Newsletter

OF THE EUROPEAN COALITION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Issue No.8

December 2008/
January 2009

Word from the Editorial Team

Dear Readers,

In the previous two issues, we discussed various aspects of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ("the Convention") and we continue with this theme in this issue.

Following up on our Seminar in Norway, which took place in September 2008, we have included a note of the presentation delivered by Professor Gerard Quinn from the University of Ireland, Galway on the added value of the Convention. In his presentation, Prof. Quinn reflected on the impact the Convention is likely to have on the lives of people with disabilities and gave some suggestions on how to maximise this impact and use the Convention as a tool for change.

As promised in the last issue, you will find the results of our survey on the Convention, which we carried out during the Seminar in Norway. We asked the participants about the level of awareness about the Convention in their countries, the opportunities and barriers to its ratification and implementation, and suggestions about activities ECCL could carry out in 2009 to promote the use of the Convention. While the number of surveys returned was quite small, the answers provided give us an indication about the opportunities and challenges we face in making the Convention a reality across Europe.

One of the first countries in Europe to ratify the Convention was Croatia. We therefore asked Damjan Janjušević from the Association for Self-Advocacy (ASA) in Croatia to reflect on the situation of people with intellectual disabilities in the country. In addition to his article, we include an insight into the lives of five self-advocates from ASA – Đurđa, Mara, Ratko, Fadil and Milica. We are grateful to them for speaking very openly about their experience of living in institutions and explaining how their lives have changed now that they live independently.

Finally, on 10 December 2008 – which marked the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – ECCL launched its advocacy manual for disability organisations and service providers entitled "Creating Successful Campaigns for Community Living". The purpose of the manual is to assist individuals and organisations who want to achieve the changes that are needed to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in community life as equal citizens. It provides information and advice on how to conduct campaigns and other activities to attain the goal of community living for all people with disabilities.

A copy of the press release announcing the launch of this manual can be found on page 15 of this Newsletter.

We would like to end this Editorial by thanking our members and all those who contributed to ECCL's activities in 2008. We look forward to continuing this cooperation in the New Year and encourage you to continue sending us your contributions to the Newsletter or the website. We would also like to thank the Open Society Mental Health Initiative for their generous financial support in 2008, which helped us continue with our work, and Socires Foundation for supporting the publication of the advocacy manual and the workshop.

With best wishes for the New Year!

Editorial Team (Ines Bulić, John Evans and Camilla Parker)

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Added Value of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[1]

By Prof. Gerard Quinn

I would like to thank ECCL and ULOBA indeed for the high honour and privilege of being here this morning.

It is a very special week for me and my family because my 19-year-old daughter who is disabled has just started college this week and we certainly could not have predicted that 19 years ago. I am always shocked when I realise that 3 per cent – only 3 per cent – of children with disabilities in developing countries ever see the inside of a school house, which certainly jars my conscience and motivates me to further action.

Prof. Gerard Quinn

I would like to also acknowledge the presence in the room of colleagues from the Norwegian Government, from Department of Children and Equality, who played a very constructive and positive and instrumental role in New York during the negotiations.

I was asked to speak on the added value of the Convention. My presentation is based on two fairly lengthy papers which I will not bore you with details of. ECCL has them and I will just draw out the three points from those papers that I think are important in setting out the kind of debate that we are going to have about how do we make use of this Convention.

The first basket of ideas is to reflect just momentarily on why the Convention was necessary. Now, there is a boring lawyer's answer to this question and then there is the real answer. And, it is the real answer that I want to get at. And it has to do with invisibility, but not just in text - at a much deeper level, for example, in the political process. Second thing I want to do is to try to put my finger on what the pulse of the Convention is – where is the golden thread. Because, there is a lot of detail, there is a lot of texture apt to get lost if you do not have a navigational guide. I will suggest a golden thread that maybe hangs it all together for you and certainly gives a sense of why independent living is so critically important in the intellectual structure of the Convention.

And lastly, I want to look to the future, to some of the challenges - and there will be lots of challenges - but also to some of the opportunities. It was after the drafting of the US Constitution that Benjamin Franklin was accosted in the street by a lady who said: "Well, what do we have, Sir? Do we have a Republic or do we have a Monarchy?" And he said: "You have a Republic, Madam, if you can keep it."

Well, we have our paper Convention and largely it is down to you to actually turn it into reality. It is not a magic bullet that will solve all your problems, but it is something that if used wisely can help create a new dynamics of disability politics.

So, the first thing I want to open up is - *Why the Convention?* Now, lawyers are often accused of having very sharp minds, but only at the cost of narrowing them down, and I think there is a lot to that. Here is the narrow legal reason for why we needed the Convention. We already had a web of international human rights Conventions. We already purported to be universal, to apply to 100 per cent of the population. But the reality is that they were never operationalised that way. They were certainly not drafted with people with disabilities in mind. They did have the inherent capacity of being applied in the disability context, but never were and, truth be told, never were likely to be. So therefore, a well of support grew for the idea of drafting a thematic Convention on disability, just like there had been one dealing with women, dealing with children and dealing with racial minorities. That is the legal reason.

Embedded in that is the sense that the existing texts were not cognizant of disability, that people with disabilities were invisible in the existing texts. But I will suggest that textual invisibility is only a manifestation of a much, much deeper invisibility. And it is that deeper invisibility that I think the Convention could best be used to tackle and to undo. And that is an invisibility in the political process itself. The reality is that the default setting in most political arenas is that disability costs, the costs need to be contained and welfare and charity will do it for us. So, people with disabilities were placed on a pedestal, but in reality were placed in a gilded cage through the misuse, I would suggest, of social supports down through the decades.

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[1] This presentation was delivered at the Seminar of the European Coalition for Community Living on 12 - 13 September 2008 in Drammen, Norway.

The trick is to change that default in the political system, to get the political system thinking of disability issues as rule of law issues, to try and ensure there is no impunity for violence and exploitation. To get the political system to think of disability as an issue of justice and as an issue of rights that apply to everybody. That is actually not revolutionary, but it is revolutionary in the context of disability. We are only asking that the legacy values of our civilisation, for want of better word, would actually be put to good use for at least 10 per cent of the population. So, if we are revolutionaries, we are conservative revolutionaries.

How do you do it? This is the core challenge. We can do it by having new texts that explicitly refer to disability. And we can use those new texts, let's say the UN Convention, to challenge the outputs of the political process – the bad laws, the bad policies, the bad financial systems, the bad service delivery design and all the rest of it. But I would suggest you are not actually getting at the true added value of the Convention by confining yourselves to such narrow legalistic approaches. The whole point about the Convention is not just to challenge the outcomes, but to change the process itself. To create a new dynamic of disability politics in which the default setting moves away from viewing disability simply as cost to viewing disability as really an issue of the rule of law and justice and human rights.

