



European Network on Independent Living European Elections 2014 Toolkit



Implemented in the framework of the project "Proud, Strong and Visible – Promoting the Choice, Control and Participation of Disabled People in Europe", supported by the European Commission 2014 PROGRESS Action Grant and by ULOBA, Norway.



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1. Opening Statement

“ENIL promotes Independent Living and Human Rights for disabled people and I am convinced that it is important to push these issues at the EU level for change in our lives. I believe it is essential that all EU politicians understand that they can make a difference in the domain of disability. They can make the right difference. And we disabled people need to recognize that our vote during the EU elections can lead to better disability policy at the national level. So it is up to everyone of us to exercise our right and responsibility to vote in the May elections!”

Jamie Bolling, Executive Director of ENIL

2. Introduction

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is a Europe—wide network of people with disabilities, with members throughout Europe. Our organisation promotes equal opportunities for disabled people and fights against discrimination in Europe. ENIL’s mission is to advocate and lobby for Independent Living values, principles and practices, namely for a barrier –free environment, provision of personal assistant support and adequate technical aids, together making full citizenship of disabled people possible.

ENIL recognises the importance and influence that European politics can have on the lives of disabled people. In May 2014, 751 Members of the European Parliament will be elected to the European Parliament. The European Parliament is the only directly elected European institution allowing European citizens to influence the direction of European Union. In this election period it is crucial that potential Members of the European Parliament understand and are aware of the importance of independent living and disability related issues. The European Parliament elections in May 2014 offer all citizens a chance to have their voices heard and to vote for Members of the European Parliament who will make changes that impact positively on the lives of disabled citizens in Europe.

ENIL has a long tradition of raising awareness of the rights of disabled people at the European Level. ENIL’s flagship lobbying event every two years is the Strasbourg Freedom Drive which provides an opportunity for Freedom Drivers to discuss issues at the European Level which also have a huge impact on the lives of disabled people in individual countries. These include deinstitutionalisation, the use of the EU Structural Funds and the issue of the non-transferability of personal assistance services in Europe.

The ENIL Election Toolkit has been created to outline the importance of voting in the European Elections in May 2014 and to support you in how to identify voting for a candidate that aligns with the independent living philosophy. We encourage our members to be as active as possible in this campaigning period, the voice of every disabled person in Europe must be heard and counted! The power of disabled people who are champions of the independent living movement cannot be underestimated!



3. Why vote in European Elections?

There are a number of reasons why voting in the European Elections is important and how the decisions taken at a European level can have a direct affect on our daily lives:

European Union Directives: EU directives have succeeded in speeding up the process of the adoption of national legislation that protect disabled people. For example, the EU Buses and Coaches directive obliged the member states to change legislation which resulted in many countries buying new accessible buses allowing wheelchair users to use public transport.

Use of the EU Structural Funds: How the European Union invests the Structural Funds plays a crucial role in deinstitutionalisation. It is imperative that these funds are not used to improve or to build more institutions in member states. For the first time, the new regulations for the EU Cohesion Policy investment adopted in December 2013 by the European Council and the European Parliament include specific references to support the “transition to community based care”. This represents a commitment that EU funds will not be used to perpetuate institutionalisation but to develop much needed community based alternatives.

EU Research: EU research allows for a wider collection of evidence and disability reporting. It has lead to the creation of the Commission’s online tool DOTCOM which facilitates disability reporting. EU research allows for data to be generated in relation to issues that significantly affect the lives of disabled people but at present very little information is available about them, for example the impact of hate crime on the lives of disabled people in Europe.

Legal Protection: European Union law is applied by the courts of member states and where the laws of member states provide lesser rights EU law can be enforced by the courts of the member states. European Citizens can also take cases to the European Court of Justice to ensure that their rights are upheld.

Decrease the Democratic Deficit: The European Parliament is the only directly elected body of the European Union and is a direct link to the constitutes in the member states. The European Parliament has gained more power in recent years recognising the importance of an engaged citizenship in Europe. The 2014 European Elections will be the first to take place under the Lisbon Treaty which means that the European Parliament will be able to elect the future President of the European Commission based on a proposal by the European Council taking into account the results of the European Elections.

European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: The core elements of the strategy which combines anti-discrimination, equal opportunities and active inclusion measures are reflected in the **UN CRPD** which the EU signed in 2007. The EU is bound by the UN CRPD to the extent of its competencies.



