

ENIL YOUTH INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PEOPLE 2017 STATEMENT

04/12/17

This International Day of Disabled People, ENIL Youth with support from the European Youth Forum continue to champion the right of disabled young people to live independently and be included in the community.

Far too many disabled young people across Europe are still forced to live in institutions such as large care homes or group homes, in stark violation of our rights. In these homes, as disabled young people we do not have the same level of choice and control over our lives as our non-disabled peers. Often we do not have access to community based services such as education and leisure facilities and lack control over even the most basic decisions such as what to eat or what time to go to bed.

Every disabled young person has the right to live in the community, with our families, and then as a young adult, in a setting of our choosing whether that be with friends, a partner or alone. Segregated education is a clear violation of our right to inclusive education, to be able to go to school, college and university on an equal basis with others. Our right to Personal Assistance must be fulfilled in order for us to have full choice and control over every aspect of our lives, whether we want to party until 2am with our friends or go to the gym before breakfast!

In order for our inclusion to be fully realised, disabled young people must also be guaranteed equal access to employment and volunteering opportunities. Every effort should be made to provide disabled young people with the resources and adjustments we need to be successful as a volunteer or employee, whether in our hometown or in a new country. Currently, disabled young people make up only a small number of those accessing youth mobility projects. More must be done to increase participation. Disabled young people need adequate accessible housing, Personal Assistance and support at work so we can take full advantage of the range of opportunities on offer to other young people.

ENIL Youth with support from the European Youth Forum call on the European/International institutions, Member States and governments across the world to get disabled young people out of care homes and into the community, and to give us access to a full range of inclusive community based services. Only then will disabled young people be able to enjoy our rights as young citizens and be full and equal members of society.