

2025 – 2028

ENIL YOUTH NETWORK

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY



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Plain Language Summary:

What is this document?

This document explains how ENIL Youth will communicate from 2025 to 2028.

Good communication helps young people find ENIL Youth, join our work and have their voices heard.

1. Who is ENIL Youth?

ENIL Youth is a network of young disabled people and non-disabled supporters. We work for Independent Living and disability rights. ENIL Youth gives young people opportunities to:

- learn new skills;
- meet other young people
- take action for their rights
- speak to decision-makers
- represent young disabled people

2. What do we want to achieve?

1. **Help young people grow as leaders.** We want young disabled people to build knowledge, confidence and advocacy skills.
2. **Make ENIL Youth more visible.** We want more people to know about ENIL Youth and our work.
3. **Make young people's voices heard.** We want young disabled people to take part in decisions and policy discussions.
4. **Support our members' priorities.** We want to speak about the issues that our members say are important.

3. How should we communicate?

- **Accessible:** People should be able to access and understand our content.
- **Useful:** We should choose the right way to communicate with each audience.
- **Timely:** We should share information when people need it.
- **Creative:** We should use different and interesting ways to share our messages.
- **Authentic:** Disabled people should be able to speak for themselves. We should avoid stereotypes.

4. Who do we talk to?

Our main audience is young people, especially young disabled people and their friends and supporters. We also communicate with:

- disability organisations and youth organisations
- European and international organisations
- policymakers and institutions
- the wider public

5. Where do we communicate?

Instagram: Our main channel for reaching young people.

LinkedIn: Our professional channel for organisations, institutions and policymakers.

Facebook: Mainly used to share Instagram content and stay connected with members and allies.

YouTube: This is where we sometimes publish recordings of our online events.

ENIL Newsletter: A monthly newsletter with longer updates and articles.

ENIL website and Members Mailing: Places for important information, resources and updates.

6. Who does the communication work?

The ENIL Youth Coordinator leads most communication work, with support from ENIL staff. The Youth Board also helps. Board members can:

- send updates
- suggest content
- write articles

The Coordinator and Youth Board should publish at least one piece a week.

7. How will we know if it works well?

Communication changes over time. We will check what works and what does not. Each year, ENIL Youth will make a Communications Plan.

We will look at things such as:

- how many people see our content
- how people interact with it
- which channels work best.

We will use this information to improve our communication.

1. About ENIL Youth

The ENIL Youth Network is a movement of young disabled people and non-disabled allies committed to the principles of Independent Living. It was established in 2012 with the aim to provide a space for young disabled people to engage with youth and disability rights issues at the European level. Through the Network, ENIL provides various learning opportunities to young people, encourages them to actively advocate for their rights, and supports them to address policymakers and to represent the organisation at important events. Over the years the ENIL Youth Network has also expanded its activities and influence by having representation in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe and the European Disability Forum (EDF) Youth Committee.

Any person aged 18-35 can become a member of the ENIL Youth Network, as a full individual member if they are disabled and residing in a Council of Europe Member state, or an associated member if they are a non-disabled ally and/or residing outside of the Council of Europe geographic area.

The ENIL Youth Network recognises the crucial role of young people in shaping the future direction of the disability rights movement, and the fact that a movement's strength is only as great as its visibility. As such, the ENIL Youth Network aims to fulfil its mission by being visible across digital communities in the public space.

This visibility in the digital landscape plays a crucial role in building trust with existing members and strengthening participation in the activities and democratic processes within and beyond the Youth Network. It invites the audience to join the disability rights movement and advocates for Independent Living, among supporters and opposers alike. Moreover, it allows the Network to develop connections with youth and disability organisations across Europe, strengthening youth participation overall.

2. Communications Objectives

This Communications Strategy has been developed to accompany the ENIL Youth Network Strategy and Action Plan 2025–2028. It follows the four strategic principles mapped in the ENIL Youth Strategy as follows:

1. To build youth leadership and capacity, aiming to strengthen the knowledge, confidence, and advocacy skills of young disabled people.
2. To enhance visibility, communication, and networking.
3. To increase meaningful youth representation within European, national, and international policy spaces, as well as within ENIL.
4. To advocate for the policy issues that our members themselves have identified as priorities.

The purpose of this strategy is to establish a framework through which the ENIL Youth Network can use communications as a tool in achieving these objectives. Thus, it is essential that all communications align with the above.

The overarching goal of the Communications Strategy is to take the four strategic principles outlined above and transform them into tangible communication actions. Specifically, the following actions have been identified:

For youth leadership and capacity:

- Empower disabled youth by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and communications skills to become future leaders.
- Provide members with ample opportunities for personal development.
- Showcase the activities and achievements of the Youth Network to encourage active participation and mobilise new members.

For visibility, communication, and networking:

- Define reach and engagement targets for all of the Network's communications channels, on a yearly basis.
- Foster trust with existing members and strengthen their participation in the Youth Network's activities and democratic processes.
- Further develop the Network's partnerships with other youth and disability organisations, establishing foundations for further cooperation.