4. ENIL Election Campaign 2014

In the run up to the May 2014 European Elections, ENIL are running a campaign to engage voters and raise awareness among Members of the European Parliament about disability related issues.

ENIL Manifesto: ENIL recognise that it is vital that the candidates are aware of the pertinent issues affecting disabled people achieving Independent Living. Equally, eligible voters need to acknowledge the importance of casting a vote as well as know what the candidates, in the Member States, intend to do to improve the inclusion of disabled people within society. To achieve this we have created our ENIL 2014 Manifesto which outlines what we think needs to happen to improve disabled people's life chances and support us to achieve our goals and aspirations.

Our vision is to ensure that all disabled people, regardless of their impairment or background, have the opportunity to have choice and control over all aspects of their lives. By adapting societal policies and services, disabled people will have their needs met; in order to do this Governments and those in decision-making positions need to recognise that disabled people want and need personalised support services (such as personal assistance), a right to inclusive education, meaningful employment opportunities and a life that is void of any harassment, discrimination and abuse.

We have ten key demands, which if implemented, will improve disabled people's life chances and support us to achieve our goals and aspirations. These demands are outlined in our Manifesto; so please read, share and challenge those in decision making positions to act on them!

Our demands have been translated into various languages. If you would like to translate our demands into a language that is not listed, please contact us. The manifesto is available to download on the ENIL website, www.enil.eu and in Annex 1 of this Toolkit.

European Parliament Election Questionnaire: ENIL have also created a questionnaire which has been sent to all the leaders of the European Parliament Political Groups. These questions, adapted from ENIL's Demands (see 2014 Manifesto) , provide European Political Groups, Parties and even individual Candidates an opportunity to outline their intentions to support disabled people. Whilst responding to the questionnaire is not mandatory, we encourage all the relevant people to participate and demonstrate their commitment to promot-



Meeting in the European Parliament ©ENIL



ing the rights and demands of disabled people across Europe, at the European Parliament.

ENIL will publish all responses to the Questionnaire on our European Parliament webpage at www.enil.eu and will not advocate or endorse specific Parties, Groups or Candidates. If a Political Group is unable to provide a response then we will state that to our members and audience. This is a great opportunity to show you, as potential voters, what your political parties/groups want to do to improve disabled people's life chance; you can use it to help you make an informed decision of who to vote for!

If you want to ask a specific candidate or person about their views/intentions then there is a blank questionnaire for you to send out to them available on our website and in Annex 2 of this Toolkit. Once they have responded, you can send it to us and we will publish it on our website so other people can be aware. If you have any questions then please contact our lead for the European Parliament Elections—Miro Griffiths; miroconsul@gmail.com.

5. Stop Disability Cuts Campaign

Alongside and as part of the 2014 Election Campaign, ENIL has launched the "Stop Disability Cuts" Campaign which aims to raise awareness of the disproportionate effects of the austerity measures which took place at both an EU level and national level on the lives of disabled people across Europe. This Campaign will culminate on the 5th May 2014 with simultaneous actions taking place across Europe. ENIL has declared May 5th 2014 as European Independent Living Day and we invite all disabled people and supporters, disabled people's organisations, NGO's and Centers for Independent Living across Europe to join us in this Campaign by holding events to highlight the impact of the cuts on the everyday lives of disabled people in each member state.

As a result of the economic crisis in Europe, disabled people are becoming increasingly marginalised from society. Disabled people already face many barriers to employment, education and to full inclusion in the



www.stopdisabilitycuts.eu

community but now because of the cuts to independent living and disability services disabled people face further isolation with the return of the threat of institutionalisation and increased poverty. This is in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ratified by the European Union and twenty five member states.

The "Stop Disability Cuts" Campaign aims to raise awareness of the barriers that disabled



people in Europe face to being fully included in the community. It targets primarily the current and potential Members of the European Parliament in the run up to the elections in May 2014. We aim to bring the voices of disabled people to the highest levels in the European Union and we would like to hear from you!

Please visit our new website which was developed in cooperation with the European Foundation Centre and the European Disability Forum dedicated to this campaign www.stopdisabilitycuts.eu which offers a platform for you to share your personal stories and experiences of how the economic crisis continues to impact on the lives of disabled people in Europe. If you would like to hold an event in your country on the 5th May 2014, please contact us vanessa.scanlon@enil.eu. We hope you join us on the 5th May in advocating for the rights of disabled people in every country in Europe. Stop Disability Cuts now!

6. The European Parliament

The European Parliament is one of the three main decision making institutions that make up the EU alongside the European Commission and the Council of the European Union.

