



## Deinstitutionalisation in Hungary runs against the principles of the CRPD

Budapest, 18 June 2019

The National Federation of Associations of People with a Physical Disability (MEOSZ) is deeply concerned about current Hungarian deinstitutionalisation policies. MEOSZ asserts that the latest deinstitutionalisation strategy (2019-2036) of the Hungarian Government may potentially contribute to the further dominance of residential institutions and institutional culture in social care.

\*\*\*

Last month, the Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources (EMMI) [published](#) their mid-term strategy on deinstitutionalisation for the years 2019-2036. Although the new strategy sets out various principles for the strategy's time span of 17 years but it fails to commit to actual actions. The paper consists of mostly generalities (for example a detailed history of legislative changes, lengthy descriptions of actors involved in the process, etc.) but fails to set out actions with deadlines and responsible authorities. Even where actual steps are proposed they are repeatedly mentioned as "possible" tools or solutions to facilitate community living. This vagueness poses a serious limitation as to how seriously the Government's commitment should be taken.

Furthermore, although the strategy claims to be working towards the implementation of the CRPD, and the text makes repeated references to Article 12 and Article 19 of the Convention – but overall the paper makes statements that run against the principles of the CRPD.

For example, although the Strategy states the Hungarian Government created a new legal category of supported living in the Social Act in 2013 (p. 2.), but then it is also asserted that supported living [*támogatott lakhatás*] in the new Hungarian law means '*housing services in flats or houses for up to 12 people and in compounds of flats and houses for up to 50 people*' (p. 2.). On the same page it is stated that beds in existing residential institutions can still be created to reach an upper limit of 50 beds per establishment. MEOSZ is firmly opposed to such measures as they contribute to continued institutionalisation of disabled people. Settings for up to 12 or 50 people are *de facto* institutions and not 'supported living' services. We believe that these policies constitute a breach of the principles of Article 19.

It is also of major concern that the strategy fails to set out measures to create and develop community-based services for disabled people. MEOSZ has repeatedly asked the government to develop better community-based services, including various support services, personal assistance schemes etc. In 2019, our in-house research with hundreds of disabled people showed there is a huge lack of support for those living in their own homes.

Importantly, the strategy avoids making a commitment to the full closure of institutions. This allows for projects where some residents can leave the institution while others have to stay. MEOSZ believes that no residents should be left in the old institutions when new settings are created.

Although the strategy uses the language of human rights, and makes references to the CRPD, its content runs against it. The strategy only demonstrates that the Hungarian Government has decided

to maintain the current situation – that is the dominance of residential institutions for disabled people with little or no services to those who already live in the community. There is a high risk that if the current deinstitutionalisation policies continue they will result in further, EU-sponsored investment into institutions, even if new settings will be, misleadingly, labelled ‘supported living’ settings. It is hard to believe that the Government and its experts are unaware of such substantial contradictions.

Therefore, MEOSZ is and will be unable to accept the current deinstitutionalisation strategy. We call on the Government to reconsider its strategy towards community living and develop a new paper that includes measures to strengthen community-based services for all disabled people in Hungary.

MEOSZ is committed to the right to live in the community. We will always be a strong ally to any initiative that aims to develop and strengthen community-based services in Hungary. If the Government decides to review its strategy for 2019-2036, MEOSZ will be happy to provide input to it.

If you have queries please contact Ms Kata Miklós at [fogyatekossagugy@meosz.hu](mailto:fogyatekossagugy@meosz.hu).