**STATUTE OF THE EUROPEAN NETWORK ON INDEPENDENT LIVING (ENIL)**

**1. Name and Seat**

1.1. The organisation has the name "European Network on Independent Living", hereafter referred to as "ENIL", which is a non-profit organisation.

1.2. ENIL has a seat in the Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium. ENIL is the voice of the Independent Living Movement in Europe.

1.3. ENIL has a non-profit Limited by guarantee company registered in Ireland and a registered NGO in the Brussels-Capital region, Belgium for the purpose of administering projects. ENIL Brussels Office is constituted and incorporated as a not for profit International Association in accordance with the provisions of the law of 23 March 2019 introducing the Belgian Code for Companies and Associations (BCCA). The ENIL Board has the opportunity to start other offices when necessary through a board decision. The ENIL Board can choose to close any ENIL office as seen fit and will, as per paragraph 1.3.1., inform the ENIL membership.

1.3.1. If any change in the company status were to take place, members of ENIL will be informed through the newsletter and at the next General Assembly.

**2. Purpose**

2.1. ENIL’s purpose is to promote the Independent Living principles and to develop and support the Independent Living Movement in Europe in order to improve the situation of disabled people through:

* Promoting the social and human rights models of disability, individual and group empowerment, self-determination and fighting against systemic ableism, in order to reduce structural, systemic, attitudinal and practical barriers to full participation in society;
* Promoting human rights for disabled people through advocacy for the adoption and implementation of disability laws and policies compliant with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
* Advocating for opportunities for full participation in society;
* Advocating for Personal Assistance services and legislation, and other services and legislation that support Independent Living;
* Promoting and monitoring the implementation of the CRPD in Europe, particularly Article 19, through an intersectional approach, using the guidance provided in the General Comments and guidelines by the CRPD Committee.

2.2. ENIL is a network of disabled people and their organisations for Independent Living on a local, national and European level, dedicated to improving co-operation, disseminating information, mobilising knowledge, advocating for and contributing to emancipation of disabled people.

**3. ENIL Membership**

3.1. Individual disabled persons as well as organisations of disabled people and their national bodies in Europe can apply for membership, if they support and adhere to the Independent Living philosophy and approach, as well as the Independent Living principles, and if - in the case of organisations - they are run, represented and controlled by disabled people. Individual disabled persons are full ENIL members, if they support and adhere to the Independent Living philosophy and principles.

3.1.1. ENIL full organisational members are local, regional, national, international or European NGOs organised with a social model and a human rights approach to disability, adhering to the Independent Living Philosophy. The organisations are to be run, represented and controlled by disabled people, with at least 51% of board members being disabled people. Organisations applying for full membership must provide organisational documentation to support their application. Organisations that run or advocate for segregating services for disabled people cannot be full organisational members.

3.1.2. Associated organisational members are local, regional, national, international or European NGOs, academic institutions or research centres that are committed to a social model of disability and a human rights approach to disability, promoting Independent Living Philosophy and the principles of Independent Living. Organisations applying for associated membership must provide organisational documentation to support their application. Organisations that run or advocate for segregating services for disabled people cannot be associated organisational members.

3.1.3. Associated individual members are non-disabled persons who support the objectives and work of ENIL, including disabled and non-disabled persons based outside Europe.

3.2. ENIL’s Board decides on membership applications by simple majority. Organisations applying for full and associated membership must provide organisational documentation to support their application.

3.3. The membership fee is decided during the General Assembly. The fee may differ for individual members, organisations and national organisations.

**4. Cancellations of membership**

4.1. Members have the right to cancel their membership. Membership fees will not be refunded.

**5. Exclusion**

5.1. A member may be excluded from the organisation if they act against human rights of any group of people or do not fulfil the member’s duties as stated in the statute such as:

* Violates the Independent Living principles, adopted by ENIL in 1990;
* Acts in contrary to provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its General Comments;
* Does not follow decisions made by ENIL’s elected bodies;
* Actively contravenes ENIL’s interests;
* If the member’s contact details are unknown and the member cannot be reached – or in the case of organisation – it has been dissolved for more than a year.

5.2. The ENIL Board decides on exclusion cases after a hearing with the respective member. A hearing shall not be necessary, if the member explicitly foregoes this option, or if the member has moved to an unknown address, or if neither the respective member nor an authorised representative for the member is present at the meeting where the issue is to be dealt with. The respective member has to be notified of the exclusion in writing and without delay.

