



Concept note for a side event during the 19th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD (COSP 19)

CRPD at 20: Are we any closer to Independent Living for All?

**Tuesday 9 June, 10:00 – 11:15 EST
Room CR11, UN Headquarters New York**

Organised by the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the UN & the European Network on Independent Living

In cooperation with the Global Coalition on Deinstitutionalisation, consisting of: ENIL, International Disability Alliance, Inclusion International, Transforming Communities for Inclusion, Disability Rights International, Validity Foundation, University of Pretoria

Background

The 19th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD marks the 20th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. One of the three themes explored is *Resilient societies – strengthening care and support systems to ensure the empowerment, autonomy and independence of all persons with disabilities*.

This side event, co-organised by the European Network on Independent Living and the Government of Belgium will take stock of what has been done to turn the aspirations of Article 19 of the CRPD into reality.

The right to independent living is a key article to the implementation of the Convention as a whole. For this reason, there have been many efforts to help States Parties break it down into practical actions that will improve the lives of disabled people around the world. From the General Comment 5 to the *Guidelines on deinstitutionalisation, including in emergencies*, to regional and national guidance and strategies, goals were defined for removing barriers to the right to independent living and eliminating segregated settings and services. Yet, the challenges faced by disabled people to live independently seem as numerous as ever. From cuts to support services, such as personal assistance, to the extreme poverty faced by many disabled people, the building of new institutions, the persistence of guardianship, discrimination in education and employment, and ableism – we often seem to be back to square one.

This side event will explore the remaining barriers, while celebrating what has been achieved. We will also highlight the importance of advocating for independent living and what can be achieved with collective action of disabled people and allies. The aim of the side event is to inspire hope and optimism, while not shying away from the many problems we continue to face in fighting for Independent Living for all.

Speakers

Representative of the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the UN
Representative of another State Party (Costa Rica)
Heba Hagrass, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Nadia Hadad, Co-Chair of ENIL
Markus Scheffer, Member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Representative of the Global Coalition on Deinstitutionalisation (Jarrod Clyne, International Disability Alliance)
Jessica Podesva, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy, National Council on Independent Living, USA
Representative of a DPO working on IL from Asia-Pacific or Africa

Potential agenda items

Personal Following Budget – a success story from Belgium
Supporting IL Globally – good practice from the another State Party
Independent Living under Stress – lessons learnt from the US
Key takeaways on Article 19 from CRPD country reviews
The role of UN special procedures in promoting Independent Living
An elephant in the room – how do we get rid of institutions
Lessons learnt in promoting the right to independent living from around the world
An intersectional approach to Independent Living – a roadmap for the future

Accessibility requirements

- International Sign Language
- Closed captioning in English
- Live streaming on UN Web TV, to make the event accessible to participants from around the world, not present at COSP