So, at the textual level, the myth system has changed. Everybody now has signed up to what they should have signed up to 60 years ago, which is that human rights are universal. But the operation system remains the same. Do not be under any illusion about that. There will be a large amount of push-back, some of it will be covert, some of it will take the form of co-opting the language of rights, but in fact using the language of rights to justify continuing as before. That is to be expected, that is normal in the sociology of legal change. But, it is something to be counteracted. And, as I say, the values lying behind the Convention - as expressed in Article 3 - are not at all revolutionary, but they are revolutionary in the context of disability, and that is why we will need to continue manning the barricades.

So, that is my first point – the Convention should be seen as something that helps transform that normal default setting, that helps enrich and transform the normal dynamic of disability politics, which can then be relied upon to produce results that you can live with here in Norway and that we can live with in Ireland, and so on and so forth.

Second point – *What is the golden thread in this Convention?* There are many different ways of getting your handle over it, there are many different ways of unpacking the various rights, and there are many different ways of getting lost in the text of the Convention. If you stand back from this, there is one very simple powerful message in the Convention, which is that people with disabilities are subjects capable of controlling their own personal destinies, not objects to be managed by others. It is as simple as that. And of course, that is something that we accept in respect to all the human rights conventions, with respect to every person who is able bodied. But now, what this Convention does, is transmit that very simple and powerful lesson into the disability context.

The way I unpack rights, to make them somewhat more accessible, is to package them into four bundles of rights. And they all make sense along a particular spectrum, emanating from this idea that people with disabilities are subjects and not objects.

One tranche of these rights focuses on simple existence. They protect people against the deprivations of others – the right to life, freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse, and the integrity of the person. This is classic rule of law matter, which has simply now been applied and tailored into the disability context. And I think there is a very powerful message in Article 16 against violence, exploitation and abuse. It is simply that there will no longer be tolerated any enclaves or any 'no go' areas, or any impunity for violence perpetrated against people with disabilities, especially in vulnerable situations. What it is really saying is the cloak that has been hiding invisibility has been removed, that the rule of law now applies for the benefit of everybody. So we have a kind of static, protective tranche of rights that simply apply the rule of law to people with disabilities.

Then, of course, we have another tranche of rights built on top of that, restoring autonomy to people with disabilities. And autonomy simply comes from the Greek idea of *auto nomos* – self government. Nobody else dictates to you how you should live your life. Ideally, you create for yourself your own worldview and you live it accordingly. As the Woodstock generation would say - Let the hair hang down and do what you want! And right at the core of this is Article 12 on legal capacity, acknowledging that people with disabilities have an innate capacity to decide for themselves and respecting that choice. If there is to be an intervention on the part of the State, the primary impulse should be to support a residuum of capacity - this is very important for the elderly, whose capacities decline naturally - and to intervene to support people to make decisions for themselves, with appropriate safeguards to guard against conflict of interest and so forth.

I think the revolution of ideas, moving from object to subject, is best encapsulated in Article 12. To me, that is non-negotiable. To me, any reservation to Article 12 by a State attempting to punch holes in the fabric of the Convention should be declared incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. So, this is pivotal to everything else that arises. This centres the person; it gets the person outside of the gilded cage and enables them to make decisions for themselves. It also wraps a system of services around that to enable this to occur.

That I think is really the foundation for the article on independent living – Article 19. Article 19 very much is a result of this revolution of ideas. The fascinating thing about the article on independent living is the necessity of reengineering of services. Now, this is not going to be easy. This is something I sense you have done quite well in Norway. This is something you are going to have to educate others about, because they do not know what the trigger is. They do not know how you actually go about doing this and they encounter a lot of resistance from traditional service providers, who fear change. That is a natural part of the human condition; so, they have to be shown what are the practicable models to bring about that change. I would also bundle into this tranche of rights the right to rehabilitation and habilitation.

There was quite a fascinating debate over it, because, of course, the Convention is not supposed to contain anything new. And therefore, the insertion of this right was rightly challenged by Governmental representatives, who said there is no precedent for this elsewhere. But, of course, the argument that won at the end of the day was that this is because one assumes a capacity for freedom and choice. Whereas, in the disability context, we must go the extra mile to ensure people have the highest level of attainment to functioning, in order to enjoy the blessings of freedom. And that is why rehabilitation, independent living and legal capacity are woven of the same cloth and should be seen as part of the liberation struggle for people with disabilities.

So much for the 'form internal' for protecting people and for restoring decision making to people. The rest of the Convention deals with what I would call the 'form external', and breaking down barriers into the economy, into the social sphere and into the political sphere. And this is where the third tranche of articles is relevant - on accessibility - generally, but also in very specific contexts. If I could predict something that is going to be incredibly important over the next 20 years, it is going to be the application of these accessibility ideas to the information society, to e-accessibility and so on and so forth.

The last tranche is very traditional, which is economic and social and cultural rights. All of the kind of supportive rights that we need to take advantage of our freedom and our opportunities. Of course, the revolution here is that we are no longer viewing these rights as things that imprison people in the gilded cages. We are trying to reengineer these social supports and make a life of choice and freedom a reality for everybody.

So much for the rights - I think they are rather packaged and unpacking them makes them much more accessible, so long as you remember that the core revolution is one of moving from object to subject.

What are the actual obligations contained in the Convention? Here is where I think there are a lot of opportunities. One of the obligations is to, as it were, embed a reflective process in your national governments - to think about compatibility between your inherited laws and practices and the actual Convention itself. Now, it is true, as our colleague from the Parliament said, that different countries have different traditions with this respect. I would have argued with colleagues from those countries that do not have a tradition of agonising before ratifying, that they actually have an obligation under the Convention to do so in Article 4. And, if they have not done so, it is a pity. It is actually a wasted opportunity to embed this new kind of disability politics.

There is also the obligation for mainstreaming, which you are quite familiar with, and to listen and consult actively with people with disabilities. Here is your opening to create a new dynamic of disability politics in the domestic apparatus.

There is also a very dynamic dimension to the general obligations of States. Not everything will be achieved immediately. Some things are going to take time and yes, some things are going to take money. There is going to have to be a lot of experimentation before we arrive at adequate solutions - solutions that can be reconciled with your obligations under the Convention and solutions that suit you in Norway or in Zimbabwe or wherever. The dynamic side of the Convention is to the effect that these programmatic changes have to genuflect before resource scarcity. However, that is not an excuse for not having a dynamic in place to move in the right direction. That is not an excuse not to have measurable goals and to be able to measure achievement along a certain continuum. And those measurable goals should not be that we catch up in 200 years. It should be that we catch up in 5, 6 or 7 years.