**6. Membership rights**

6.1. Each full member has the right to participate in and to contribute to the organisation’s activities. This includes in particular the right to:

* Participate in the General Assembly and its deliberations, decisions and elections;
* Attend and participate in Board meetings, provided they contact the Board at least five (5) working days in advance and wish to raise an issue related to the work of the organisation;
* Make suggestions for the agenda for the General Assembly and send a motion to the General Assembly, provided these are submitted to the Board in English, in writing, within (10) working days after receiving the General Assembly documents;
* Access all documents and accounts of the organisation, if this does not violate an individual’s reasonable right for privacy;
* Read the organisation’s annual accounts and receive explanations from the Board at the General Assembly.

6.2. Each associated member has the right to participate in and to contribute to the organisation’s activities. This includes the right to:

* Participate in the General Assembly, as an observer.

**7. General Assembly**

7.1. The General Assembly is the organisation’s main decision-making body. The General Assembly has to take place at least once in every three years.

7.2. Each full individual member has one vote at the General Assembly. Each full member organisation and national organisation - independent of the number of members - has one vote. No one can represent both herself/himself and an organisation at the same time, the exception being those instances where a present member can show a proxy written by an absent member to vote on the absent member’s behalf. There is a maximum of 1 (one) proxy per person and the proxy vote requests must be presented to the Board at least fifteen (15) working days before the General Assembly takes place. If members are unable to attend the General Assembly, their votes can also be sent to the Board at least five (5) working days prior to the General Assembly.In order to vote, organisations or individuals must have been a member of ENIL for at least 2 (two) months before the ENIL General Assembly.

7.3. The Board has to inform the membership through email and the electronic newsletter, unless requested in another form by an individual member, about the General Assembly at least six (6) weeks before the planned date of the General Assembly. The notice has to contain the place, date and time of the day and include an agenda and the deadline for motions. The agenda shall contain all the items to be taken up at the meeting.

The Board must respond to any incoming motions, including by sending additional documents, at least one (1) week prior to the General Assembly.

The Board can decide to hold a General Assembly online, instead of in person. In this case, the notice shall contain information on the remote voting system that will be used.

7.4. The General Assembly elects the chair for the meeting and the minute taker. The minutes shall be signed by the meeting’s chair and the minute taker. Members shall receive the minutes of the meeting no later than three (3) months after the General Assembly through email and the electronic newsletter, unless requested in another form by an individual member.

**8. Decisions of the General Assembly**

8.1. The General Assembly decides primarily over the following issues:

* Changes in the Statute;
* The approval of the Board’s report and annual accounts;
* The vote on any incoming motions from members;
* The election of the new Board;
* Membership fees;
* The election of the Nominating Committee for the Board.

8.2. Decisions at the General Assembly are made by simple majority by all the members present with voting rights and those voting remotely in absentia,as long as this procedure is in accordance with the law and the organisation’s Statute. In case of a tied vote on a motion, the motion will be turned down. In case of an online General Assembly, members present shall be understood as members participating online.

8.3. The following decision require a majority vote of three quarters of the present members with voting rights and those voting remotely in absentia:

* Abolition of the non-profit status of the organisation is decided by a majority of three quarters of the present members at two consecutive General Assemblies;
* Dissolution of the organisation or merger with other organisations is decided by a majority of three quarters of the present members at two consecutive General Assemblies;
* Changes in the Statute;
* Changes in the “Principles of Independent Living”.

8.4. The quorum of the General Assembly is if one third of ENIL members from the Council of Europe Member States are represented and at least 25 ENIL members are either physically present, have authorised present members to vote on their behalf or have voted remotely in absentia. Before the General Assembly can start, the number of members with voting rights has to be counted and adopted by the Assembly. If the General Assembly has no quorum, the Board shall announce another General Assembly to be held no later than one year after the date of the first General Assembly. This subsequent General Assembly can have a quorum with a smaller number of members with voting rights than what has been specified above. The Board, in this case, decides how many members with voting rights make up the quorum.

8.5. At the election of the Board members and other officers, each member has one vote to be cast on each of the officers to be elected. Those candidates receiving the highest number of votes are elected. In case of a tie, the General Assembly chair decides by drawing a lot.

**9. The Board**

9.1. The Board consists of at least six (6) persons and not more than nine (9). The General Assembly shall determine the number of Board members before election of the Board takes place. All Board members must be disabled people and more than 50% of the Board members should be in need of personal assistance, as defined by ENIL. The aim is for representation on the ENIL Board of different countries, regions, cultures and impairments. An equal balance in gender should be sought. The elected Board is to be the same Board for all ENIL NGO branches.