For meaningful youth representation:

- Ensure ENIL Youth's voice is represented within the relevant policy spaces, primarily through the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe and the EDF Youth Committee, as well as through other opportunities if applicable.
- Regularly communicate updates on ENIL Youth's representation and other activities to members and the general public.

- Strengthen the connection between the Youth Board, the Network's membership base, and the disabled community in general, by creating opportunities for consultation and dialogue.
- Communicate key principles of meaningful youth participation by disseminating information about relevant frameworks, such as the Council of Europe Youth Perspective and others, building the members' skills to engage.

For member-driven advocacy:

- Conduct surveys and needs analysis whenever applicable, to identify the policy areas, topics and priorities that matter most to members.
- Promote access to, and understanding of, the Independent Living movement, its history and philosophy, as outlined by Independent Living Pillar 14.
- Ensure advocacy messaging speaks consistently across platforms on all identified priorities ("one voice"), allowing members to feel empowered in advocating for ENIL and ENIL Youth Network's positions.

3. Communications Standards

While the Communications Objectives outline what this strategy aims to achieve, the following standards establish the way in which all communications, regardless of objective, will be delivered. These principles inform the strategic approach taken when communicating with the ENIL Youth Network's target audience and are supported by concrete communications actions. They are also informed by ENIL Youth Network's own [Guidelines on Media Representation of Persons with Disabilities](#), developed through the Independent (Living) Media project.

Standard 1: Accessible Communications

Strategic approach: ENIL Youth communications will aim to be as accessible as possible for young disabled people.

Communications actions:

- All content will be produced in a variety of formats, ensuring maximum accessibility as a core principle, by using high colour contrast, providing easy-to-read versions, alt text, image descriptions, and transcripts and captions, among others.
- Meetings and events will be offered in an in-person, hybrid or online mode as appropriate. Materials will be sent out to participants in advance whenever possible, or immediately after, in an accessible format. Other access needs such as the need for captioning and Sign Language Interpretation will be provided whenever possible (subject to resources).
- The ENIL Youth website section and other digital and physical content produced by the ENIL Youth Network will be reviewed periodically for accessibility.

Standard 2: Effective Communications

Strategic approach: The tools and channels used will be the most effective and accessible ones appropriate to the specific output and target audience.

Communications actions:

- The most appropriate mix of communications channels and formats will be used to maximise understanding of content, reach and engagement.
- The accessibility, relevance, and performance of communications platforms and tools will be reviewed periodically.
- Changes will be made to tools and platforms based on the findings of these reviews or other developments as appropriate.

Standard 3: Timely Communications

Strategic approach: Messages and information will be delivered in a timely and planned way to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Communications actions:

- Plan communication actions around key dates and events (e.g., Disability Pride Month, European Independent Living Day, Freedom Drive, Youth Cafés, projects).
- Communications will be responsive to any emerging issues that may affect disabled youth or the broader disability rights movement.
- A yearly communications plan will be used to schedule content and to ensure consistent communications output throughout the year.

Standard 4: Creative and Adaptable Communications

Strategic approach: Communications will make use of varied and engaging formats to inform, educate and entertain, all while reflecting the voices of our members.

Communications actions:

- Creators will be encouraged to innovate and experiment with new approaches and methodologies.
- Creative storytelling techniques will be employed to communicate messages in engaging and meaningful ways.
- Diverse, impactful and easy-to-understand visuals will be used as appropriate.

Standard 5: Authentic Representation

Strategic approach: Communications will be guided by the principle of authenticity and self-representation, as outlined in ENIL Youth's Guidelines on Media Representation of Persons with Disabilities.

Communications actions:

- Members will be supported to contribute ideas and content that reflect their own interests and perspectives.
- Content will avoid stereotypes, sensationalism, and will aim to emphasise the “whole person” rather than just their disability.
- Measures will be taken to prevent discriminatory comments or online harassment aimed at individuals who feature in the Network’s content.

4. Communications Framework

4.1 Our Audience

ENIL Youth communications intend to serve a number of distinct audiences, each of which require distinct messaging, tone, and substance.

Young people, including both young disabled people and non-disabled allies, are the Network's primary audience. This includes members of the ENIL Youth Network, young people that have participated in the Network's events, as well as disabled and non-disabled youth who are unfamiliar with ENIL Youth and its activities.

Communications aimed at this groups should contain the following messages:

- ENIL Youth Network is a hub for passionate young people and is active throughout the European continent and beyond.
- Through active participation in ENIL Youth, young people can develop friendships across borders and gain skills for life.
- ENIL Youth makes it easy to stay engaged, by sharing the Network's impact, upcoming events, and open calls to get involved.
- ENIL Youth creates opportunities for young disabled people to take part in various projects, decision-making processes, and initiatives, representing their peers within ENIL and in wider European youth and policy spaces.
- ENIL Youth is run by young disabled people, for young disabled people and their allies: it is inclusive of any impairment, and any other identity markers, committing itself to an intersectional, non-discriminatory and Human Rights based approach in all of its actions.
- Activism and political engagement are how previous generations advanced disability rights, and ENIL Youth's goal is to foster an environment that enables young disabled people to continue that work.