My experience is that people with disabilities generally go along with that, because they understand the resource constraints. What they do not understand is that these resource constraints are used as an excuse to temporise and not to do anything. So, a lot of us argued in the UN that one of the obligations that should have been on States is to have a national plan for implementing the Convention. Sadly, that was left to one side.

Let me move on now to look at some of the opportunities and challenges. I think the chief opportunity in the Convention is not to use it like a musket to fire off rounds challenging particular laws. It is that, but it really is an opportunity to embed a new practice of disability politics. Article 4 requires active consultation with people with disabilities. Article 33 requires governments to have a focal point on disability. Now, this may not be new for you [in Norway], but it is new for the vast majority of countries around the world. That focal point has to deal proactively with representative organisations of people with disabilities.

Think for a moment what you have done in Norway and think for a moment of the challenges in some of the developing countries. You should be thinking about how you are going to use Norwegian development aid to transfer some of those political skills to get things happening in developing countries around the world.

Article 33(2) requires the State Parties to set up a national monitoring mechanism *independent* of government. That will normally be a human rights commission or an equality body or an ombudsperson, or whatever your taste is in the various jurisdictions around the world. And the tasks will be to *promote*, to *protect* and to *monitor*. Very open ended, very powerful tasks. For example, promote or, rather, protect, may require taking legal action on behalf of groups of people with disabilities in the national jurisdiction. And, more to the point, these national independent mechanisms are required to function in active consultation with people with disabilities.

So, the Convention is interesting and unique and distinctive. Most international Conventions say: we have the obligations, in the pure ether, now go do it. The gap has always been – where is the transmission belt between international law and the domestic matrix for change? This Convention actually goes the extra step and requires that matrix to be in place. And now it is up to you to actually maximise your opportunities, to use it.

With respect to the international monitoring mechanism, regrettably, they fixed on a very traditional model. Even though States were arguing at the outset that the old model does not work and we cannot fix it, *we* knew the new model. And we [in the human rights commissions] came forward with an idea that we would not have any more paper mountains accumulating in New York or Geneva, that we would have some smart reporting. Whereby, if the new UN Committee [on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities] felt that independent living or legal capacity or deinstitutionalisation was the single most urgent moral priority, that we should ask States for their input as to how they have progressed this, about where the obstacles are. Then the UN Committee should go on to do further in-depth study about solutions to those challenges and not necessarily make willy minded recommendations about change.

Unfortunately, that did not gain traction so we have a very traditional treaty monitoring mechanism. However, it will function like other treaty monitoring mechanisms, which means there will be opportunities to interact with it, perhaps even feed shadow or parallel reports to it and influence how it assesses the State report of whatever the State Party is in question. So, it is important to cultivate that relationship [with the UN Committee]. Generally speaking, the practice of listening to civil society amongst treaty monitoring bodies is very good and very open.

With respect to the Optional Protocol, if your country ratifies, you will have an opportunity to lodge individual or collective complaints. I would be a bit careful about that personally, because the wrong complaint lodged too quickly can produce the wrong result. Let us wait and see, let us be a bit strategic about how we do this. There are many organisations out there who have experience in strategic litigation, who can pass on their experiences about the uses and the limits of this way of proceeding.

For my own part, what I welcome is that there is a collective dimension to this; it is not just an individual complaint. Treaty bodies normally are very conservative and recoil when they have an individual complaint, particularly when it deals with resource issues, because they do not like to be portrayed as having the tail of the dog wag the dog. But, if you can come forward with a representative group that has been systematically excluded in the process, whereby the indefensible inequity is between different groups [of people with disabilities] or between persons with disabilities and others, then you have a much stronger case for intervention. So, it could well be the case that those kinds of collective cases that reveal systemic deficiencies - that actually reveal invisibility in the political process – succeed. Cases that point to egregious violations of legacy values, such as violence, exploitation and abuse, and a lack of the rule of law in this context, those kinds of cases could also succeed.

The Conference of State Parties, which has to be set up, is innovative and offers a lot of opportunities for States to share solutions. I think that is where the emphasis should be. There may be opportunities for civil society to interact as the corrective, and to say: you are looking at the wrong problem; or, your diagnosis of what the obstacle is, is wrongheaded; or, a different kind of research agenda is needed to actually tackle these problems.

Lastly, I think another opportunity is international development aid and cooperation. Particularly in States where no amount of law is going to bring about change, you have to use other levers to actually bring about that change. And in some countries, of course, you have systems that do not listen to the voice of their own people, so you have to look to other levers to trigger high levels of expectation, let us say amongst parents in developing countries. To put it very bluntly, Norway, Ireland and other countries that ratify will have to proof their development aid program from a disability point of view. I am really delighted to see the World Bank is at last stepping up to the plate on this through the Global Partnership for Development and Disability. That gives you opportunities to transfer not just knowledge about law, but political entrepreneurship skills to countries that actually need them to bring about change themselves.

I will just focus on three challenges and wrap up –

One challenge, paradoxically, is the equality concept embedded in the Convention. The purpose of the Convention is to secure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights. But, beware, there is a little bit of a trap here. Most of the rights are predicated on a notion that they will be secured on an equal basis with others. And the philosophical among you will remember Aristotle's precept of treating equals equally and unequals unequally. Now, you can spin that positively to show that people with disabilities are in a different situation, therefore some extra measures are going to be needed in order to accommodate their needs. Or, you can spin it negatively to say, oh well, they are different and therefore they cannot expect to enjoy a similar level of enjoyment of rights as others; and take the next step, which is to rationalise exclusionary special measures as actually for their own benefit. So, I just put it on the table as a trap, and one that could be sprung if the wrong kind of case is brought through the Optional Protocol. Of course, it could be also sprung if people who do not really understand the revolution are actually elected on to the new UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Let us suspend judgment in that respect and see how the actual election works out.

The second major challenge is reservations; the temptation of States to punch holes in the Convention, to simply have it reflect current practice. This is a huge wasted opportunity, because the idea of the Convention is to add to the dynamic to change practice. Not that it necessarily points to the right solution, but at least it embeds that dynamic of change and the expectation of change. Now, frankly, we have a dilemma here - and I am reverting to my lawyer's hat - which is that we have two different universalisms at play. One universalism suggests that we need every country to sign this. However, nearly every country is going to have some issue with it. So, therefore, in order to bring them on board we need to be somewhat flexible toward the reservations they enter. You can imagine for example the United States having problems with respect to social rights and the right to health, but that should not stop us getting the United States to ratify. On the other hand, if a reservation goes to the core of the Convention and guts it, then we should have some mechanism for determining its reconcilability with the Convention and those reservations ought not to be acceptable. The problem under international law as it stands at the moment is that treaty monitoring bodies do not have legal capacity to adjudicate on the reconcilability of reservations with the Convention. The International Law Commission, which is studying this problem, has suggested that the human rights treaties be amended to give treaty monitoring bodies this adjudicatory capacity, but no step has been made in that direction so far. By the way, the International Law Commission is about to end a very long study on reservations. I mention that because these general problems of international law are now your problems. You have to have a distinctive voice on them, as well as on the specific issues of disability.

