

FRA Press Release
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Independence far from reality for many people with disabilities

Many people with disabilities in the EU still live in institutions. They risk being isolated, marginalised and prevented from living a full, independent life, and face worse conditions than people without disabilities. This calls for systematic changes in the way support for people with disabilities is organised and funded, new reports from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) reveal. They suggest what people with disabilities need from the EU and its Member States to enjoy living independently with community-based support, simply taking public transport or shopping.

"Too often people with disabilities are prevented from having choice and control over their lives," says FRA Director [Michael O'Flaherty](#). *"While the EU and its Member States have committed themselves to enabling people to enjoy their right to live independently, in practice realities are falling short. These reports serve as a wake-up call to guide policy makers to ensure this right is fully implemented across the EU."*

The '**From institutions to community living**' reports explore different aspects of the move away from institutions towards independent and community living, a right enshrined in the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). They look at: [deinstitutionalisation plans and commitments](#); [funding](#); and the [impact this is having on people with disabilities](#).

The reports show that many Member States have deinstitutionalisation strategies which commit them to enabling independent living for all people with disabilities. EU structural funds have also made the transition from institutions to community-based support a condition for receiving funding. However, strategies often lack adequate funding, clear timeframes and targets, and fail to properly involve disabled persons' organisations, hampering progress. In addition, many Member States still finance institutions.

Coupled with a lack of coordination among the many different national and local authorities that offer support, people with disabilities commonly live in worse conditions than people without disabilities. This is especially true if they have severe impairments. This often leaves them feeling excluded and lacking control over their lives.

This points to the need to establish clear, properly resourced plans in terms of funding and responsibilities for supporting the closure of institutions and enabling community-based living, such as providing a range of good quality personal assistance options. Adequate community support should exist to support people with disabilities as they leave institutions. Making everyday services like transport, healthcare and education accessible is therefore essential. Involving people with disabilities and their representative organisations in decision making and monitoring progress is also key to ensuring their needs are addressed so they can enjoy their right to live independently.

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Notes to editors:

FRA is the EU's independent body for delivering fundamental rights assistance and expertise to the EU and its Member States. More on FRA's disability work can be found on our [website](#).