



Draft

Title: **The Right for Independent Living all over Europe now!**

Tabled by: EGP Disability Network and Swedish Greens

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1 **Resolution on Human and political rights for the people with disabilities in**
2 **Europe: The Right for Independent Living all over Europe now!**

3 People with disabilities, just like everybody else, have the right to choose
4 where, under what circumstances and with whom they want to live. They are
5 entitled to receive the necessary support to participate on an equal footing
6 with other citizens in society. This is called the '*Independent Living*'
7 principle which encompasses all spheres of life. The idea behind Independent
8 Living is also one of the core elements of the UN Convention on the Rights of
9 Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which was adopted by the United Nations in
10 2006 and has been ratified by many European countries. However, European
11 countries and the European Union are far from making the proclaimed rights of
12 the Convention a reality.

13 The EU has yet to align the 1976 Electoral Law with the CRPD, Convention of the
14 Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is also the case for many countries in
15 the rest of Europe where accessibility barriers remain and millions of people
16 with disabilities are being prevented from participating in elections and from
17 becoming a candidate for office. Likewise, democratic exercises, such as the
18 Conference on the Future of Europe, remain inaccessible to people with
19 disabilities.

20 National and European institutions should commit to supporting the fight for the
21 right of disabled people to be able to live a life where they can exercise

22 political rights and freedom of movement, but which also extends to the private
23 sphere and the rights to own body as more people with disability are being
24 subjected to violence, sexual harassment or to forced sterilisation[1] and
25 cannot exercise the right to marry.

26 According to a recent survey, EU funds have been used to build up group homes in
27 many EU Member States[2]. The mainstream approach is to organise the lives of
28 people with disabilities around institutions and there is no real motivation to
29 outline plans for deinstitutionalisation. Yet many institutions for people with
30 disabilities are like cages with invisible bars. Thus, it is time to shift to
31 the perspective of people with disabilities themselves as regards their own
32 lives. Progressing from segregation to an inclusive society must be a political
33 priority for all EGP member parties. As a solution to the way forward, we the
34 European Greens see de-institutionalisation as the key element for the
35 emancipation of people with disabilities[3].

36 In concrete terms, the resources applied for building new institutional
37 facilities should rather be reallocated to enable independent and self-
38 determined living of people with disabilities. The right to independent living
39 is a fundamental freedom that is best facilitated by creating and fostering
40 schemes of personal assistance for people with disabilities. Such support -
41 personal assistance for people with disabilities - in the housing, educational,
42 working environments and leisure time plays an important part in facilitating
43 societal inclusion. Moreover, these personal assistance schemes should be under
44 the control of the disabled individuals themselves. This would also manifest the
45 principle "Nothing about us without us" which has been a core principle for the
46 international disability movement for decades.

47 The ideal of *Independent Living* goes much further than housing issues, however.
48 One key aspect is the possibility to participate in the general labour market.
49 Hence, the working environments of people with disabilities should also be de-
50 institutionalised. In particular, since disabled people are notoriously
51 underemployed, there is an urgent need for supporting schemes to make workplaces
52 and social protection frameworks accessible for all, including unemployment
53 benefits or sick leave. These social investments generate fair chances for
54 societal inclusion for people with disabilities. In general, legal frameworks
55 must not support institutions over independent living, inclusive learning and
56 working in the general labour market.

57 Obviously, the demands for Independent Living for people with disabilities need
58 to be accompanied by a holistic view of the accessibility of society in general.
59 The exclusion of people with disabilities is higher in countries with a lower
60 GDP; even in these same countries, marginalisation is more severe in smaller
61 cities, rural mountain areas or islands. Therefore, we the European Greens call
62 for:

- 63 • Decision-makers to implement all articles of the UNCRPD as well as the
64 articles in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which
65 bring together the most important personal freedoms and rights enjoyed by
66 EU citizens into one legally binding document. In particular, we call
67 for:
 - 68 ◦ Political, union rights as well as the right to organise in
69 patient/interest groups without political, law, and/or economic
70 barriers to action – such as removing economic disability support
71 and/or prohibitive action and also the goal of removing existing
72 accessibility hindrances to exercising those rights as far as
73 humanly possible;
 - 74 ◦ The right to their own body;
 - 75 ◦ The right to freedom of movement and of residence;
 - 76 ◦ The alignment of the 1976 Electoral Law of the European Union with
77 the CRPD.
- 78 • Raising the awareness of disability issues among activists in its member
79 parties. The concerns of people with disabilities are important to the
80 Green family which means that we strive for accessibility in every respect
81 of all our activities.

82 [1] Forced sterilisation is currently practised in 13 countries in Europe: as of
83 September 2022, these are Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia,
84 Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal and Slovakia. Three
85 countries carried the explicit authorisation to forcibly sterilise minors:
86 Czechia, Hungary and Portugal. In Belgium, France and Hungary, it is included as
87 a requirement for admission to residential institutions.

88 [2] ENIL's Shadow report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the
89 Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the European Union: [https://enil.eu/wp-](https://enil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ShadowReport_EU_Final_140222.pdf)
90 [content/uploads/2022/03/ShadowReport_EU_Final_140222.pdf](https://enil.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ShadowReport_EU_Final_140222.pdf)

91 [3] The term 'institutionalisation' refers here to the circumstance of having
92 particular facilities specifically for the accommodation, education and labour
93 of disabled people.