The last challenge that I will put on the table is what I call excessive ownership, excessive proprietorial ownership of the Convention by people with disabilities themselves. And I see this as a danger. The Convention inures directly to the benefit of 650 million people with disabilities around the world. But the reality is, it belongs to everybody. It is an expression of justice. And everybody out there has a stake in its success. People who believe firmly in the rule of law have a stake in the success of this Convention, even though they might never have connected that to the disability context. So, I think the lesson in this is: do not hide forever behind the barricades. Reach out to, for example, other groups that have effectuated change and learn from their mistakes. For example, if your issue is women with disabilities, reach out to women's groups who have been successful, or maybe not successful in bringing about change in your society and in your cultures. When I hear the words mentioned 'raising capacity within civil society', I cringe, because usually it means imparting information. But information does not bring about change. What brings about change is marrying that information with political entrepreneurship skills and you are not going to develop those in a silo; they have to be developed alongside others who are arguing for justice within society. And that means it is incumbent on you; and this is where you have to shift up to a new level, a new gear. It is incumbent upon you not to come forward with whatever clearer denunciations of what is wrong. In my experience, Governments know full well what is wrong. You actually now have to go to the next level to come forward with ever more practicable blueprints for change. And that is also where you have to develop relationships with a lot of researchers who will now be getting into the field; particularly those who can debug the cost-benefit analysis that sometimes passes as cost-benefit analysis coming from Governments.

Thank you very much.

Gerard Quinn is the Director of the Centre on Disability Law and Policy and professor of law at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Barriers to community living for people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia: looking for the end of an era of exclusion

By Damjan Janjušević, *Association for Self-Advocacy Croatia*

Introduction

People with intellectual disabilities are a severely marginalised group in Croatia. The wide ranging barriers to their participation in society has been highlighted in recent reports, for example the lack of access to employment, education, political and social life, and to other public goods and services. However to date, no targeted research on the ways in which people with intellectual disabilities are truly excluded from society has been carried out in Croatia as there is a serious lack of reliable statistical data on the topic.[1] What is missing is a clear image of the dynamics and nature of their marginalisation, and this article describes the main factors that lead to their social exclusion.

Key factors in the social exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia

1. Highly centralised system

The lives of people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia are mainly under the influence of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare holds major responsibility for all policies relating to people with intellectual disabilities, including the type and level of support services that are available to them. The Ministry is highly centralised and bureaucratic, with decisions made within the Ministry without consultation with the people whose lives are affected by the policies and who will use the services. The Centres for Social Welfare, which fall under the remit of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and are, in policy and in past practice, a key part of the social welfare system, in reality have very little autonomy to make decisions related to the Ministry. However, the Centres exercise broad authority in interpreting the rights of service users and the laws affecting them without understanding their real needs.

2. Care based on the traditional model of charity

In Croatia, people with intellectual disabilities continue to be seen as objects of charity and pity. This view results in a paternalistic approach towards them. Thus, all regulations concerning people with intellectual disabilities, even the most recent ones, emphasise the need to protect them as vulnerable people rather than emphasize their right to treatment as equal citizens. This attitude in itself presents a major barrier to their social inclusion and violates the principle of universality of human rights. For example, when referring to services for people with intellectual disabilities, Croatian regulations give preference to residential institutions and sheltered workshops rather than community living or employment in the open labour market.

3. The ‘Second System’

A direct result of this paternalistic approach is the development of two parallel systems. The first system includes mainstream services, such as education, housing and employment support, which are aimed at the general population. Rather than ensuring that the mainstream system can meet the needs of a diverse population, a second system for people with intellectual disabilities has developed. They get a choice of special kindergartens, special schools, placement in residential homes of various size and sheltered workshops. These ‘special institutions’ are part of the second system that co-exists with, but is separate from, mainstream services. Their purpose is to “protect” people with intellectual disabilities from the rest of society. They run parallel to society, but are not part of it.

A very good example of this is the recent and most comprehensive reform in the education system in the last twenty years. While the reform could have been an ideal opportunity to improve the access of people with intellectual disabilities to mainstream education, none of the reforms refer to this. This is a clear sign that the education authorities are not concerned with dismantling the segregated system, and are instead content with the status quo.

Examples of social exclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia

- Special groups in kindergartens for children with intellectual disabilities;
- Special schools or the complete absence of education (this, despite the fact that primary education and secondary education are mandated by law);
- Residential institutions (where many people spend all of their lives[2]);
- Unemployment or work in sheltered workshops (which is generally unpaid or very poorly paid);
- Low level of support given to families with intellectually disabled children (as a result many children are placed in residential institutions because their families do not receive information about the few alternative services available in the community);
- Routinely placing people with intellectual disabilities under plenary ‘guardianship’, taking away their legal capacity. Without legal capacity, they cannot make a range of personal decisions such as to work, to marry or to vote; nor can they instruct a lawyer to help them take legal action if their rights have been violated.)

The chance to live in the community

Although in general the situation of people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia is grim, some people with intellectual disabilities live in the community. This is because several organisations have established community-based alternatives to institutions. Unfortunately, these services are few and far between.[3] This is partly because there are significant legal and administrative barriers that organisations must overcome to be eligible to provide community-based services. For example, since 1997, the Association for Promoting Inclusion (API) has been working to develop a system of community-based support services for people with intellectual disabilities. Its most successful programme is community-based housing. This programme has 160 clients in 5 locations (Zagreb, Osijek, Bjelovar, Slavonski Brod and Grubišno Polje). Before joining the programme, most of the clients lived in institutions. In 2000, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare agreed to fund this programme, which has proved to be viable, sustainable and of good quality. A major barrier to further progress has been that, until very recently, in order to receive Government funding, community-based service providers were required to register and perform as if they were residential institutions. More specifically, community-based service providers had to comply with the same legally prescribed rehabilitation programmes as residential institutions.[4] These regulations came into conflict with API’s mission as ‘rehabilitation’ programmes are focused on administration, not people. Community based programs that promote real community living must put the people first. Thanks to legal reforms this problem is solved, and now it is possible to provide community-based housing without registering as a residential institution. The fact that API is the first and only service provider to make use of the new legal provisions says a lot about bureaucracy as a barrier to progress. Of more general concern is that the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is still unwilling to work with community-based service providers to develop better regulations for rehabilitation and community living. For the Ministry, the people concerned are not at the centre of policy making.

New perspectives?

