



## ENIL Press Conference 'Stop Disability Cuts': a wakeup call to Europe on May 5<sup>th</sup>, the European day for Independent Living.

Most of the European Union (EU) countries have undergone, or are going through, a review of their public spending. This was triggered by the economic and financial crisis which started in 2008/2009, and which continues to affect European economies today and will do so in the years to come. When public spending cuts are at stake, sectors such as social protection, social services, health care and education are always at risk. Therefore, our support to live independently, in the community is being reduced or taken away and the threat of institutionalisation, or re-institutionalisation, is a reality for many of us as disabled people.<sup>1</sup>

An increasing number of voices in Europe and internationally are pointing out the disproportionate effect of the crisis on disabled people, and warning about the long-term consequences for the entire society. ENIL has been working with a number of European<sup>2</sup> and national organisations over the last years, as well as with some MEPs, in order to ensure an adequate response of the European Parliament and the European Commission to the austerity measures imposed by the Member States. Although political awareness and the political debate on this issue is on the rise, until now Europe is still failing its disabled citizens.

'[Stop Disability Cuts](#)' is an EU-wide campaign organized by ENIL with the support of the European Disability Forum and the European Foundation Centre's Consortium of Foundations on Human Rights and Disability. Together they have set up [www.wakeupcall.eu](http://www.wakeupcall.eu), a platform to showcase real life data and testimonials portraying the negative effect austerity measures have had on the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. This platform



<sup>1</sup> For more information, please see Hauben, H. et al. (2012) Assessing the impact of European governments' austerity plans on the rights of people with disabilities – European report. European Foundation Centre. Available at: [http://www.efc.be/news\\_events/Pages/austerity-measures.aspx](http://www.efc.be/news_events/Pages/austerity-measures.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> AGE Platform Europe, Autism Europe, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), European Disability Forum (EDF), Inclusion Europe, European Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP), Mental Health Europe (MHE) and European Foundation Centre (EFC).



*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.*



is also a discussions and ideas forum, promoting the sharing and development of alternative and creative solutions and best practices.

The **'Stop Disability Cuts'** campaign culminates in a large number of various events throughout Europe on or around **May 5<sup>th</sup>**, declared as the **European Day for Independent Living**. Traditionally this date has been a day of protest for the Independent Living movement and many disabled people and their organisations have used it to raise awareness about the need to improve conditions in the society for disabled people. In each of the events taking place on May 5<sup>th</sup>, disability right activists invite their national MPs to support them in standing up to the cuts against disabled people and their families

In this central Press Conference in Brussels, hosted by the European Foundation Centre, an overview of the May 5<sup>th</sup> campaign events will be provided together with the disability right movement's demands to the European Parliament, Council and Commission in the upcoming period.

*The Press Conference will take place at **Philanthropy House, Rue Royale 94, Brussels on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 from 14.00 to 14.30.***

*Contact for Press and other queries: Peter Lambreghts, ENIL Regional Coordinator [peter@independentliving.be](mailto:peter@independentliving.be) / +32 475 877 129*

*Contact for logistics: Carmen Arroyo de Sande, European Foundation Centre [carroyo@efc.be](mailto:carroyo@efc.be) / +32 476 069 111*

## Supporters:



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ENIL – Ground Floor, Chase House, City Junction Business Park, Northern Cross, Malahide Road, Dublin 17, Ireland, T +3531 525 0700 E [secretariat@enil.eu](mailto:secretariat@enil.eu) W [www.enil.eu](http://www.enil.eu)