9.2. Candidates for the Board must be full members of ENIL and must be willing to dedicate at least five (5) hours per month to ENIL, as volunteers, in addition to attending Board meetings. Candidates for the Board are required to provide in writing their CV and a motivational letter as to why they wish to be elected, in which they should indicate how they comply with the criteria for the Board and in which ENIL region they are based in.

9.3. ENIL Board members are elected to serve two mandate periods (a mandate period is the time between ENIL General Assemblies). The ENIL Board members are to be elected so that a part of the ENIL Board is elected at a given ENIL General Assembly, allowing for as close to 50% of the Board to have experience of the Board work. For example, it there are to be nine Board members, this would mean 5 Board members are to continue until the next GA.

9.4. If a member of the Board leaves before the end of the elected period, the remaining Board members may appoint a substitute by simple majority. The person shall serve for the remainder of the period. The Board will meet at least two (2) times a year. The meetings can also be conducted online, under the condition that at least 50% of the Board members participate. The Board may delegate individual members with specific areas of responsibility.

9.5 The Board’s tasks are defined in the Terms of Reference. The Board may call an extraordinary General Assembly when needed, within one (1) months’ notice.

**10. ENIL Advisory Group**

10.1. The members to the Advisory Group are appointed by the ENIL Board at any given Board meeting.

10.2. The term of membership is unlimited. It can be terminated if the Board finds a person is not acting in ENIL interest or if the member decides that for some reason they can no longer be in the group. The ENIL Director is to be notified.

10.3. The group is consulted for their expertise by the ENIL Board when there is a need for further opinion. The group could also give their opinion or suggestions on certain issues upon the initiative of any of its members. The members of the group can attend Board meetings when invited by the Board. The group is to facilitate decision-making by offering their knowledge and experience. There is no budget for the work of the ENIL Advisory Group.

10.4. Communication with the Advisory Group is done through email, online meetings or through direct communication at some of ENIL’s events.

**11. ENIL Audit Committee**

11.1 The ENIL Audit Committee is appointed by the ENIL Board and is comprised of a minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 members. At least one member of the Audit Committee must be a disabled person experienced in financial matters.

11.2. The Audit Committee is an independent appraisal function established by ENIL, for the review of activities as a service to the Board. The Audit Committee evaluates and reports upon the effectiveness of internal, financial and other controls, as a contribution to the safeguarding and efficient use of ENIL resources.

**12.** **ENIL Nominating Committee**

12.1. The ENIL Nominating Committee is elected by the General Assembly and consists of at least four (4) disabled persons. If possible, there should be one member from each ENIL region – north, south, east and west Europe. The General Assembly appoints the Chair of the Nominating Committee who summons the meetings. When voting, if there is a tie, the Chair’s vote counts twice.

12.2. The Nominating Committee is responsible for preparing the call for nominations to the ENIL Board and for establishing criteria for nominations. The Nominating Committee shall interview prospective Board members, establish whether they fulfil criteria for the ENIL Board, and ensure that their CVs and motivation letters are disseminated to membership by email and electronic newsletter at least six (6) weeks before the planned date of the General Assembly.

**13.** **ENIL Management Team**

13.1. The ENIL Management Team is appointed by the Board and consists of three (3) persons, including the Executive Director, one other senior member of staff or one Board member, and at least one Board member.

13.2. The Management Team Provides support to the Executive Director in making important decisions regarding the organisation’s day-to-day work and with long-term planning; it acts as a link between the staff members and the Board, and is led by the Executive Director. The Management Team meets at least once per month.

**14. ENIL Subgroups**

14.1 ENIL subgroups, such as the ENIL Youth Network, can be established for targeting and focus on distinct areas. To allow these groups to be formal, an MOU will be produced and agreed by ENIL Board and the group representatives in order to carry out activity.

14.2. ENIL Youth Network is an ENIL subgroup founded and led by disabled young people. ENIL Youth Network has its own Constitution and Youth Board and is entitled with the degree of autonomy in decision-making set out in the MoU. ENIL Youth Network has one place guaranteed in the ENIL Board.

**15. Non-Profit making status**

15.1 ENIL is a non-profit making organization.

15.2. ENIL's funds may only be used for purposes stated in the Statue.

15.3. Voluntary work within ENIL. ENIL promotes voluntary work for office administration/staff in the different regions according to the current national laws regulating this type of work in each country.

**16. Dissolution**

16.1. In the event of the organisation’s dissolution or loss of the organisation’s non-profit status, ENIL’s assets are to be transferred to another Independent Living organisation with similar aims.

*Approved by the General Assembly on 24 May 2025.*