While the lack of community-based alternative services is a major barrier to the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, two areas of development show promise. These are:

1. Croatia’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (‘the Convention’)
2. Croatia’s future accession to the European Union

The Government clearly wishes to create an ***impression*** of positive developments. Reality shows that what the Government really aims for is to preserve the status quo. Though Croatia was one of the first countries in the world to ratify the Convention, there are several significant mistakes in the Croatian translation of the text. These errors allow the Government to claim that it provides greater protection than it does in reality.

For example, the translation of Article 19 – Living independently and being included in the community - refers to “residential institutions” as a community living option, which simply is absent in the original text.

In the beginning of the EU accession process, minor positive changes which had started to be discussed were ended abruptly after the Government learned that social policy is so-called “soft law”; in other words, that problems in this area would not prevent Croatia’s accession to the EU. The adoption of regulations without the involvement of the public or consultation with relevant stakeholders has come to characterise Croatia’s journey towards membership in the EU.

Conclusion

While the challenges to social inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities are many, the ultimate power to resolve them still lies with Government. Whether people with intellectual disabilities will be able to enjoy their right to live in the community depends on the answer to the following question: will the State continue to provide care based on the charity model or will it opt for the concept of equal citizenship?

Unless concrete action is taken to promote social inclusion and protect human rights, people with intellectual disabilities will remain on the fringes of society. Civil society advocates must continue to push for necessary changes so that each person will have the possibility to reach for their dreams and become a master of their own happiness.

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[1] Examples of such reports include: *Human Rights of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities*, Country Report Croatia, Association for Self-Advocacy, Association for Promoting Inclusion, Inclusion Europe, 2007; *When The State Cares*, Partnerstvo za društveni razvoj, Zagreb, 2008; *Rights of People with Intellectual Disabilities*, Access to Education and Employment, Croatia Monitoring Report, Open Society Institute, 2005

[2] Paradoxically, many residential institutions for people with intellectual disabilities in Croatia are officially called Centres for Rehabilitation. One of their main tasks is to prepare individuals for life in the community. The fact that many people spend their entire lives in these Centres shows that there is a major gap between well worded intentions and reality.

[3] Over the last 11 years the Association for Promoting Inclusion has been establishing community-based alternatives to institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. In the last 3-4 years, several new community-based housing providers have been established. They are mostly organisations run by parents of disabled people. These are: parent organisations in Čakovec and Ploče, the parent organisation Puž from Zagreb and a non-governmental organisation Lastavice from Split.

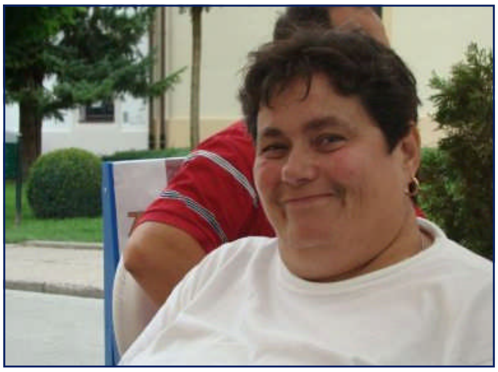
[4] The intention of these regulations is to organise life in a residential institution, which means that they refer to wake-up times and times for going to bed, movement of residents, buying and storing food etc. In short, everything is done in such way that it prevents even minor involvement of the residents in making decisions about their everyday lives. A life in the community organised in this way would lose all its meaning as it would virtually be like life in an institution.

Speaking for Ourselves: The Story of Self-Advocates

The Association for Self Advocacy (ASA) was established in 2003. It is the only association of persons with intellectual disabilities in Croatia, and one of the few self-advocacy groups in South-Eastern Europe. In Croatia, ASA often works on projects with mainstream human rights organisations, and internationally, ASA works with Inclusion Europe, Inclusion International, the European Platform of Self-Advocates (EPSA) and the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL).

ASA has a membership of 35 people with intellectual disabilities, most of who once lived in residential institutions and are now a part of the supported housing programme in the community, operated by the Association for Promoting Inclusion (API). The main focus of ASA's work is advocating for deinstitutionalisation and the right to live and to receive quality support in the community. ASA also advocates for the reform of the guardianship system. Through ASA, they aim to improve both their own lives, and also the lives of all those who still live in institutions.

Through their involvement in ASA, self-advocates are able to highlight the inhuman living conditions in institutions. The decades many of them spent in institutions – marked by meaningless rules, abuse, neglect and lack of privacy have scarred them for the rest of their lives. Still, the self-advocates are not bitter. Their will to have a normal life has helped them cope with the trauma of institutionalisation. Today, self-advocates are part of their communities.



Đurđa Budimić

I like taking walks, washing up, ironing, cleaning and dusting. I like doing things when I want and I like that there is nobody to tell me what to do.

Milica Čičić

I'm proud of working here [in the Association for Self-Advocacy]. At the beginning it was very hard. There were many things I didn't understand, and now I am working and speaking for myself. I am very proud of that.

Five of the self advocates, Đurđa Budimić, Mara Pavlović, Ratko Koletić, Fadil Špuren and Milica Čičić, told us about their life in the community and their hopes for the future. We have recorded their responses below.

Our lives now

The five self advocates are very different. While Đurđa and Mara like cooking and taking care of their apartments, Ratko is more into art and likes dancing, drawing and going to exhibitions. Fadil is an avid reader and has been a member of a library for five years now. Milica likes going shopping with her assistant, who helps her read the price tags and handle her money.

However, one thing that Đurđa, Mara, Ratko, Fadil and Milica all have in common is their wish to be indepedent. They like doing things that they want to do and having the freedom to go about their everyday lives as they wish. They do not like being controlled or bossed around.

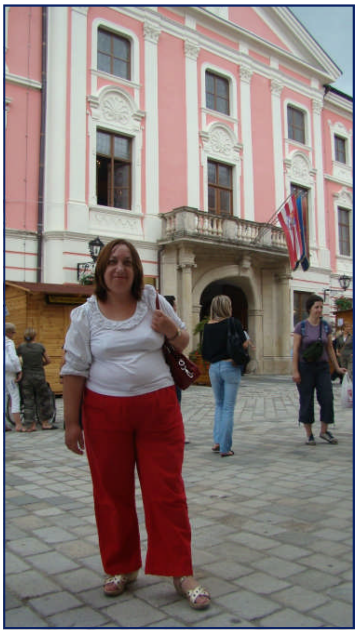
When asked to choose between life in the institution and life in the community, the self-advocates said that their lives have been much better since leaving the institution. Remembering their time spent in institutions, they spoke about beatings, being yelled at by the staff, having to work without being paid and not being allowed to go out.