Partner organisations and institutions represent a secondary audience. These include adjacent disability rights organisations at the national, regional, European or global level, other youth organisations, and international bodies such as the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Communications aimed at this group should contain the following messages:

- The ENIL Youth Network is a vibrant youth initiative at the forefront of developing future leaders for the disability and human rights movement.
- The ENIL Youth Network is committed to developing opportunities for disabled youth, through capacity-building, education, advocacy and more.

- In ENIL Youth, members are treated as experts who have opportunities to represent the Network at meetings and events across Europe, strengthening youth participation and access to rights at every level.
- With extensive reach across Europe and beyond, the ENIL Youth Network is continuously shaped by the needs of its members and responsive to contemporary events.

The wider public is a broader, more diffuse audience reached primarily through social media. While not the primary focus, all external communications will play a role in raising general awareness of Independent Living principles and the disability rights movement, informed by [ENIL's 18 Pillars of Independent Living](#).

4.2 Current Tools and Platforms

Given the Network's volunteer-based capacity, these communication channels have been selected to maximise reach while remaining sustainable:

Instagram is the Network's main social media channel and its most important tool for reaching young people. Its visual format is particularly useful for the type of content that ENIL Youth intends to create. It is the platform that is most likely to reach new audiences and convert consumers of content into members and allies.

LinkedIn, through a showcase page, serves as the Network's professional channel, used to engage policymakers, institutions and organisations. It is best suited to sharing event announcements, representation updates, policy work, statements, position papers, and reports.

Facebook is used by the ENIL Youth Network mainly through cross-posting from Instagram. The ENIL Youth Network Facebook page primarily serves to keep a connection with former and current members and allies of who were members of the "ENIL Youth Network" Facebook group, a public group which was ENIL Youth's primary communication channel when it was first established.

Youtube is used occasionally, to publish longer form content, such as recordings from selected online events.

The *ENIL Newsletter* is sent out monthly and provides longer-form communication delivered directly to members. Unlike social media channels mentioned above, the newsletter covers the entire organisation, not just the ENIL Youth Network, and it is for people who have chosen to opt in. This makes it a useful tool for keeping existing members engaged. Here, they can be informed of activities, as well as read opinion pieces on various topics, strengthening their connection to ENIL's work.

The *ENIL website and Youth Corner* of the Members Mailing serve as the Network's permanent public resource. They hold space for essential information, publications, member resources, and archives.

- *The website* is not as time sensitive as social media but must be kept accurate and accessible, as it impacts public image.
- *The Youth Corner* of the ENIL Members Mailing provides dedicated space for short form updates on the most important actions taken by the ENIL Youth Network and the Youth Board. The Members mailing also covers the entire organisation, and it is published monthly, mid-month.

4.3 Responsibility of Maintaining Communications

Communications, and especially social media work, requires a time commitment. It must be updated on a regular basis, so that users have an incentive to follow and return frequently. Sporadic or irregular output negatively impacts growth and diminishes the profile's standing with the algorithm. However, this work must be balanced with a recognition of ENIL Youth's volunteer-based and limited capacity, to avoid overextending.

To ensure visibility is achieved, while respecting the voluntary nature of the ENIL Youth Board and membership roles, social media and communications responsibilities are mainly assigned to the ENIL Youth Coordinator, with support from the ENIL Communications Trainee/officer, as members of staff.

The ENIL Youth Networks nine Board Members have supporting roles in communications, by:

- regularly informing the Coordinator of their activities, to be included in the Members Mailing
- suggesting social media content or writing articles for the newsletter on a voluntary basis

The ENIL Youth Coordinator and Youth Board will be responsible for planning and publishing at least one piece of content per week, in accordance with the objectives outlined in this strategy, to maintain momentum and ensure continuity. To reinforce visibility of the Youth Network, the ENIL Youth Coordinator will check in with the Youth Board ahead of deadlines for the Members Mailing and Newsletter each month, and more often as needed.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The media landscape is continuously evolving. What were once youth orientated platforms (e.g., Facebook) have become increasingly associated with an older demographic. It is therefore essential that the ENIL Youth Network pays attention to emerging trends and audience behaviours when deciding which channels and formats to use in delivering its messages.

To ensure adaptability and growth, as well as structured and planned communications, the ENIL Youth Board will adopt a yearly Communications Plan at the start of each calendar year. This plan will be aligned with the ENIL Youth Workplan for the year, and include specific targets per channel, as well as reflect the upcoming work to identify topics, periods, events, and potential developments that need particular attention.

The Network will monitor performance of each communications platform and tool used by the organisation on a quarterly basis. Specifically, when available, quantitative data measurements (activity metrics, reach metrics and engagement metrics) will be used to measure effectiveness of communications.



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