



VALIDITY

#EDDW19  
coordinated by  
IDDC



## **Group Homes – A Defensible Investment?**

**Roundtable about the role of international donors and organisations in perpetuating the social exclusion and segregation of children and adults with disabilities**

**Organised by the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), Disability Rights International (DRI) and the Validity Foundation, in cooperation with Julie Ward MEP**

**European Parliament, Brussels (Room TBC)  
10:00 – 12:00, followed by networking lunch**

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), Disability Rights International (DRI) and the Validity Foundation, in cooperation with Julie Ward MEP, are organising a roundtable to question the use of group homes as an alternative to large residential institutions for disabled children and adults in Europe and globally. The event is organised as part of the 2019 European Disability and Development Week, coordinated by the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC).

Investments by the European Union, through its Structural and Investment Funds, and by other international donors, have contributed to the proliferation of group homes, “family-type” centres and similar congregated settings, thus leading to re-institutionalisation, rather than deinstitutionalisation of disabled children and adults. This is evidenced by research into the

rights abuses of children and adults in group homes and similar settings, and has been condemned by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in a number of concluding observations.

The roundtable will focus on the so-called “Bulgarian Model” – the internationally promoted approach to deinstitutionalisation. While an 84% reduction in the number of children in institutional care was achieved between 2010 and 2018, 1,845 disabled children were moved from large institutions into 140 group homes. The same approach is now being used to reduce the number of disabled adults in large residential institutions, and is the subject of a petition at the European Parliament’s Petitions Committee.

DRI and Validity Foundation have just completed extensive research into group homes for children and adults in Bulgaria and will be launching their reports during the roundtable. This will be followed by a discussion, with recommendations to the EU and other major donors and international organisations on how to ensure that their investments comply with the requirements set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The roundtable will be followed by a light networking lunch. Registration is free, but compulsory, due to security measures in the European Parliament. For further information, please contact Ines Bulic Cojocariu at [ines.bulic@enil.eu](mailto:ines.bulic@enil.eu).

*This event is organised in the context of the European Disability and Development Week, coordinated by IDDC #EDDW19. Photo shows a group home for children and young people, taken by DRI in Bulgaria.*

**To register for the event, please fill in this form by the 22nd November 2019: <https://forms.gle/bKQRuYyC4TrqRHg76>**

## **Group Homes – A Defensible Investment? Draft Agenda**

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|---------------|---|
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Welcome and opening by Nadia Hadad, ENIL Co-chair and Julie Ward MEP  |
| 10:15 – 10:25 | Setting the context: the role of public and private donors in implementing Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Jamie Bolling, ENIL Co-chair and Independent Living Institute |
| 10:25 – 10:40 | Launch of DRI’s report on group homes for children with disabilities in Bulgaria – Dragana Ciric Milovanovic, Director for Europe, Disability Rights International  |
| 10:40 – 10:55 | Presentation of Validity Foundation’s research into Bulgaria’s adult institutions – Steven Allen, Co-Director, Validity Foundation  |
| 10:55 – 11:05 | A perspective from the Global South – Speaker TBC   |
| 11:05 – 11:20 | A response to the reports by the European Commission and MEPs – Speakers TBC  |
| 11:20 – 11:50 | Moderated discussion  |
| 11:50 – 12:00 | Recommendations for joint action and closure of the roundtable  |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Networking lunch  |