Having work and being paid for it is very important to all of the self advocates and something they are proud of. Being appreciated by their colleagues, feeling useful, doing something they love and earning a salary are things that they mentioned when asked about what makes them happy.

When asked about the support they receive from API, all of the self advocates said they were happy with the level of support that they get. Being treated with respect, being appreciated and receiving help that she needs is something that Milica mentioned when speaking about the supported housing programme. Mara wished it was easier to find company when she'd like to go shopping or for a walk.

Looking to the future, Đurđa wishes she could save more money, so that she can buy the things that she likes. She also hopes she can go to the cinema more often with her assistants. Fadil wants to stay healthy and wants to continue working in the Association for Self-Advocacy and contributing to ASA as much as he can. Milica would like to learn to read and write, so that she can sign her name on her own.

Đurđa, Mara, Ratko, Fadil and Milica are clearly all very different from each other, with different hopes and plans for the future. What they all have in common is that they don't see themselves as needing special treatment, they simply want to go on about their lives just like the rest of the people in Croatia.

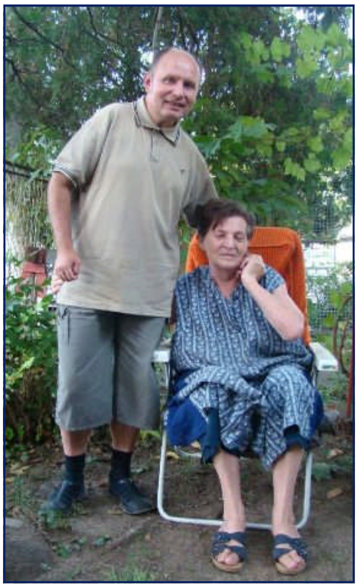


Mara Pavlović

I didn't like it in the institution. We fought and they beat me. The staff didn't let me go out, walk around town, I suppose they were scared... I like it in [the supported housing programme], because I am independent, I am my own person. Nobody bothers you, talks about you behind your back, forces you to do anything that you don't want to do. Nobody controls me.

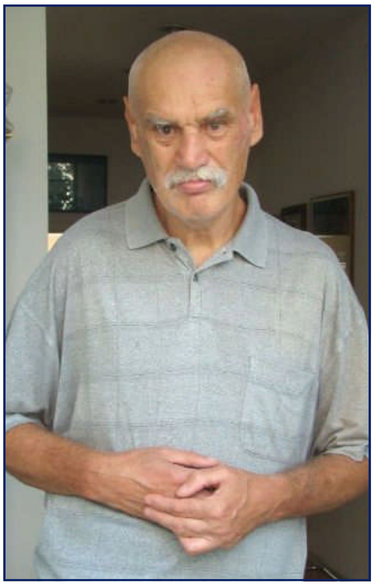
Fadil Špuren

I find work extremely rewarding. I want to work while I still can. That is important to me because I feel useful.



Ratko Koletić *(with his neighbour)*

I like resting, lying down. On Mondays and Fridays I go shopping, I decided this myself.



Results of ECCL’s Survey on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

During the European Coalition for Community Living’s 2008 Annual Seminar in Norway, a survey was carried out among the participants on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention). We wanted to find out about the developments in countries around Europe and get feedback about how ECCL could contribute to the effective implementation of the Convention in the coming year.

Below is the summary of participants’ responses, followed by information about the meaning of reservations and how they affect the implementation of the Convention. We were able to collect an overall of 16 responses from 10 countries: Bulgaria (1), Denmark (1), Estonia (1), Germany (1), Hungary (1), the Netherlands (2), Norway (5), Romania (1), Slovenia (1) and the United Kingdom (1 response from Northern Ireland and 1 from Wales). We would like to thank the Seminar participants from those countries for completing the Survey.

Introduction

Responses provided to the four survey questions show that many of the countries share very similar barriers to the ratification and implementation of the Convention, such as lack of resources and the general lack of awareness about this new treaty. The latter is, however, also perceived as an opportunity to promote the Convention - to use it as a tool in decision making and to raise awareness about the rights of people with disabilities. Out of the countries included in the Survey, two have already ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol – Hungary and Slovenia.

Q 1: What is the level of awareness about the Convention in your country?

The responses showed that the level of awareness about the Convention is highest among organisations working on issues affecting persons with disabilities. This is especially so when it comes to organisations working on the national level (or, for example, at the federal level in Germany). However, the level of awareness is lower at regional and local levels, and is lower still among the general public. User led organisations (such as Centres for Independent Living) tend to know more about the Convention than organisations *for* disabled people (for example, organisations run by parents of disabled people). When it comes to service providers, the more they are involved in policy development, the more they know about the Convention. The level of awareness about the Convention among policy and decision makers varies from country to country, but it is clear that there is a need for raising the level of awareness.

Q 2: What are the key opportunities and barriers to the ratification or implementation of the Convention in your country?

The perceived lack of resources for the implementation of the Convention is considered to be a major barrier, or one of the barriers, to ratification in Estonia, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands and Wales. This is followed by the unwillingness of Governments to make changes in the current system and legislation (both of which would be necessary after ratification). For example, Germany experiences a certain level of opposition to ratification of the Convention from the federal states (the so-called Lander), because a number of laws that relate to persons with disabilities have to be changed or repealed. Areas that require most attention are education (i.e. including children with disabilities in mainstream education), legal capacity, community living, as well as issues affecting women with disabilities.

Reservations that have already been made (or in other countries are expected to be made) by Governments on certain articles of the Convention were noted as a barrier in several countries, including Northern Ireland, where organisations are currently challenging the proposed reservations. As suggested by survey participants from Germany, in order to put the Convention into practice, self-advocacy groups and other advocacy organisations need to mobilise themselves and start working with decision makers at all levels.

The lack of awareness about the Convention is considered to be both a barrier to ratification and implementation of the Convention and a good opportunity to raise awareness about issues affecting people with disabilities, for example through organising seminars about the Convention. The Convention can also be used as a tool in policy making and for education of social workers, for example.

Seminar participants from Croatia and Slovenia mentioned an additional barrier – the translation of the Convention into different languages. In these two countries – both of which have ratified the Convention – the meaning of the original text does not correspond to that of the translation. For example, Article 19 in the Croatian version provides for existence of residential centres (institutions) for people with disabilities.

Q 3: What are some of the activities you are undertaking to get the Convention ratified or implemented in your country?

There are various ways of promoting the Convention - through awareness raising activities at local, regional and national levels - to lobbying for new legislation and challenging proposed reservations. Below are some of the more specific examples that were provided in the survey:

- A petition to the federal government was sent in Germany, along with the launch of "All Inclusive" campaign and the organisation of conferences on eight issues covered by the Convention;
- Work with local politicians and the media in Norway;
- Promotion of the principles in the Convention and raising awareness about the Convention among self-advocacy groups in the Netherlands;
- Denmark introduced "Convention pilots" at the local level, in order to influence local decision makers;
- Roundtable discussions with the Disability Unit and the Ministry of Social Affairs in Estonia.

