



PRESS RELEASE

Strasbourg, 7th September 2011

5th ENIL Strasbourg Freedom Drive, European Network on Independent Living (ENIL)

On the 14th of September hundreds of people from over 20 European countries will march through Strasbourg's streets with crutches, wheelchairs and guide dogs in the direction of the European Parliament. The goal is to hand over the ENIL demands on Independent Living to the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Independent Living is a philosophy and a movement of disabled people who work for self-determination, equal opportunities and self-respect. Independent Living demands the same choices and control in everyday lives as our non-disabled brothers and sisters, neighbors and friends. To grow up in families, to go to the neighborhood schools, to use the same bus as our neighbors, to work in jobs that are in line with one's education and interests, and to start our families are just some of the demands.

Between the 12th and the 15th of September in Strasbourg, the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) will organize conferences and meetings focused on the rights of disabled persons (program attached), in the hope of getting the messages through to the officials at the European Commission and the Members of the European Parliament.

ENIL President, Vibeke Marøy Melström, stresses that, "disabled people have the same civil rights and should have the same life choices as non-disabled people. The role of the European Parliament is to see that this becomes a reality".

Founder of the Freedom Drive, Martin Naughton from Ireland declares, "Institutions are not solutions! Free our people NOW!"

This is the fifth Strasbourg Freedom Drive where decision makers at the European level have the opportunity to meet disabled people from all over Europe and become aware of the need for Independent Living. Deinstitutionalization, personal assistance, international development funding for Independent Living and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are among the key ENIL demands.

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See the program <http://media.fd2011.enil.eu/2011/07/Agenda-FD-week-1-Sept-2011.pdf>

Freedom Drive route <http://www.enil.eu/?p=4406>

