

*EUROPEAN INDEPENDENT  
LIVING DAY 2018 REPORT*

*#ILDAY18*



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## Foreword

The 5<sup>th</sup> European Independent Living Day was a resounding success! As in previous years, social media was instrumental in spreading the word on #ILDAY18, with many of the fruits of our labour spread through the Internet.

Those of us living in Brussels had something of a head start to the celebrations with a screening of “Defiant Lives”, a documentary on the history of the Independent Living movement, at the European Parliament. We extend our most sincere gratitude to MEPs Helga Stevens, Brando Benifei, Heidi Hautala, Jean Lambert, Julie Ward and Merja Kyllönen for agreeing to not only to host us, but also to promote this year’s edition of the European Independent Living Day.

When it came to the day, however, you, our members all over Europe, organized events, wrote articles and made videos to highlight the importance of Independent Living as a human rights issue and cast light on our common struggle for the realization of the right of all human beings to claim their lives for themselves and live independently.

The [ENIL Youth Network](#) also rallied to the 5 May call by posting [videos](#) and photos. We would also like to thank the many European NGOs who shared their Independent Living experiences and joined us in demanding an inclusive Europe where everyone can live independently.

Seeing so many people answer the call is especially heartwarming as ENIL, as a pan-European organization, draws its strength from the commitment of its members. We do your work and our voice is only as loud as the collective behind it. The European Independent Living Day has a demonstrable impact. We reached 11.000 people through our Facebook page on the day, and saw interactions on the page more than double compared to an average day. Continuing to engage people is important in order to reach our goals.





We were very happy we receive many testimonials, photos and other material from you regarding this year's theme, **Barriers to Independent Living**. As we mentioned before, we will use the concrete examples you provided to campaign for a more robust and meaningful European Accessibility Act. We will not let our rights become a political game. The EU elections in 2019, which we will have more information on for you later, are the best way to keep Independent Living on the political agenda. **Nothing about us without us**. With this report, our aim is to give you a short overview of what happened across Europe on the day. It is, by no means, an exhaustive list.

Once again, thank you for your commitment and your participation. The work we do depends on you, your dedication and will to effect change.





## Overview by country:

### Armenia:

Our friends at Skarp NGO produced and shared through social media a video on the right to Independent Living in the particular context of recent political developments in the country.

Watch it [here](#).

Xcho Poghosyan from Armenia also send a picture which clearly illustrated the fact the disabled people in Armenia face multiple barriers to Independent Living.





## Austria:

The Österreichischer Behindertenrat joined the Independent Living day celebrations by raising the awareness on 4 may and stressing the importance of Independent Living in Europe on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May. You find the links to the Facebook posts [here](#).

## Belarus:

The Office for The Rights of Persons with Disabilities published a statement on Facebook on the importance of access to justice for persons with disabilities, as well as the right to Independent Living. Around 5 may the office organized their sixth week full of activities dedicated to accessibility and Independent Living.



You find links to the different activities in Belarus [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).





## Belgium:

ENIL members Onafhankelijk Leven and Ensemble pour une Vie Autonome - EVA asbl both marked 5 May with social media actions and other activities around Personal Assistance.

Onafhankelijk Leven published an article and organized a campaign to thank personal assistants. The goal was to highlight the importance of PA to enable Independent Living. You can find a link to the article here which you can find [here](#).

Ensemble pour une Vie Autonome - EVA asbl, shared a [testimony](#) and a [video](#) to explain the effect PA budgets have on the (quality of) life of disabled people.

Several people, including ENIL board member Nadia Hadad, shared examples of barriers to Independent Living they face in Brussels and Belgium.





## Bosnia and Herzegovina:

In Mreža žena BiH (the “Network of women with disability”) organised a photo contest in honour of the day. See the winner and runners-up on the [Facebook page](#)!

## Bulgaria:

The Centre of Independent Living Sofia marked the day by having media personalities wear t-shirts emblazoned with the Ophrase “[The system kills them](#)”. People were invited to share and like the pictures of the t-shirts to show that society is ready to fight for Independent Living.







## Cyprus:

ENIL's Cypriot member, the Cyprus Paraplegics' Association, organized a press conference to announce the launch of a personal assistance pilot scheme supported by the European Social Fund (ESF).

## France:

Coordination Handicap Autonomie - Vie Autonome France marked the occasion by showcasing a series of recorded testimonies from people with disabilities on the shortcomings of the French home care system. See the testimonies [here](#).



## Georgia:

The Coalition iFor Independent Living in Georgia came together to celebrate [Independent Living Day](#).



## Germany:

The German [Aktion Mensch Foundation](#) holds its own day of action (Aktionstag) for inclusion in conjunction with the European Independent Living Day. This year's theme was "Inclusion- right from the start". A whole host of activities was available in many parts of the country.



ENIL EVS volunteer Miriam Graute, promoted the Independent Living Day at the open day of the EU institutions which also took place on 5 May.