Q 4: What can ECCL do to promote the Convention?

Besides continuing with its current projects it was suggested that ECCL should expand its activities in the following direction, with special attention to putting Article 19 of the Convention into practice.

- Expand campaigning and awareness raising activities using the media and internet, as well as by working with the service providers to ensure that the information reaches all levels;
- Sharing best practices in the implementation of the Convention;
- Developing standards – choices that people with disabilities should have if the Convention is implemented properly;
- Expand ECCL seminars all over Europe and involve local and national NGOs more, such as the Coalition for Inclusion in the Netherlands;
- Inform decision makers about the importance of ratification of the Convention and explain how implementation of the Convention can help protect the human rights of persons with disabilities;
- Provide a copy of Convention to all members.

ECCL will take into account all of the suggestions made in the survey and welcomes any further suggestions. For full version of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities please visit www.community-living.info/?page=283.

What is the meaning of reservations?

Several countries that have ratified the Convention have made reservations on certain provisions. Reservations can be made while signing or ratifying the Convention. They are used when the State ratifying a treaty wants to ensure that it will not be bound by specific provisions of that treaty.

According to the Handbook for Parliamentarians on the UN Convention (www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=212), a reservation is "a statement that purports to exclude or modify the legal effect of a treaty provision with regard to the State or regional integration organisation concerned. The statement might be entitled 'reservation', 'declaration', 'understanding', 'interpretative declaration' or 'interpretative statement'. However phrased or named, any statement that excludes or modifies the legal effect of a treaty provision is, in fact, a reservation. A reservation may enable a State or regional integration organisation that would otherwise be unwilling or unable to participate in the Convention or Optional Protocol to so participate."

The following are examples of reservations made to the Convention:

- **Malta** made a reservation when signing the Convention about participation of people with disabilities in political and public life (Article 29). While people with disabilities have the right to vote and stand for elections, at this stage, Malta will not change its electoral legislation in so far as voting facilities, materials and procedures, as well as assistance in voting procedures are concerned.
- **Poland** made a reservation when signing the Convention about Article 23 (Respect for Home and the Family) and Article 25 (Health). It does not want either of these articles to be interpreted as conferring to the right to have an abortion.

- **The Netherlands** made a declaration upon signature expressing its intention to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but with further declarations and reservations.

A country can also object to reservations made by another country, as happened in the following case:

- **Austria** objected to the reservation made by El Salvador, because it was too broad and did not clearly specify the extent of El Salvador's derogation from the Convention.

Suggestions for action

Taking into account results of the survey, ECCL sets out some suggestions below on how you can promote the Convention in your country and contribute to its ratification and/or implementation:

- Organise awareness raising activities at the local level, targeting local authorities, organisations for people with disabilities and service providers;
- Explain the importance of the Convention and its Optional Protocol to the general public, in order to raise public support and put pressure on the Government to ratify;
- Find out what the obstacles to ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol are in your country and present your own counter arguments, focusing on the solutions and the importance of the Convention for people with disabilities;
- Find out if your country is planning to make reservations on one or more provisions and highlight any concerns that you may have about this;
- Ask to be consulted in the process of translation of the Convention and check whether the translation corresponds to the meaning of the original text;
- Find out how organisations in other countries are promoting the Convention – initiatives such as "the Convention Pilots" in Denmark (implemented by Disabled People's Organisation Denmark, (www.handicap.dk/english) and "Ratification without Reservations" in the UK (www.un-convention.info/page3.html) can be replicated in other countries;
- Keep ECCL informed about developments in your country (especially in relation to Article 19 of the Convention on Community Living) and send us your suggestions on how we can help.

25 years of Independent Living in Sweden

25years il
Independent Living in Sweden

How far has the Independent Living Movement come and where are we going? Have we been able to influence social policy, have we had an impact on society's and our own view of disabled people, has our work led to concrete improvements in our group's living conditions? How can we better support each other in our struggle for full citizenship, self-determination and self-respect?

These questions were discussed at the conference celebrating 25 years of the Independent Living movement in Sweden, organised on 28 - 29 November 2008 by the Swedish Independent Living Network. The aim of the conference was to evaluate the achievements of the civil rights movement in Sweden, Europe and other parts of the world and plan for tomorrow.

Speakers included John Evans (UK), Judy Heumann and Marilyn Golden (USA), Bente Skansgård (Norway), Kalle Könkkölä (Finland), Shoji Nakanishi (Japan), Horst Frehe (Germany), Jos Huys (Belgium) and others. They were invited to discuss successful Independent Living strategies and examples of good practice in their respective countries and regions. Among topics discussed in plenary sessions and workshop were de-institutionalisation, personal assistance, non-discrimination and accessibility legislation, and the Independent Living philosophy.

Conference proceedings can be downloaded from the website of the Swedish Independent Living Network, at www.independentliving.org/25years2008.

Press Release: ECCL publishes a new resource on advocating for Community Living

London, 10 December 2008 - On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day and the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) is proud to announce the publication of its advocacy manual for disability organisations and service providers entitled **'Creating Successful Campaigns for Community Living'**.

The purpose of the manual is to assist individuals and organisations who want to achieve the changes that are needed to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in community life as equal citizens. It provides information and advice on how to conduct campaigns and other activities to attain the goal of community living for all people with disabilities.

Speaking about the manual, John Evans, one of the founders of the Independent Living movement in the UK and ECCL, said: *"Every day, millions of disabled people in Europe living in institutions and receiving services they have no control over, are having their rights violated. It is our duty and responsibility to change this"*. He added that *"This manual has the possibility of changing the lives for thousands of disabled people in Europe, especially Eastern and Central Europe."*

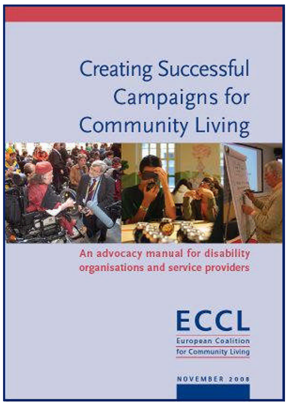
According to Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all persons with disabilities have the equal right to live in the community, with choices equal to others. However, across Europe, more than 1.2 million people with disabilities – including children and young people - still live in long-stay residential institutions, segregated from society. In order to make the UN Disability Convention a reality, Governments must put in place quality services in the community as alternatives to institutional care. No disabled person should be forced to live in an institution because of the lack of alternatives.