The European Parliament has three main roles:

European Legislation: The European Parliament works together with the Council as co-legislature and discusses the basis of EU laws and officially adopts them.

Institutional Supervision: The European Parliament reviews the work of the Commission and other EU institutions to ensure democratic practices are being upheld.

Budget Supervision: The European Parliament plays a role in adopting the EU budget and monitors the expenditure of the budget throughout the year.

The European Parliament is based in three locations ; Luxemburg (Secretariat), Strasbourg (Plenary Sessions) and Brussels (Plenary Sessions & Committee meetings).(1)

6.1 European Parliament Elections

Elections to the European Parliament take place every five years and have done so since 1979. In 2014, 751 Members of the European Parliament will be elected as outlined in Article 14 of the Treaty of Lisbon " *The European Parliament shall be composed of representatives of the Union's citizens. They shall not exceed seven hundred and fifty in number, plus the President. Representation of citizens shall be degressively proportional, with a minimum threshold of six members per Member State. No Member State shall be allocated more than ninety-six seats*".

The number of Members of the European Parliament is different in each member state. The number of seats that a member state can elect has been agreed upon in a number of European treaties. Countries with a larger population are allocated a greater number of seats. In

1. http://europa.eu/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament/index_en.htm



2014, Germany will be allocated the highest number of seats—96 seats and Malta with the lowest number— 6 seats. However, to ensure that the distribution of seats is equitable the allocation of seats is on the basis of the principle of degressive proportionality. This means that smaller states elect more MEPs than is proportional to their populations.

Elections to the European Parliament will be held in all member states of the European Union between the **22nd and 25th May 2014**. Each member state can decide on the type of electoral system and procedures they put in place for the election. All member states must use the proportional representation system which can be either the party list system or the single transferable vote system. Most of the member states of the EU elect their MEPs with a single constituency covering the entire state but some member states divide the country into a number of regions or constituencies.

To find out exactly the date that your country will be holding the European Election, how you can vote and who the candidates for the election in your country are, please visit <http://www.elections2014.eu/en> for comprehensive information on your country. (2)

6.2 Accessible Voting

Every European citizen over the age of eighteen has the right to vote in European Elections.

Article 29, of the UN CRPD guarantees the **right to participation in political and public life**. It outlines that state parties shall;

“Ensure that person’s with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives including the right and opportunity for person’s with disabilities to vote and be elected, inter alia by:

(i) Ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use;

(ii) Protecting the rights of persons with disabilities to vote by secret ballot in elections and public referendums without intimidation and to stand for elections, to effectively hold office and perform all public functions at all levels of Government, facilitating the use of assistive and new technologies where appropriate;

(iii) Guaranteeing the free expression of the will of persons with disabilities as electors and to this end, where necessary, at their request, allowing assistance in voting by a person of their own choice”

The European Union along with twenty five member states have signed the UN CRPD. There is an obligation on all member states who have signed the UN CRPD to ensure that voting is accessible to all disabled people.

2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elections_to_the_European_Parliament



The European Disability Strategy 2010—2020 also makes reference to accessible voting and outlines that “accessibility to voting in order to facilitate the exercise of EU citizen’s electoral rights” will be addressed through the implementation period. All citizens of the European Union have the right to exercise their vote and this right must be upheld in all member states.

7. European Political Parties

European Political parties are funded by the European Union and are usually made up of national parties, individual MPs and MEPs. European Parties influence the decision making process of the European Council and also work closely with affiliated Members of the European Commission. Under the Lisbon Treaty, for the first time, the European Party that wins the elections has the right to nominate to the European Council its candidate for President of the European Commission.

In many member states national parties play a significant role in the selection of candidates for the European elections and very often influence the position candidates take on crucial issues.

There are currently 13 Political Parties in the European Union:

- European Peoples Party: President: President , Joseph Daul, www.epp.eu
- Party of the European Socialists: President , Sergei Stanishev, www.pes.eu
- Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party: President, Sir Graham Watson, www.aldeparty.eu
- European Green Party: Secretary General, Jacqueline Cremers, www.europeangreens.eu
- Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists: President — Jan Zahradil, www.aecr.eu
- Party of the European Left: President, Pierre Laurent, www.european-left.org
- Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy: President Niki Tzavela, www.meldeuropa.com
- European Democratic Party: President, Francois Bayron, www.pde-edp.eu
- European Free Alliance: President, Franz Obermayr, www.eurallfree.org
- Alliance of European National Movements: President, Bela Kovacs, www.aemn.eu
- European Christian Political Movements: President, Peter Ostman, www.ecpm.info
- EU Democrats: President, Patricia Mckenna, www.eudemocrats.org

