



For stronger protection against discrimination!

ENIL stands with the Polish EU Presidency in opposing withdrawal of the Equal Treatment Directive proposal

Many disabled citizens can tell stories of discrimination in accessing housing, healthcare or social services. Some face multiple discrimination as members of other marginalised groups. The Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities condemned such practices and urged the EU and its Member States to stop all forms of discrimination by ensuring real inclusion in the community, with adequate personal support and integral accessibility in all areas of life.

To date, the European Union has failed to adopt legislation that would combat discrimination against disabled people in areas outside employment. In 2008, the European Commission proposed a Directive on Equal Treatment that was to ban discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the areas of social protection, including social security and healthcare; education; and access to goods and services, including housing.

After 17 years of negotiations between the national governments in the EU Council, the European Commission has announced the withdrawal of the proposed directive. The EU Treaties grant the Commission this competence to permanently end a legislative project.

The step was announced in the annexes to the European Commission [work programme for 2025](#), which was published on 11 February. The Commission justifies the decision by stating: *“No foreseeable agreement – the proposal is blocked and further progress is unlikely”*.

The European Network on Independent Living – ENIL denounces this failure to adopt meaningful legislation to protect disabled people against discrimination and advance the right to independent living and being included in the community.



ENIL Co-Chair Nadia Hadad stated:

“The fact that 17 years of negotiation were not enough for the national governments to agree on a text for the Directive that lays down common anti-discrimination standards is embarrassing for the European Union. It highlights once more the decreasing political will to adopt meaningful laws and policies in the area of disability and anti-discrimination. We are the largest minority group in the EU and despite many criticisms from the various UN Committees - on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women - and the Human Rights Council, the EU is unable and unwilling to correct its course. How is Europe supposed to stay credible, if it fails to meet the internationally agreed human rights standards?”

Call for further action

ENIL cannot accept that the rights of disabled citizens are being left unprotected. It is essential to have an EU anti-discrimination directive which extends the right to equal treatment to disabled people in different areas of life. This would have a direct positive impact on those confined to a life in residential institutions, special schools, sheltered workshops and others, whose right to live independently in the community, with choice and control, is undermined and constitutes discrimination. Ensuring that people can access all services, without discrimination and with the needed support, would help keep them out of segregated settings and allow them to leave and move into community.

ENIL will continue to fight for the right to equal treatment for all disabled people, in all areas of life. [Our shadow report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) highlights EU's failure in the area of anti-discrimination.

Support for the Polish Presidency

ENIL was informed by the Polish Presidency of the EU Council that the Commission decision will not be accepted by them. Many Member States are resolved to continue working on this crucial piece of legislation. Efforts are underway to make the Commission reconsider. Asking for the reintroduction of the proposal is one option that is being considered. The Polish Presidency highlighted the crucial role of civil society in this context.



ENIL supports any attempt to save the Equal Treatment Directive and put it back on the table. We will approach the European Commission speak to Members of the European Parliament, among other actions at our disposal.

For additional input please visit www.enil.eu or contact:

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