## Greece:

The Independent Living Organization of Greece - I-living held its first awareness day on Independent Living. The aim was to explain the IL ideology and highlight the importance of Independent Living to the participants and the general public in Greece. See i-living's own report on the event [here](#)



I-living also published a video where four disabled Greeks talk about their lives and the problems they, their families, their families, friends and society at large face owing to the total lack of a framework for personal assistants. You'll find the video with English subtitles [here](#)

ENIL member Aglaia Katsigianni organized two online petitions in the run-up to Independent Living Day. One to highlight the need for accessible public transport in Greece and a second petition to establish a PA system in Greece. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Aglaia took to the streets to distribute the ENIL Myth Buster, asking people to sign the petitions.

You can still sign the petitions here:

- [Public Transport](#)
- [PA system](#)



## Hungary:

ÉFOÉSZ, the Hungarian Association of People with Intellectual Disabilities, organised a conference on Independent Living together with Eötvös Loránd University. The title of the conference was **What do we need to live independently?**

The conference was split into three workshops, each touching on a different theme:

- 1.) Supported housing.
- 2) Easy-to-read materials
- 3) Inclusion in university education and research.



For more photographs of the conference, click [here](#):

MEOSZ, the corresponding organisation for people with physical disabilities, shared a video message from Mr. Czaba Kiss, a disability advisor at the organisation. His testimony is available [here](#):





## Italy:

ENIL Italia marked IL-Day by cooperating with I-living in Greece by sharing a video about Independent Living with Italian subtitles. You can find the video [here](#)

## Lithuania:

Central to the Lithuanian effort this year was the #MiestasVisiems ("City for all") campaign, which intended to highlight the fact that an inaccessible built environment is a barrier, and not one's attitude or the disability in itself.

The campaign kicked off with a launch event at the local Swedish embassy and ended in a march through Lithuania's capital, Vilnius. The campaign was prominently featured on national television, with accessibility being discussed by NGO's and city officials alike on a Lithuanian morning TV programme.



More photographs of the march through town can be found [here](#)

## Montenegro:

Our Montenegrin member, UMHCG/AYDM, organised a street party at the Independence Square in Podgorica. The Montenegrin Minister of European Affairs, Aleksandar Andrija Pejović, as well as the Head of the European Union Delegation to Montenegro, Aivo Orav, were in attendance.



All parties agreed on the importance of discussing the rights of disabled people with regard to Montenegro's future ambitions of accession to the European Union.

A short documentary produced by AYDM by the name of "Moving Boundaries" was also shown and can be found [here](#) (English subtitles).





## Norway:

ULOBA, the leading Norwegian Independent Living organisation, posted three videos on social media in honour of the Independent Living Day. The videos are currently only available in Norwegian. They deal with the obstacles and hostile attitudes people with disabilities face when going about their lives in the community, such as lack of inclusive education and adequate personal assistance. The tagline is *Derfor kjemper vi*. ("That's why we fight" ) The videos are available through the following links: [Hansemann](#) , [Andreas](#), [Mohammed](#) and [Kerstin](#).

## Portugal:

The Centro de Vida Independente ("Centre of Independent Living) in Lisbon organised the first national march for Independent Living in Portuguese history. A candlelight vigil for Independent Living was also organised in the town, with attendance estimates somewhere near 200 people.





## San Marino:

ENIL member, Attiva-Mente highlighted the IL-Day by sharing an [article](#) on Personal Assistance.

## Serbia:

Having investigated the accessibility of polling stations (or, rather, the lack of it) in Serbia, Centres of Independent Living across the country have decided to organize information sessions on voting rights for disabled people. This was done together with hands-on street action in selected locations to draw attention to the lack of accessibility of polling stations and the denial of the exercise of the right to vote.



A variety of material from the sessions organised by the many branches of Independent Living Serbia can be found on their Facebook page [here](#). Make sure to scroll down to the appropriate dates, since not all events took place on the day.

## Spain:

Our Spanish member, Federación VI ("Vida Independiente"/"Independent Living") organized an [IL-Event](#) and shared the following image on social media:



It says: "Liberty is not a gift, it is something to be gained through action."

## Sweden:

The Independent Living Institute of Sweden called for people to assist ENIL in gathering examples of barriers to Independent Living. The day was particularly festive in Sweden due to amended [anti-discrimination legislation](#), which, as of May 1st 2018, no longer exempts small businesses.

## Turkey:

Friends of ENIL in Turkey took to social media to demand the right to Independent Living and full enjoyment of their rights as citizens, as well as opportunities for economic independence and societal engagement at all levels. Much of the material is bilingual and can be found [here](#).

Different NGOs in Turkey came together on 5 May to form the Turkish Independent Living Network. You can find their IL-Day press release [here](#).





## United Kingdom:

In honour of the European Independent Living Day, the Independent Living Group at Action Disability Kensington and Chelsea, active in its respective Royal Borough of London, has compiled a [report](#) identifying 12 basic rights for disabled people. These include appropriate and accessible health care provisions, an adequate income or a fully accessible transport system, among others.

The report sheds light on the adverse impact inadequate provision of these vital services has the lives of disabled people, and calls attention to problems arising from recent changes to the British welfare system, such as the replacement of Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payments and delays in payment of benefits due to the introduction of the new Universal Credit scheme.

Northern Irish non-profit Mobiloo Ireland launched a campaign aiming to bring mobile accessible toilets to remote areas of Northern Ireland.