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_political_party



Once elected, MEPs also organise themselves into political groups; which are the parliamentary groups of the European Parliament. MEPs organise themselves into ideological groups similar to traditional national legislatures. (3)

8. People Power—What you can do

“ What it all boils down to is this; you and I are the people who want change and we are the only people who can bring about change. The first step has to be you and I voting which sends a clear message of our voting power. This was true when George Bush, Snr. won the Presidential election in 1988 on disability and it is true now in these elections. Its all up to us. ”

Martin Naughton, Co-Executive Director of ENIL

There are many different ways of raising awareness among the Members of Parliament of the many struggles that disabled people face in daily life and also of informing disabled people about their rights as citizens of Europe and what the European Union can and should be doing for disabled people in every member state. Here are a few suggestions about how you can make a difference:

Join the ENIL 2014 Election Campaign

Use the **ENIL Manifesto** to talk with Members of the European Parliament when deciding who you wish to vote for. The position that they take in relation to the topics outlined in the manifesto will help you to decide if this is the candidate you believe will work towards making a difference in the lives of disabled people. The manifesto also serves to raise more awareness of independent living among Members of the European Parliament. You can also send your MEP a copy of this manifesto and ask them to support this manifesto.

You can also download a copy of the **ENIL Questionnaire** and send it to your MEP asking them to complete it. You can also send the responses from MEPs (which will be available on www.enil.eu) through your network so that a greater number of people will be aware of the opinions of the main political parties in relation to disability. The ENIL Manifesto and the ENIL Questionnaire can be the tools that you can use to initiate a dialogue with potential MEPs about disability issues.

Join the “Stop Disability Cuts Campaign”

Join us on the **5th May** this year to celebrate European Independent Living Day! On this occasion we wish to highlight the continued effects that the economic crisis is having on disabled people in Europe. To mark this day, we are asking our members to organise an event in your local town or city to raise awareness of the barriers that disabled people face everyday in Europe. The event can be anything you choose from a meeting with an MEP to



a national march. Tell us your story, how have the cuts affected your life? If you wish to share your experience on the website www.stopdisabilitycuts.eu, please get in contact with us today; vanessa.scanlon@enil.eu. You will also find all of the information in relation to the events that will happen on the 5th May in your country on the website if you would like get involved in any of them!

Direct contact with MEPs

Send a letter or an email to MEPs or phone the MEPs office directly. If possible try to mobilise a number of people to send emails, or send one email on behalf of your group or organisation outlining your campaign and inviting the MEP to respond with their proposed plans should they become elected. Ask them to **support specific commitments** on disability issues.

Use social media

Follow MEPs through facebook, twitter or online blogs and contact them in relation to specific issues. Try to mobilise as many of your facebook friends and twitter followers as possible to do the same. One good strategy is to nominate one day when you and your network will focus and target as many candidates in one day with the **same message**, eg. #independentliving!

Organise an event

Organise an event such as a roundtable, a panel debate or meeting and invite a candidate for election to speak at this. The event will give the candidate a platform to share their political promises and also allow you to raise the issues specific to disability. Invite as many people as possible to attend this event and if budget allows advertise this event with flyers and online.

If possible also contact your local media organisation to cover this event. At these events you could also have MEPs sign **pledge cards** which outline what the MEP has promised to do once they get elected. Once elected these pledge cards can be used to remind MEPs of what they had committed to doing.

Share information through your network

Ensure that your members and supporters are **well informed** about the European Elections and the issues that affect disabled people. Disseminate information in relation to the elections to them through your newsletters or website. Involve and engage your members and supporters in generating ideas on how to influence MEPs and what demands should place on them. Also try to raise more awareness among the general electorate about disability related issues in your local area.

Encourage your members to become **involved** in the election campaign at a local level and to be informed of the process of voting in European Elections.



Ensure that your members are familiar with the candidates and their positions. If possible attend an event where candidates will be speaking and prepare questions to ask candidates at these events.

