

# **ENIL's Statement on Discrimination against People with Complex Dependency Needs**

**Brussels 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008.**

First of all I would like to thank Inclusion Europe and the University of Siegen for taking the lead in steering forward this very important research. Personally I think this kind of study was long overdue. Now this research is completed our work really begins in lobbying and campaigning to ensure that the recommendations from this report are acted upon and implemented both at a national and European level.

Our organisation, ENIL, as many of you know, has campaigned long and hard over the years to promote and develop the right to Independent Living. An important aspect of our work is to convince Governments, Authorities and the European institutions, to provide individuals with choice and control over the support they require in order to live decent lives with quality, respect and self determination. We still have some way to go. There are many challenges we still face. This research presents us with another one.

ENIL has always been committed in fighting for all disabled people regardless of their impairment to have the opportunity and right to live independently and this certainly includes people with complex dependency needs or those with high levels of support. Independent living was started by physically disabled people, but over recent years it has spread to people with other impairments, like intellectual and learning disabilities, mental health service users and those who are defined as people with complex dependency needs. This is important for us. We are striving for an inclusive society and independent living is an inclusive philosophy whose sole purpose is to enable all disabled people to have the life chances and opportunities like everybody else.

This research has clearly identified and demonstrated how people with complex needs are discriminated against in many different ways throughout a person's life cycle. From the moment of birth until the end of their lives this group and their families are constantly struggling to overcome institutional and systemic barriers and discrimination. It could be at birth through ill informed advice from medical practitioners, nursery school, access to decent education or employment, to mention a few.

This must stop. This research provides us with ample evidence to challenge this discrimination. Personally on many occasions reading the findings from some of the countries made me very angry. We cannot accept that people with complex dependency needs are forced into institutions because of lack of choice and appropriate community services.

We now have some very concrete and workable recommendations from this report that can be implemented. The most important thing for us today and all stakeholders is to do something about it and not let the findings from this research gather dust on the book shelf. We need to take action I know ENIL is committed to this cause and we will lobby hard and wide to politicians and policy makers to address this unacceptable reality for people with complex needs and their families. This work is now just beginning. We all need to be sure we are united in this call for action.