



Amendments of the European Network on Independent Living to AgoraEU

Technical title of the regulation: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the AgoraEU programme for the period 2028-2034 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818

About the European Network on Independent Living

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is a disabled-led, cross-disability network of disabled people and their representative organisations. ENIL promotes the right to independent living, as set out in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). ENIL is active at the European level, and internationally. ENIL's actions and activities are based on the social and the human rights models of disability, and on the principles of inclusive equality, self-determination, solidarity and intersectionality.

Disability Equality as a horizontal objective of European Union law

European Union primary and secondary law define the equal treatment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities as a core objective.

Article 19 TFEU grants the EU the competence to combat discrimination based on disability.

According to article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights discrimination on the ground of disability is prohibited. According to article 26, the Union recognises and respects the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from measures designed to ensure their independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community.



The purpose of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) “is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities”.

In March 2007, the European Union signed the Convention. Council Decision of 26 November 2009 “concerning the conclusion, by the European Community, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2010/48/EC)” approved the UN CRPD on behalf of the EU. Being a state party to the UN CRPD entails the obligation “to adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the present Convention”.

In November 2024, the European Commission adopted the Commission Notice “Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding.”¹

The exclusion of disabled people

Disabled people are still severely excluded from life in the community.

The segregation of disabled people has increased. According to Eurofound, the number of disabled people confined to institutions has increased by 29% in the last decade.²

Disabled people are excluded from work. Between 2010 and 2023 the disability employment gap has increased from 18,6% to 24,5%.³

Disabled people experience significantly higher poverty rates and are much more likely to be homeless. According to Eurostat, in 2024 28,8% were at risk of poverty, compared to 17.9% of non-disabled people.⁴

¹ European Commission 2025. Commission adopts guidance on independent living for persons with disabilities https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-adopts-guidance-independent-living-persons-disabilities-2024-11-20_en

² Eurofound 2024. Paths Towards Independent Living <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/all/paths-towards-independent-living-and-social-inclusion-europe>

³ ENIL 2025a. Advocacy Campaign for Inclusive Employment takes shape. <https://enil.eu/advocacy-campaign-for-inclusive-employment-takes-shape/>

⁴ Eurostat 2025b. Disability statistics - poverty and income inequalities. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Disability_statistics_-_poverty_and_income_inequalities



The role of organisations of persons with disabilities

The UN CRPD foresees a central role for these organisations when it comes to implementing the Convention. According to art. 4(3):

“In the development and implementation of legislation and policies to

implement the present Convention, and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities, States Parties shall closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations.”

Due to their widespread exclusion from all spheres of life, disabled people face severe barriers to self-organise into advocacy organisations. Disabled people have very limited access to economic resources. Representative organisations are small-scale and rarely have access to funding. Operational grants to organisations of persons with disabilities Organisations of persons with disabilities play a vital role by giving a voice to the otherwise voiceless.

Scope for improvement in CERV

According to an evaluation of the European Commission, the Citizens Equality Rights and Values programs is insufficiently resourced to fulfil its objectives.⁵ Under previous calls, up to 92% of proposals were rejected despite receiving high evaluation scores, reflecting insufficient funding. As the Commission noted, “many excellent applications cannot be funded due to budget limitations.”

Persons with disabilities are predominantly not organised into organisations. Organisations of persons with disabilities only make up a small portion of those granted funding. Organisations of persons with disabilities have great difficulties of reaching a stage where they can launch proposals, face stronger barriers in mobilising co-funding and rarely possess the resources that allow outreach into the disability community. Our organisations depend on the EU, to continue their work.

CERV funding must at the very least remain stable, so our organisations can do their work.

⁵ European Commission 2023. CERV work programme 2021-2023. <https://www.cerv.at/dam/jcr%3A0b835c7f-5f28-4305-ab5f-ee41b295da02/CERV%20Statistics%202021%20-%202023.pdf>



Our recommendations

1. **Maintain the distribution of funding the European Parliament has proposed. CERV+ should not receive less than 41,9% of the envelope. Of that 50% should be allocated to support organisations of persons with disabilities.**
2. **The role of disability equality should be strengthened throughout the programme.**

Recital 15a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
	<i>Disability equality is a fundamental right and an objective of the Union. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is part of the EU legal order, the European Union is bound to implement the policy objectives formulated therein. Progress to implement the Convention remains very limited. Persons with disabilities are still strongly excluded from life in the community due to the lack of support services, insufficient accessibility and confinement to segregated settings. Persons with disabilities are discriminated against when it comes to accessing employment, housing, education and their legal capacity. Women with disabilities face more severe exclusion than men. Women with disabilities are at a high risk of experiencing a combination of ableism and sexism-based violence, including domestic violence and forced sterilisation. The Convention obliges state parties to mainstream disability equality across all policy</i>



	<i>areas. All EU programmes and policies have to contribute to the implementation of the Convention.</i>
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Recital 15b (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
	<i>Due to their exclusion from most areas of life, their segregation and limited support options, persons with disabilities face stronger barriers to make themselves heard than other disadvantaged groups. Organisations of persons with disabilities play a vital role in empowering persons with disabilities and voicing their needs to policy makers. Grass-roots organisations of persons with disabilities are often small and with limited financial power due to the limited access to economic resources of their members. Under the Convention, it is the honour and duty of the European Union to provide resources to organisations of persons with disabilities, granting them the ability to organise and involve a severely excluded group into the democratic life of the Union, enable them to voice their needs to policy makers and ensure their access to fundamental rights. To support organisations of persons with disabilities, the European Union provides multiannual operational grants.</i>