9. Useful Tips and Links

- Please remember you must be registered to vote in the European Elections, please check that you are registered in your member state
- Please remember to bring a valid ID such as a passport or national identity card
- Contact your local CIL or National Disability Organisation if you require support to attend the polling station or information about accessible voting in your member state
- Click on this link: http://www.europarl.org.uk/en/european_elections/faq2014elections.html for answers to **Frequently Asked Questions** such as: When are the elections taking place and how will they work?, I'm not sure if I'm registered to vote, how do I find out? and When can I register to vote?
- **Election 2014 Website:** For a full list of dates of the elections: <http://www.elections2014.eu/en>
- **My vote 2014** shows the recent trends ahead of the elections: <https://www.myvote2014.eu/en/home>

10. Conclusion

The achievements over the last number of years by the Freedom Drivers who have attended the Strasbourg Freedom Drive demonstrate the power of ordinary citizens mobilising to fight for change. The issues brought to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe emerge from the grassroots, from the lived experiences of individuals throughout Europe. Throughout the years a large number of MEPs responded to individual issues. This illustrates the powerful voice of the campaigners and the extent to which MEPs are willing to sit up and take notice. Rarely in European politics is there such an example of a direct link between the civil society and the policy and decision makers.

With the 2014 Election Campaign, ENIL hope to replicate the success of the Freedom Drive and encourage our members to become involved in our campaign. Have your voice heard and ensure that your voice is carried straight into the heart of the European Union.

It is up to each one of us to raise the awareness of independent living among European policy makers and become active European citizens. We need to send a strong message that disabled people are not willing to be passive citizens but are active and fully participating members of society.

We hope that this toolkit supports you to engage with potential Members of the European Parliament and to play an active role in the European 2014 Parliament Elections.



Annex One: ENIL Manifesto

European Network on Independent Living



2014 Manifesto



Disability Rights UK



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Implemented in the framework of the project "Proud, Strong and Visible – Promoting the Choice, Control and Participation of Disabled People in Europe", supported by the European Commission 2014 PROGRESS Action Grant and by ULOBA, Norway

Chair's Foreword

"Freedom, equality and democracy...



Any nation which excludes a section of its citizens will enjoy neither freedom nor equality – and can barely be called a democracy. For those excluded, it is of little consequence whether the exclusion is based on ideological differences or disguised and excused as compassionate care. Furthermore, you can always rise up and fight against your known opponents, but you can often be left feeling powerless against those who profess to have your best interests at heart.

Those of us, who remain excluded in most European countries, have found good solutions to become active participants within society. The Independent Living Movement, established and developed by disabled people, is based on the fact that all humans are equal. Disabled people, like their non-disabled peers, want to contribute to society. We want to pay taxes and help in the development of our countries. Inclusion and participation is no more expensive than exclusion; we need to strive to be seen, heard and included in society; to ensure we have opportunities to access education and work, realise our rights and obligations as citizens and our right to control our own lives. We need to fight for our rights. Changing society's perception of disabled people means we will all have to work together and ensure people listen to disabled people, especially politicians in power.

When we build our nations together, we build a better society for everyone. Whenever certain groups are excluded, history shows that we are all the poorer for it. This is why the European Network on Independent Living's rallying cry is "Nothing about Us without Us".

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a major step in the right direction for us - but each Member State must work to make the articles within the Convention a reality. Ahead of this year's EU elections, ENIL has prepared 10 demands which together, and individually, will make the European countries better places to live in – for everyone."

Vibeke Marøy Melstrøm

Chair, European Network on Independent Living



About the European Network on Independent Living

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is a Europe-wide network of people with disabilities, with members throughout Europe. ENIL is a forum for all disabled people, Independent Living organisations and their non-disabled allies on the issues of Independent Living. ENIL represents the disability movement for human rights and social inclusion based on solidarity, peer support, deinstitutionalisation, democracy, self-representation, cross disability and self-determination.

ENIL promotes equal opportunities for disabled people and fights against discrimination in Europe. ENIL addresses the under-representation of persons with extensive disabilities in European disability and social politics, as well as in mainstream society. ENIL's mission is to:

- Promote the Independent Living philosophy among disabled people, general public, national policy makers, government administrations, as well as among regional bodies (e.g. European Union and the Council of Europe).
- Develop the concept, principles and definition of Independent Living. Promote the development of Centres of Independent Living throughout Europe and enhance solidarity and networking among them.
- Carry out training and awareness raising activities at the European level.
- Represent Independent Living Organizations and the Independent Living movement at the European level.
- Combat social exclusion and discrimination through policies which promote Independent Living of disabled people.
- Embrace the social model of disability in acquiring independence and self-determination by overcoming the barriers of the medical and attitudinal models.

