

**Members of the Board of the European Network on Independent Living**



**Mr. Armen Alaverdyan** is a well-known disability leader and human rights advocate in Armenia. He is Executive Director of Unison NGO, the first organization to promote independent living for disabled persons in Armenia. Unison established the first CIL in Yerevan in 2006.

Armen has earned a diploma in Human Rights from the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (Sweden). He has authored a number of publications on inclusion; he was also the Armenia Country Researcher for the International Disability Rights Monitor (IDRM) Regional Report of Europe 2007. He has also managed dozens of projects (both national and international) aimed at the promotion and protection of the rights of disabled people.

Armen is passionate about promoting inclusion, advocating for independent living and human rights. Independent living and accessibility are his top priorities. Together with the Unison team, he has been instrumental in making Yerevan more accessible (though it is still far from being a fully accessible city). In 2016, he was awarded the Movses Khorenatsi medal for his contributions to culture and societal life. During the first country review of Armenia by the UN CRPD Committee, Armen coordinated the development of the List of Issues in relation to the Armenia Country Report by Armenian DPOs. Following this, he was selected to represent the Armenian DPO community during the 17th session of the Committee.

Throughout the years, Armen has been actively involved in creating job opportunities for young disabled people and in promoting inclusive higher education in Armenia.

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**Mrs. Jamie Bolling (Co-chair)** is the director of the Independent Living Institute (ILI) in Stockholm and the co-chair of ENIL – the European Network on Independent Living. She was a member of the European Fundamental Rights Platform's Advisory Panel from 2010 - 2014.

Jamie has a Masters degree in Social Anthropology and work experience in disability research, international development cooperation, hate crime as well as other areas concerning disability issues. She is today the vice President of MyRight, working with International Disability Development Cooperation, and the project leader for the project called Disabled Refugees Welcome which is run by ILI.

Combining her experience in politics as a county counselor and from different appointments at local, regional, national and EU level, with her vast knowledge of the international disability movement, Jamie works for progress in Independent Living issues, the self-determination of disabled people, access to equality and full participation of disabled people in our societies.



**Ms. Nadia Hadad (Co-chair)** has been a human right activist from a young age. She worked in the field of development cooperation and adapted technologies. She gives lectures and trainings on inclusive cooperation, the UN CRPD and SDGs at universities, ministries, NGOs, DPOs and more. To reclaim real inclusion in society for each person with disabilities, she joined the Boards of several national organizations like GRIP (Equal Rights for each person with disabilities), BROG and DOP VBB.

Nadia is the Vice President of the Brussels City Advisory Council of Persons with Disabilities and a member of the Brussels Region Advisory Panel. She is a member of the Belgian Supervising Commission inside UNIA, the independent mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the UN CRPD in Belgium, for GRIP.

On the international level, she is the co-chair of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) and representing ENIL at the Executive Committee of the European Disability Forum (EDF). She's a member of the Advisory Panel of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's Fundamental Rights Platform and the Academic

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Network of European Experts on Disability (ANED).

Nadia has a degree in Electromechanical Engineering, specialising in “Mechanical conception”, water resources engineering, human ecology, environment coordination, and Philosophy.



**Mr. Michael Holden** is married and has two teenage children. As a family, they enjoy going to the cinema, theatre as well as travelling. He lives in Northern Ireland and is the current Chairman of the Centre for Independent Living Northern Ireland and is an accredited member of the Chartered Management Institute and holds a PGC in Social Science Research.

Michael has been involved in numerous projects to help assist people living with disabilities, including the launch of his website [tripability.net](http://tripability.net). His activities have also involved working in the education sector to advance disability awareness training and addressing conferences to highlight the challenges people with disabilities can face in relation to finding employment.



**Mr. Rados Keravica** has been ENIL’s Board member since 2017 and served as the Board Member of ENIL Youth Network from 2015 – 2017 and as ENIL Youth Network Chair from 2017 – 2019. He holds M.A. degree in Human Rights Law from the Central European University, Hungary, and MSc and BSc degrees in International Economics from the University of Novi Sad, Serbia.

Currently, he works at the University of Leeds in the Centre for Disability Studies as a researcher under the DARE Project (Disability Advocacy Research in Europe). His research concerns the right of disabled children to be heard and express their views in life matters which concern them and exercising autonomy and decision-making in childhood.

He has extensive experience of disability advocacy as he worked for Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI) from 2011 to 2016 as the Regional Officer for Europe supporting national DPOs to apply holistic participatory human rights monitoring methodology devised by DRPI to monitor the implementation of CRPD.



