



**European Network on
Independent Living**

Nothing about us without us!

Freedom Drive Protest 2022
27 September 2022, Brussels
"50 Years of Independent Living"
Dedicated to Kapka Panayotova

PRESS RELEASE

By ENIL - the European Network on Independent Living

On the increasing violations of human rights of disabled people in Europe
and the Freedom Drive Protest 2022

30 August 2022

Human rights monitoring conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic produced evidence of grave and systemic violations of human rights of disabled people confined to institutions throughout Europe. Failure to protect the lives, health and safety of disabled people in institutions are reflected in the disproportionate number of COVID-19 related deaths. For example, in the Netherlands deaths in nursing homes accounted for 51% of the total COVID-19 deaths and 68% of COVID related fatalities in Spain.

Throughout Europe, disabled people are deprived of their liberty and detained against their will in institutions. Physical restraints are commonly used; for instance, cage beds and straight-jackets were found in institutions. Deprivation of liberty intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, with reports of people being locked in their rooms for prolonged periods in many countries.

The Freedom Drive Protest 2022 on 27 September, Brussels

To raise awareness of the situation, we will gather hundreds of disabled people from all over Europe for a protest march in Brussels on 27 September 2022, 10.00 – 13.00, starting in Parc Cinquenaire. We will take our protest to the headquarter of the European Commission, the Berlaymonth building. There we will demand to talk to a member of the college of Commissioners. Our march will culminate in a protest rally in front of the European Parliament. The march will include a surprise art installation along the route.

We would be happy to welcome reporters to the Freedom Drive Protest!



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The **Freedom Drive** is one of the key campaigns of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) – held every two years since 2003. For three days, hundreds of disability activists from all over Europe will descend on the European Quarter to raise awareness on the rights of disabled people.

To receive the full programme, please visit <https://enil.eu/event/freedom-drive/> or contact:

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About the European Network on Independent Living - ENIL

The European Network on Independent Living - ENIL is a Europe-wide network of disabled people, with members throughout Europe. ENIL is a forum for all disabled people, Independent Living organizations and their non-disabled allies on the issues of Independent Living. ENIL represents the disability movement for human rights and social inclusion based on solidarity, peer support, deinstitutionalisation, democracy, self-representation, cross disability and self-determination.

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