About the Manifesto

With the upcoming European Parliament elections (May 2014), it is vital that the candidates are aware of the pertinent issues affecting disabled people achieving Independent Living. Equally, disabled people, their organisations and allies can use this manifesto to be aware of ENIL's demands and, subsequently, ask their local candidates to support them.

What are our Demands?

Our vision is to ensure that all disabled people, regardless of their impairment or background, have the opportunity to have choice and control over all aspects of their lives. By adapting societal policies and services, disabled people will have their needs met; in order to do this, Governments and those in decision-making positions need to recognise that disabled people want and need personalised support services (such as: personal assistance), a right to an inclusive education, meaningful employment opportunities and a life that is void of any harassment, discrimination and abuse.



We have ten key demands, which if implemented, will improve disabled people's life chances and support us to achieve our goals and aspirations:

1. A legal right to live independently and be a valued member of society:

As set out in Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we expect all disabled people to have the freedom to make their own choices and have independence and autonomy within all aspects of their lives. To recognise that all disabled persons can fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Furthermore, disabled people and their families need to be aware of the Convention and provided with adequate support, which is tailored to their needs in order to achieve Independent Living; by doing so, societal attitudes will change and disabled people will be perceived as valuable members of their community, with roles and responsibilities to help with the functioning of our society.

We strongly demand a review of current legislation by Member States, detailing how they are ensuring Independent Living becomes a reality for *all* its citizens and what European countries are doing to ensure they work together and enable disabled people to move across Europe without fear of losing their independence. We expect Member States to change their policies, which affect Independent Living, and move from institutional care to community-based support; this includes disabled people accessing personal budgets and other forms of self-directed support. By working with ENIL, we can provide you with guidance on how to transform traditional, marginalising services and ensure disabled people's aspirations of achieving Independent Living becomes a reality.

2. To introduce a dedicated Directorate for Disability:

The importance of this role would be to ensure that the rights of disabled people receive the needed attention across all the policy areas, equality and diversity is promoted, equality law is enforced and discrimination is eliminated within all areas of an individual's life. At the 2013 Freedom Drive, it was strongly expressed that disability should get a higher priority within the European Union (EU) and therefore a dedicated directorate should be created. There is documented evidence demonstrating support for this from within the European Parliament, including a submission of a written declaration to the EU Parliament, requesting a European Commission Directorate for disability.

We call on Political Groups and MEPs to act on our demand, acknowledge the support from within the European Parliament as well as the Independent Living Movement and work with us to ensure we have a powerful voice championing and working to improve our lives.



3. To ensure the use of the correct terms, respecting how they are defined by the Independent Living Movement:

This allows all members of society such as community members, professionals and policy makers to be aware of the correct terminology to use when discussing and thinking about disabled people's situations and experiences. Too often, concepts of choice and control, independence and personalised support have had their original definitions hijacked by those in decision-making positions, altering their meaning and using the 'new' definitions to justify the reductions in services and to obtain EU structural funds. Local and national decision-makers need to recognise that disabled people developed the principles and terms that promote and call for our full inclusion within society.

To realise this demand, we call on all statements and policy documents to reflect and promote the 'original' concepts of Independent Living (which can be found here: <http://www.enil.eu/policy/>), acknowledging their 'true' principles; the notion of choice and control needs to be embedded firmly within all aspects of a disabled person's life. Allow us to work with Member States so that they understand what our Movement has been demanding and why the terms are vital for our existence.

4. To have the opportunity to use the European Structural and Investment Funds to support Personal Assistance schemes:

Centres for Independent Living and Disabled People's Organisations (organisations controlled by disabled people *for* disabled people) must have a real and authentic opportunity to receive this funding to further promote choice and control within disabled people's lives. Furthermore, the European Structural and Investment fund aims to promote 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (The Development and Delivery of European Structural and Investment Funds Strategies, 2013) and this can be achieved by ensuring services and schemes are designed, developed and delivered by those who use them. Disabled people want choice and control and personal assistance is a tool that, when coordinated by the individual, gives people a route towards inclusion and self-empowerment.

Work with us to ensure the Funds are delivering on what disabled people across Europe are demanding – a right to access personal assistance.

5. To stop EU funds being invested into institutions for disabled people (regardless of their size):

It is important that EU funds are invested in the development of community-based services for



disabled people. Institutions deny disabled people the opportunity to have choice and control in their life choices. We must eradicate the segregated initiatives which hinder community development, promote discrimination and sometimes leads to the horrendous abuse and death of disabled people. Hundreds of thousands of disabled people live in closed institutions and this cannot continue to be a reality for the current and future generations of disabled people. By investing in more community-based services, we will reduce social exclusion and promote disabled people's rights.