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He also worked as a disability rights specialist in consultancy capacity for UN Human Rights Team in Serbia and later as the Human Rights Project Associate coordinating joint UN project “Autonomy, Voice and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Serbia” supported through UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2018 - 2019) focusing on the legal capacity regime reform in Serbia, empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and employment of persons with disabilities.



**Mr. Jukka Kumpuvuori** has been involved in the Finnish disability rights movement for 20 years. He graduated from Law Faculty of the University of Turku. He has worked through several research projects and contributed reports to the ministries of Social Affairs and Health and the Foreign Ministry, and ILO.

From 2010 he started his own law firm that focuses purely on disability rights litigation. At the moment the firm has 1.000 cases pending nationwide. He does plenty of pro bono, for example, representing currently all under 18 years persons with disabilities for free of charge. In February 2018, he represented his client to take the first individual communication to the CRPD Committee. Simultaneously, he successfully represented a client in a personal assistance case before the Court of Justice of the European Union. He also organizes discussion events on disability rights extensively around Finland (over 100 events over past 5 years with over 6.000 participants).

Kumpuvuori is a strong advocate of changing the society through legal system in general and litigation in particular. He works to systematize various advocacy approaches at the individual and organizational levels. Kumpuvuori promotes the idea of Finland as the model state for disability rights with strong legislation on welfare benefits and anti-discrimination.

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**Ms. Suela Lala** is the Executive Director of Together Foundation/ Fondacioni “Se Bashku”, an organisation that promotes the rights of persons with disabilities and is one of the few organisations in Albania to focus on Independent Living. Suela is a disability rights activist since many years and previously she has worked in different projects for different organisations in Albania as a trainer/consultant/author always focusing on disability rights. She’s a member of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, that brings together representatives of disability organisations and Ministers of the government to shape and influence policy on disability. Suela is also a member of the Committee of Viewers and Listeners of the public broadcaster RTSH.

Suela has studied law both in Albania and England and has a master degree in Public Law from the University of Tirana and she’s an alumni of the School of Political Studies, a programme of the Council of Europe, targeting new leaders. She is fluent in English and Italian, apart from her native language.

She is also a campaigner for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and a public voice on issues concerning the rights of persons with disabilities in Albania. Because of her activism, she has been recognised with several awards nationally.



**Ms. Vibeke Marøy Melstrøm** is a mainstay of the Norwegian movement for the rights of disabled people. She is the secretary general of Uloba Independent Living Norge SA, and she has held and still holds many other roles and offices.

At the age of 18, she was involved in a road traffic accident that left her in an electric wheelchair and in need of assistance with even the most basic activities. At that time, people in this situation were dependent on their family if they wanted to live a life like other young people – with education, work and plans for the future. The alternative was a place in an institution, which was not an option for Marøy Melstrøm and many other young people who wanted to live their lives.

In 1988, she and four other persons therefore took matters into their own hands and established the working group for personal assistance (Arbeidsgruppa for Personlig Assistanse (APA)), which in 1991 became the cooperative society Uloba. Marøy Melstrøm has been deputy chair of

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the board of Uloba, BPA advisor, head of peer counsellors and assistant general manager, and is now the secretary general.

Marøy Melstrøm trained as a social worker, but has spent her whole career developing citizen-controlled personal assistance (BPA) and the Uloba organisation. In addition, she has held and still holds many offices in many national and international organisations that deal with the situation of disabled people.

In addition to having long-standing personal experience of BPA, Marøy Melstrøm was the first person in Norway to be granted work assistance, i.e. assistance at work, in 1997.



My name is **Tess Van Deynse**. I have autism. I live alone in Hasselt. In my (free) time, I do a lot of volunteer work for inclusion and rights of disabled people. By Grip vzw, Groep Intro (*project Handiknap*), VFG (*Flemish Federation for Disabled People*) in the project called bar equipment (*Caféploeg in Dutch*).

Grip vzw fights for inclusion for disabled people in Flanders region (Belgium). Also the right to choose your life: where I want to live and with who, how to spend my free time, what I want to eat, ... We do it through speaking in high schools, lobby work, taking actions against institutions and separate clubs for disabled people, fight against discrimination, ...

We do it by sensibilising children about disability and animating them to participate in the regular youth work. With playing active games such as wheel chair parcour, walking with white sticks and a bandage, reading stories about autism, ... The theme is how to communicate with disabled participants. Like other people.

We run a bar: we need to wash the dishes, to go round with drinks on receptions and events, to order drinks to clients. Like a normal bar. The aim is to sensibilise people, that we can work and talk with them. And we see work, and do what we must to do. Like everyone.