The new manual of the European Coalition for Community Living provides organisations with a range of ideas on how to encourage the development of quality community-based services and accelerate the process of deinstitutionalisation in their country by carrying out lobbying activities and campaigns, forming coalitions, working with the media etc. The manual gives examples of successful initiatives from across Europe, such as lobbying for direct payments in the UK, establishing self-advocacy groups in Croatia, using a pilot programme on personal assistance in Norway to influence legislation on social services and organisation of a lobbying week in Brussels with representatives of EU institutions.

The main part of the manual is accompanied by four annexes. In addition to the case studies, these contain explanations of all the terms relevant to advocacy for community living, an overview of the relevant European and international policies, and suggestions about how to use them in lobbying activities.

The manual is aimed primarily at organisations in Central and Eastern Europe, but will also be helpful to organisations in other parts of Europe looking for new ideas for future advocacy activities. The European Coalition for Community Living hopes that it will be a useful tool for anyone working towards getting Article 19 of the UN Disability Convention implemented in their countries.

The manual is currently available in English and can be downloaded from the ECCL website www.community-living.info. Translations into Easy-to-Read, Serbian and Albanian will be available at the beginning of the next year. For other translations, additional advocacy resources and advice on how to present the manual at local or national advocacy workshops, please continue checking the ECCL website. *The production of the manual was funded by Socires Foundation from the Netherlands.*



Creating Successful Campaigns for Community Living

An advocacy manual for disability organisations and service providers

ECCL
European Coalition for Community Living

NOVEMBER 2008

Introducing ECCL's new intern

ECCL's team has grown bigger in December with **Ayla Alasgarova** joining it. Ayla comes from Azerbaijan and has previously worked with Save the Children (USA) in her country. She is currently studying for her Master's degree in Public Health and Health Economics in London. She is past president of the Rotaract Club of Baku and is an active youth community projects participant. Ayla will be supporting the ECCL Coordinator until the end of June 2009 and we are happy to have her on board.

Members

Autism Europe, Belgium (founding member) • European Disability Forum, Belgium (founding member) • Inclusion Europe, Belgium (founding member) • Mental Health Europe, Belgium (founding member) • Open Society Mental Health Initiative, Hungary (founding member) • European Network on Independent Living, Spain (founding member) • Tizard Centre, University of Kent, United Kingdom • Rehabilitation Foundation "Speranta", Romania • "Woman and children - Protection and Support", Republic of Moldova • Center for Innovations in Education, Azerbaijan • Association for Social Inclusion of Persons with Mental Retardation Canton of Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina • Brothers of Charity Services, Ireland • MDAC (Mental Disability Advocacy Center), Hungary • "Pentru Voi" Foundation, Romania • Association for Self Advocacy, Croatia • Association for Promoting Inclusion, Croatia • Steven M. Eidelman, United States • Klubi "Deshira" Clubhouse, Kosova • Open Society-Georgia Foundation Public Health Programs, Georgia • Public organisation "Somato", Republic of Moldova • Hand in Hand Foundation, Hungary • European Network of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry • Renate Weber, Romania • Regional Society for Support of People with Intellectual Disabilities, Bulgaria • Down's Syndrome Aid Society, Serbia and Montenegro • Association for the Psychosocial Health of Children and Adolescents (A.P.H.C.A.), Greece • Pierre Belpaire, Belgium • Erivajadustega Inimeste Toetusühing Tugiliisu (MTÜ Tugiliisu), Estonia • HADER, Kosovo • Association "Inclusion" of the Brcko District, Bosnia and Herzegovina • The Association for Help to People with Mental Handicap in the SR (ZPMR v SR), Slovak Republic • FDUV, Finland • CHANCE, Bulgaria • Interessenvertretung Selbstbestimmt Leben in Deutschland e.V. (ISL) - German Council of Centers for Self-Determined Living, Germany • Real Life Options, United Kingdom • Ado Icarus vzw, Belgium • Hungarian Society of People with Golden Heart, Hungary • St Anne's Service, Ireland • The Association for Helping Persons with Developmental Disabilities Gradačac - "Kutak radosti", Bosnia and Herzegovina • Stichting Pepijn en Paulus, the Netherlands • Mental Health Foundation, Armenia • The Latvian Centre for Human Rights, Latvia • Lebenshilfe Wien, Austria • NGO Riga city "Child of Care", Latvia • TIBP mbH, Germany • The European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) • Lebenshilfe Deutschland, Germany • Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health, Greece • Learning Disability Wales, United Kingdom • PUŽ - Association of Parents of Children with Special Needs, Croatia • Foundation Open Society Institute Macedonia, Macedonia • Quip - Association for Change, Czech Republic • Stefan Krusche, Germany • Forum selbstbestimmter Assistenz behinderter Menschen eV (ForseA), Germany • Heart of a Child Foundation, Romania • The Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations SUSTENTO, Latvia • Resource Centre for People with Mental Disability ZELDA, Latvia • Frank Mulcahy, Ireland • Serbian Association for Promoting Inclusion, Serbia • ProAssistenz e.V., Germany • Keith Gordon Sansom and Karen Victoria Beecher, Spain • Kevin Caulfield, UK • Janet Cobb, UK • Ukrainian organisation for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and users of psychiatry, Ukraine • ACASA - Association for Charity and Social Assistance, Republic of Moldova • Tamas Barnabas, Hungary

Please note that, in accordance with our privacy policy, we have not included those organisations/individuals who wished not to be named publicly.

Join ECCL

Our membership is open to all organisations, institutions and individuals committed to the promotion, development or provision of community-based services as an alternative to the institutions. Membership of ECCL is free of charge.

If you would like to join ECCL, please visit our website for further information. Please pass the invitation to join to any organisation, institution or individual who shares ECCL's vision of community living. Thank you!

Advisory Council

Tina Coldham, Mind UK • James Elder-Woodward, Inclusion Scotland • Ingrid Körner, Inclusion Europe • Prof. Jim Mansell, Tizard Centre • Camilla Parker, Open Society Mental Health Initiative • Judith Klein, Open Society Mental Health Initiative (alternate member) • John Patrick Clarke, European Disability Forum • Janina Arsenjeva, European Disability Forum (alternate member) • Prof. Gerard Quinn, National University of Ireland, Galway • Bojana Rozman, Association for Promoting Inclusion Croatia • Prof. Michael Stein, Harvard Project on Disability • Josee Van Remoortel, Mental Health Europe • John Henderson, Mental Health Europe (alternate member) • Donata Vivanti, Autism Europe • John Evans, European Network on Independent Living

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

If you would like to inform the network about your events, projects or campaigns connected to community living, please send us a short description of such activities and we will include it in the next issue of our newsletter or post it on the website. Please send all contributions to Ines Bulić, coordinator@community-living.info.

For more news and information about ECCL's activities, visit www.community-living.info and download the next issue of ECCL's newsletter.