We call on Member States to implement the European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations, which references the transition from institutional to community-based care. By committing to this and ensuring it becomes a reality at an operational and grass-root level, you must work with disabled people and their organisations to improve self-directed support initiatives and provide people with support services that raise aspirations, improve inclusion and are aligned with human rights agendas.

6. To provide more funding for local and national non-governmental organisations led by disabled people:

Whether it is a redirection of existing funding or an increase, it must be made available to organisations run by disabled people and they must have a fair and realistic opportunity to bid and succeed in securing the funding; if this becomes a reality, it will improve growth and sustainability of services for disabled people. Organisations led by disabled people also ensure that disabled people have their voices heard at every level and that practical improvements are being made in the lives of disabled people and their communities. Furthermore, Governments and those with decision making power need to agree that disabled people are experts by experience. By giving them funding to provide services or advocate on behalf of disempowered disabled people, there will be recognition that disabled people are best placed to identify and find solutions to barriers.

We demand recognition that organisations led by disabled people are best placed to provide individuals with the right level of support, facilitate inclusive practices and work to improve the lives of disabled people. This recognition must be reinforced through the availability of funding, allowing such organisations to be sustainable and develop positive legacies.

7. To reverse cuts in services and benefits for disabled people:

As a result of the economic crisis in Europe, disabled people are becoming increasingly marginalised from society. Disabled people already face many barriers to employment, education and to full inclusion in the community but now, because of the cuts to support related to independent living and other disability-related services, disabled people face further isolation. Reducing benefits and services for disabled people negatively impacts an individual's right to independent living and their freedom. It is vital that Member States realise how the current level

of reductions are impacting on the lives of disabled people, who now face further isolation and exclusion from society, are grounded further into poverty and have led some to commit suicide.

We demand an immediate stop to the cuts and reverse all decisions that have stripped disabled people of their benefits and services. Member States must recognise their responsibility to provide services to all human beings and realise that disabled people have a right to access holistic support, which meets all their needs. Furthermore, by providing the right level of support and not targeting disabled people as a way of reducing Government expenditure, it prevents the escalation of higher costs to meet unsupported and crisis-related needs. We expect the European Union to provide strong guidance and additional legislative initiatives to pressure the Member States to safeguard disabled people's support services and benefits from the imposed cuts.

8. To ensure that disabled people have access to mainstream services:

Member States must focus on removing the barriers within mainstream services, which will bring us closer to an inclusive society. To achieve this, it will require all aspects of societal life to meet the needs of the individual at every stage; yet, mainstream society is void of authentic, continuous opportunities to engage and participate in public and private life. Participation is essential for the development and maintenance of our society; disabled people should have the opportunity to influence the destiny of their communities and that is why it is vital that mechanisms exist to ensure there are opportunities for participating in mainstream activities and accessing services, now and in the future. In particular, the right to meaningful employment is also imperative as many disabled people are not provided with support to aid the process of getting and staying in employment. Whilst a smooth transition between education and employment is necessary, those in powerful positions need to make reference to disabled people when agreeing on policies and services which promote employment opportunities.

We demand a review of the barriers within mainstream services and expect resources and funding to be allocated in order to remove the disabling barriers that explain disabled people's marginalisation, exclusion and isolation from community life.

9. To strengthen the protection of disabled people against discrimination (in all areas) at the EU level:

All forms of discrimination must be eradicated by improving the inclusion of disabled people within society, removing discriminatory practices as a result of policy implementations and working to protect disabled people when encountering discrimination. This also includes disability hate crime, which is considered the most extreme form of discrimination and is on the increase in countries where research has been conducted. It infringes the human rights of those



affected, stopping them from being able to enjoy the full benefits of the society.

We call for Member States to do more to promote the rights of disabled people so individuals are made aware of their rights and how they can challenge discrimination. Furthermore, we demand the EU to tackle discriminatory practices instigated by those in positions of power and influence and remind them of their obligations, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

10. To ensure inclusive education for all disabled children and young people:

It is vital that all disabled learners have the right to inclusive education which in turn strengthens and promotes an inclusive society. All schools must ensure that disabled pupils are not at a disadvantage when learning and participating within the educational environment. Inclusive education benefits all pupils, as it can strengthen a school community and ensure that all students are valued for who they are. Therefore, the right to an education needs to be realised with the education system providing better continuous support, which is streamlined at every stage within the educational process; furthermore, if we want disabled people to be valued, respected citizens with skills then we need to ensure mainstream schools are fully inclusive of all disabled students and we no longer promote a segregated approach to any aspect of our life.

