

# From institutions to community living



Part 1:  
**Commitments  
and structures**

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# From institutions to community living



An **institution** is where people with disabilities live together away from other people.



The **community** is where all different people live close to each other. They live close to their families and friends.



This report has been written by the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights**. We are called FRA for short.



The **European Union** is a group of 28 countries in Europe who work together.



**Fundamental rights** are things that everyone has. For example, the right to vote and the right to get married.



We help to make sure everyone in the **European Union** can use their rights.



FRA is looking at how to help people with disabilities move from living in institutions to living in their local community with support.



This report is one of 3 reports which look at different parts of this issue.

This is the first report. It looks at what the European Union and the 28 countries have agreed to do.



The second report is about the money that is needed to help people move.



The third report looks at the lives of people with disabilities who are living independently in their local community.

# Rights for people with disabilities

The United Nations has agreed that people with disabilities have the right to:



- Live independently



- Be included in the community



The **United Nations (UN)** is where all the countries in the world meet together to agree things.



This agreement is written down in Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).



The UN says that 'Living in the Community' includes:

## Choice:

Choice means having the chance to choose:

- Where you live
- Who you live with



It is also having the choice about how you are supported.

## Support:

Support means you have access to a range of services, including personal assistance, which help you to live and take part in your community.





This support should:

- Respect you as an individual person



- Help you to take part and be included in things that are going on



## Accessible services:

Accessible services means that people with a disability should be able to use the same services and **facilities** as everyone else.



**Facilities** are places, buildings, transport or bits of equipment.

# What EU countries have agreed to



- All the EU countries have agreed to the UN CRPD except Ireland



- The EU has also agreed to the UN CRPD



- This means that the EU and 27 of the 28 countries that are part of the EU agree that people with disabilities have the right to live in the community



- The EU gives money to help countries move people from living in institutions to living in the community



- Most EU countries have plans to move people from living in institutions to living in the community





- Some of these plans are not very good because they don't:
  - Have enough money



- Have a good timetable to make sure it happens in good time



- Involve organisations for people with disabilities



- Not many EU countries have said that they will not build any more institutions



- Different EU countries have different ways to organise how people live in the community



- Not many EU countries have set up ways that different organisations can work together to help people with disabilities move from institutions to live in the community

# Some good examples

Most EU countries have laws that help people to:



- Choose how they live



- Have their own personal support



- Access the same community services as everyone else



Some countries like Bulgaria and Latvia have given people with disabilities the right to have a personal assistant.



In Belgium the Flemish Parliament is giving people with disabilities money to pay for the support they need.



The Italian government gives money to help services for people in the community.

# Some challenges

There are still some serious challenges. Many countries:

- Still have many people living in institutions

Some countries are even moving people into institutions



- Don't have enough places in the community that are suitable for people with disabilities



- Don't have enough personal support services



- Spend more money on institutions than on services in the community



- Don't give people enough money in benefits. This means it is hard to live independently



- Don't have good plans to move people out of institutions and into the community

# EU funding



The EU gives money to many EU countries.



The EU can say how this money should be spent.



For 12 countries, the EU has said that part of the money should be spent on moving people out of institutions so they can live independently in the community.



We are worried that in some countries the EU money is being used to keep the institutions going.

# Countries' plans



About two thirds of EU countries have plans to move people from institutions so they can live independently in the community.



These plans are all different:

- Some plans say how many people need to move by a certain date



- Some plans have good ways to check that the plan is working



- Most plans involve organisations of people with disabilities



- Some countries write regular reports to show how things are going



- Some countries are working faster than others. For example:

- Romania wants to close all institutions by 2020
- Hungary wants to do it by 2041

- Some countries are focusing on different groups of people:

- The Finland plan talks about people with intellectual disabilities
- The Irish plan talks about mental health institutions

- Countries have different ideas about the size of shared homes in the community

Hungary is committed to closing places where more than 50 people with disabilities live together

Denmark has recently built housing units for 40 -100 people with intellectual disabilities



# Organising local services



Countries need good local social services if they are going to support people to live independently in the community.



Countries are doing this in different ways:

- In some countries the national government runs all social services and health. For example Bulgaria, Latvia and Poland



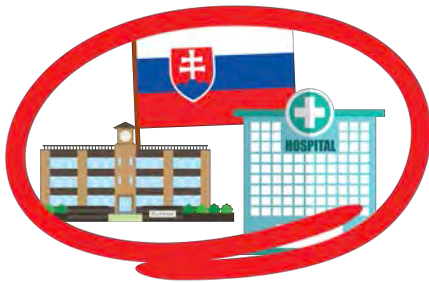
- In other countries, like Germany the regional and local government is responsible for social services



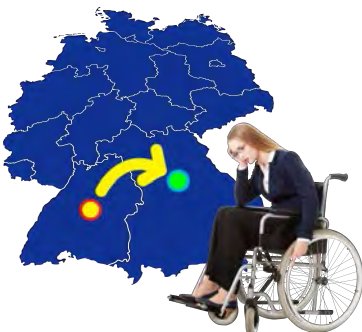
- In the UK local government is responsible for social services, but the national government controls how much money they can spend



- Some countries have laws which make different organisations work together



For example in Slovakia the law says that: housing, health, social services and schools should all work with local government



- Often it is difficult for a person with disabilities to be able to move from one local government area to another

Only a few countries have a good way to make this happen

# What we think

FRA thinks that:



- All EU countries should have plans to move people out of institutions so they can live independently in the community

They should involve people with disabilities in making these plans



- The plans should:
  - Show what has to be done, and when it should be done



- Show what money will be spent on the plans



- The plans should be checked from time to time by an independent organisation. They should check that the plans are working properly



- Countries should make sure that national government and local governments work together to help people with disabilities move to the community



- Countries should make sure that these organisations work together:

- Organisations that provide housing



- Organisations that help people to get a job



- Health authorities



- Social services

# For more information

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