), the Royal College of GPs and the UCL Institute of Education conducted a survey within the United Kingdom (UK) of people connected to autism, to enquire about preferences regarding the use of language. Amongst British autistic adults, **the term 'autistic person/people' was the most commonly preferred term.** The most preferred term amongst autistic adults, families and professionals was 'people on the autism spectrum'.

Some people refer to themselves and one another as an autist / autie / aspie. Whilst we accept that people may wish to refer to themselves and each other in this way, it is often less acceptable when used by a neurotypical person.

We urge all who are considering using the campaign materials to think about what language is acceptable and appropriate to use within their own context and geographical area, particularly from the perspective of autistic people, and to adapt the materials accordingly.

Here are some terms or expressions that are likely to cause offence:

1. Suffers from autism or victim of autism

Use the following terms instead:

- Autistic
- On the autism spectrum

2. Kanner's autism

3. Asperger's syndrome is a rare/mild form of autism.

4. Autism is a disease/illness.

Use the following instead:

- Autism is a disability.
- Autism is a condition.

5. Retarded / mentally handicapped/backward

These terms are derogatory and offensive. Consider using the following terms instead (where it is appropriate to do so):

- People with a learning disability.
- People with a developmental disability.
- People with an intellectual disability.

6. Normally developing children/adults

Consider using the following terms instead:

- Neurotypical
- Typically developing children/adults

4. Downloadable resources & checklist

Now that you have read the WAAD 2024 campaign toolkit, we hope you are ready to engage with us and make this year's campaign a great success!

Here's the list of all the downloadable resources [enclosed in this toolkit](#), and what you could do with them:

- ✓ Translate the text of the campaign visuals for them to be adapted in your language by filling the translation table provided and contact secretariat@autismeurope.org.
- ✓ Translate pledge and press release.
- ✓ Reach out to your national candidates to the European Parliament to ask them to pledge for autistic people's rights, in light of the upcoming European elections in June 2024.
- ✓ Disseminate the 2024 campaign toolkit among your network, spread the word about the campaign and encourage supporters to join in.
- ✓ Share the 2024 social media messages and visuals enclosed in this toolkit on your channels using the hashtags #AutismDay2024 and #AutismNotInvisible from 2 April 2024 onwards.
- ✓ Organise your own events in line with the 2024 campaign.