We demand an approach to education that enables all students to achieve their potential, whilst ensuring their needs and access requirements are supported. Furthermore, we expect all learners to be educated together, regardless of their background or circumstances, within their local communities.

European Network on Independent Living, 2014 Manifesto



Annex Two: European Parliament Election Questionnaire

European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) ; European Parliament Elections Questionnaire

With the upcoming European Parliament elections (May 2015), it is vital that the candidates are aware of the pertinent issues affecting disabled people achieving Independent Living. Equally, eligible voters need to know what the candidates, in their Member States, intend to do to improve the inclusion of disabled people within society.

These questions, adapted from ENIL's Demands (see 2014 Manifesto), provide European Political Groups, Parties and even individual Candidates an opportunity to outline their intentions to support disabled people. Whilst responding to the questionnaire is not mandatory, we encourage all the relevant people to participate and demonstrate their commitment to promoting the rights and demands of all disabled people, from across Europe, at the European Parliament.

ENIL will publish all responses to the Questionnaire on our European Parliament Elections webpage <www.enil.eu> and will not advocate or endorse specific Parties, Groups or Candidates.

Please contact us if we can be of any assistance with disseminating the completed questionnaires or supporting disabled people and their allies with matters related to the upcoming European Parliament Elections.



Disability Rights UK



Implemented in the framework of the project "Proud, Strong and Visible – Promoting the Choice, Control and Participation of Disabled People in Europe", supported by the European Commission 2014 Action Grant and by ULOBA, Norway.

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European Parliament Elections Questions:

Name:	
Country:	
Political Group:	
Political Party:	

<u>Questions and Answers</u>	
Q1	As outlined in Article 19 (Independent Living) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), how will you ensure that disabled people have the right to live independently and be an integral member of their community? Furthermore, what will you do to ensure that disabled people are aware of the UNCRPD and that their rights are being upheld?
A1	
Q2	What is your opinion on having a specific Commissioner for Disability Issues within the European Parliament, and what are the pertinent issues the Commissioner should be working on?
A2	
Q3	Too often, terminology such as, but not limited to: 'Deinstitutionalisation' and 'Community-Based Support' becomes hijacked by those in decision-making positions and their meanings are altered. What will you do to ensure terminology associated with disability and Independent Living, which is defined by the Independent Living Movement, becomes embedded within policies and reflected in societal attitudes?
A3	
Q4	How will you support Centres for Independent Living (CILs) and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs i.e. Organisations run <i>by</i> disabled people <i>for</i> disabled people) to use European Structural and Investment Funds to support Personal Assistance schemes? Furthermore, how will you ensure the funding is made available and that CiLs and DPOs have a realistic chance of securing the funding?



Q5	What is your view on European Union funds being invested into institutions for disabled people and what will you do to ensure that the Structural Funds are not –directly or indirectly – invested into schemes/services, all of which, continue to isolate, exclude and deny disabled people from accessing their rights?
A5	
Q6	How will you support local and national non-governmental organisations, led by disabled people, to access more funding to ensure their work is sustainable and has a legacy?
A6	
Q7	In your view, what impact are the cuts in services and benefits having on disabled people and, considering that DPOs across Europe are calling for the cuts to stop and be reversed, what will you do?
A7	
Q8	How will you ensure disabled people have continual access to mainstream services (such as, but not limited to: meaningful employment, education, transport etc.), instead of being coerced into experiencing or using segregated services?
A8	
Q9	What are your thoughts on the current level of discrimination and hate crime that disabled people are subjected to on a daily basis? Furthermore, how can the protection of disabled people be strengthened at the European level, in order to eliminate discrimination?
A9	
Q10	In your opinion, what are the barriers preventing disabled people accessing an inclusive education and how can you ensure it becomes a reality for all disabled people, particularly children and young people?
A10	

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is a cross-disability organisation, working across the European Union and neighbouring countries to promote independent living and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. ENIL’s mission is to advocate and lobby for independent living values, principles and practices, namely for barrier-free environment, de-institutionalisation, provision of personal assistance support and adequate technical aids, all of which make full citizenship of disabled people possible.

“Nothing about us, without us”

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