

Preliminary Programme

High-Level Conference on Independent Living

6 November – 7 November 2025



**Danish
Presidency**
Council of the
European Union

Preliminary Programme

Theme

The main theme of the conference will be independent living and inclusion in society. In line with the UNCRPD art. 19 and the EU's Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, it is important that persons with disabilities, old and young, have an equal right to live independently and to be included in the community. The conference will focus on the combination of various environmental and individual factors that allow persons with disabilities to have control over their own lives. Importantly, the conference will build on the Commission Notice on *Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community of persons with disabilities in the context of EU funding*, which outlines key approaches for implementing initiatives for independent living. This includes the insurance of the autonomy of persons with disabilities in regards to transport and accommodation, and through provisions such as various forms of personal assistance and reasonable accommodation.

The conference will also have a session on accessibility with the double focus on housing and on built environment addressing accessibility in public spaces.

The conference will facilitate discussion on the provisions needed to allow independent living - e.g. assistive devices, reasonable accommodation and access to personal assistance, personal budget or supported decision-making. The conference will discuss best practices and success factors, as well as political and economic challenges, and it will rely on personal testimonies of persons with disabilities highlighting the importance of independent living and being included in society.

Programme

Day 1/November 6th

9.00-10.00	Arrival and registration
10.00-10.10	Official opening by Danish minister for Social Affairs and Housing Sophie Hæstorp Andersen.
10.10-10.20	Speech by Commissioner for Equality, Preparedness and Crisis Management Hadja Lahbib (tbc)
10.20-10.30	Speech by the European Parliament
10.30-10.40	Speech by EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis

Section 1 - Ensuring Independent Living through Individual Support in the Home

10:45-11.00	Speech by FRA director on independent living in the UNCRPD.
11.00-11.15	Presentation by European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) on the importance of independent living and the support systems needed to facilitate independent living (tbc).
11.15-12.15	Panel discussing best practices, challenges in regards to the support systems promoting independent living in the home.
12.15-12.45	Refreshment
12.45-13.30	Panel focusing on being included in the community as a condition for independent living.
13.30-15.00	Lunch

Section 2 - Accessible and Affordable homes for Persons Living with Disabilities

15.00-15.45	Panel on best practices of accessibility in housing as well as barriers in accessing affordable and adaptable homes.
15.45-16.15	Interview of Independent Living Movement Ireland on personal barriers in accessing affordable and adaptable homes (tbc).
16.15-16.30	Presentation by researcher on universal design (tbc).
16.30-17.15	Panel on opportunities and barriers in regards to ensuring accessibility.
17.15-17.30	Closing (tbc)
19.00-22.00	Official Dinner

**Day 2/ November
7th**

8.00-9.00	Refreshment
9.00-9.15	Opening Speech (tbc).
9.15-9.30	Presentation by Eurofound on the development of independent living (tbc).
9.30-10.00	Interview of researcher on the good everyday life for persons living with disability (tbc).

Separate sections

10.00-13.00	EDF Board Meeting
10.00-13.00	Section for Member States.

Section 3 – Looking Forward on Independent Living

13.00-14.15	Panel on input to the upcoming initiatives in the <i>Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030</i> .
14.15-14.25	Closing Speech by Cyprus (Yiannis Panayiotou) on their upcoming presidency of the Council of the European Union (tbc).
14.25	Official closing by Danish minister for Social Affairs and Housing Sophie Hæstorp Andersen.
14.30-	Lunch

Day 2/ November 7th

EDF board meeting (by invitation only)

Board meeting for the European Disability Forum.

Section for Member States

A member state section with a presentation on ensuring fiscal sustainability in promoting independent living and roundtable discussions on dilemmas and experiences in ensuring in fiscal sustainability.

Other participants

Free section.

The sections will include a refreshment break.

Description of sections

Day 1 (6th November)

The first day of the conference will focus on how to facilitate independent living in the home as well as the accessibility needed in homes and the community.

The day will include a high-level speech from a Commission representative and an official welcome from the Danish minister for Social Affairs and Housing Sophie Hæstorp Andersen.

Section 1 - Ensuring Independent Living through Individual Support in the Home

Article 19 section b of the UNCRPD state that independent living for persons living with disabilities should be ensured through having access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services. This includes both personal assistance and assistive technology.

This section will focus on the support needed to facilitate independent living for persons living with disabilities.

- *Section 1a: Meeting the necessary support needs in the home*

The section focuses on how crucial support systems are for the individual person and that they are available and affordable for all.

This section will include a presentation and panel focusing on how to meet the needs necessary to live independently.

- *Section 1b: Ensuring independent living through inclusion in the community*

The section focuses on how to ensure that persons living with disabilities are included in the community through different kinds of services.

This section will include a presentation and panel focusing on inclusion in the community and emphasising the need for integration with the local community outside the home.

Section 2 - Accessible and Affordable homes for Persons Living with Disabilities

A very important part of ensuring independent living is to ensure sufficient accessible and affordable homes for persons with disabilities.

This section will focus on how to ensure these all-important accessible homes as well as ensuring accessibility in public spaces.

The section will also include a high-level speech on ensuring sufficient, affordable and adaptable housing as regards to disability mainstreaming in European affordable housing plan by a Commission representative.

- *Section 2a: Ensuring sufficient, affordable homes for persons with disabilities*

This section will focus on how to ensure that persons with disabilities are granted opportunities for sufficient and affordable housing or, if needed, residential accommodation with support as well as a focus on independent living.

This section will include a presentation and panel focusing on best practices of accessibility in housing as well as the barriers persons with disabilities experience in accessing affordable and adaptable housing.

- *Section 2b: Ensuring accessibility*

This section will focus on ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and highlighting the opportunities and barriers in regards to implementing accessibility in both public and private spaces.

This section will include a presentation and panel on ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, through universal design eg., as well as the process towards ensuring accessibility in existing spaces.

Day 2 (7th November)

The second day of the conference will focus on how to look forward on independent living and the upcoming initiatives for the upcoming *Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030*.

The day will include a high-level speech as well as an official closing by the Danish minister for Social Affairs and Housing Sophie Hæstorp Andersen.

Separate sections

From 10 am till 1pm, the conference will host two separate sections; the EDF Broad Meeting and a section for member states. Non-EDF and non-member states participants will have a free section.

Section 3 - Looking Forward on Independent Living

The current initiatives for the *Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030* have been or are currently being implemented. Therefore, there is a need to further the strategy in the form of new initiatives.

This section will include a panel focusing on inputs for the upcoming initiatives in the *Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030*.



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