Article 3 – Paragraph 1

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
(1) The general objectives of the Programme are to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries, to safeguard artistic and media freedom, and to protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter, thereby enhancing democratic participation and societal resilience.	(1) The general objectives of the Programme are to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries, to safeguard artistic and media freedom, and to protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties, and in the Charter <i>and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure the inclusion and equal treatment of persons with disabilities</i> , thereby enhancing democratic participation and societal resilience. <i>Those objectives shall be pursued in particular by supporting organisations of persons with disabilities active on the local, regional, national and transnational level to sustain societies based on equality and inclusion.</i>

Article 3 –Paragraph 2 – point c - point i

Text Proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
(c) the Democracy, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values ('CERV+') strand shall:	(c) the Democracy, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values ('CERV+') strand shall:



i. contribute to protecting and promoting fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination and Union citizen's rights enshrined in the Treaties including free movement of citizens, and empowering civil society ('rights, equality, citizens and civil society');	i. contribute to protecting and promoting fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination, <i>including the rights of persons with disabilities</i> and Union citizen's rights enshrined in the Treaties, <i>the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> including free movement of citizens, and empowering civil society ('rights, equality, citizens and civil society'); <i>it shall do so by providing operational- and project grants to organisations of persons with disabilities, active on the local, regional, national and transnational level.</i>
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Article 3 - Paragraph 2 – point c a (new)

Text Proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>(ca) the Daphne strand shall contribute to preventing and fighting against all-forms of ableism-based violence, violence against children with disabilities and other groups at risk of such violence, including online violence;</i>



Article 7 – Title

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
Rights, equality, citizens and civil society	Rights, equality, disability equality , citizens and civil society

Article 7 – Point (a)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
(a) promoting equality, and preventing and fighting against discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and all forms of racism and intolerance;	(a) promoting equality, including disability equality and preventing and fighting against discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and all forms of racism, abelism and intolerance;

Article 7 – Point (b)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments



(b) promoting gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and protecting and promoting women's full enjoyment of rights;	(b) promoting gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and protecting and promoting women's full enjoyment of rights; <i>promoting the rights of disabled women and girls in particular, including sexual and reproductive rights of girls and women with disabilities;</i>
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Article 7 – Point (c)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
(c) promoting accessibility and protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, supporting the EU implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;	(c) promoting <i>Independent Living</i> , accessibility and protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, <i>including by</i> supporting the EU implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; <i>including by providing operational and project grants to organisations of persons with disabilities active on the local, regional, national, european and international level;</i>



Article 7 – Point (d)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
(d) protecting and promoting the rights of the child;	(d) protecting and promoting the rights of the child, <i>including children with disabilities; including by supporting the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>

Article 7 – Point (f)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
(f) nurturing a vibrant civic space by building the capacity of, and providing financial support to, civil society organisations, human rights defenders, and other relevant actors, which are active at all levels in protecting, promoting and raising citizen's awareness of rights enshrined in the Treaty, promoting EU democratic resilience, non-discrimination and equality and more broadly Union values, such as the respect for fundamental rights, the rule of law, democracy and in protecting and promoting respect of the Charter.	(f) nurturing a vibrant civic space by building the capacity of, and providing financial support, <i>including multiannual operational and project grants to</i> , civil society organisations, <i>organisations of persons with disabilities</i> , human rights defenders, and other relevant actors, which are active at all levels in protecting, promoting and raising citizen's awareness of rights enshrined in the Treaty, <i>the Charter and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i> , promoting EU democratic resilience, non-discrimination and equality and more broadly Union values, such as the



	respect for fundamental rights, the rule of law, democracy and in protecting and promoting respect of the Charter.
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Article 8 – Point (a)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
	(a) preventing, responding to and fighting at all levels all forms <i>of abilism-based violence, including forced sterilisation,</i> gender-based violence against women and girls, domestic violence, and violence against children, young and older people, LGBTIQ people, persons with disabilities and other groups at risk;

Article 11 – Paragraph 1 a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
	<i>1a. The distribution of the amount set out in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be as follows:</i> <i>(a) 46,4% of the financial envelope shall be allocated for the specific objectives set out</i>



	<i>in Chapters II (Creative Europe, Culture - strands);</i> <i>(b) 11,7% of the financial envelope shall be allocated for the specific objectives set out in Chapter III (MEDIA+ strand);</i> <i>(c) 41,9% of the financial envelope shall be allocated for the specific objectives set out in Chapters IV (CERV+ Strand)</i>
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Article 11 – Paragraph 1 b (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
	<i>1d. Within the amounts set out for the specific objectives set out in Articles 7, 8, 9 (CERV+, Daphne and Union Values strands), at least 50% shall be allocated to support organisations of persons with disabilities</i>

Article 15 – Paragraph 2

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendments
Union funding may be provided in any form in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom)	Union funding may be provided in any form in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom)



2024/2509, in particular grants, prizes, procurement and non-financial donations.	2024/2509, in particular grants, prizes, procurement and non-financial donations. <i>European entities active on the local, regional, national and international level shall be eligible for support through multiannual operating grants. Organisations of persons with disabilities are eligible for Union funding of up to 100% of eligible costs, provided their direct-member ship consist of persons with disabilities.</i>
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ENIL has participatory status with the Council of Europe (i.e. is a member of the Conference of INGOs) and consultative status with ECOSOC.

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