



**European Expert Group**  
on the transition from institutional  
to community-based care

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Preventing institutionalisation through EU Funding- the role of the new MFF

#### EEG Online Study Session

**17 June 2025, 14:00-16:00 CET**

Registrations at:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_BT4e19GqRSuEXVJwCy1jyw#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BT4e19GqRSuEXVJwCy1jyw#/registration)

#### Rationale

Forcing people to live in institutions is harmful and limits their rights, autonomy, and opportunities for social inclusion. Institutionalisation often results from a lack of community-based alternatives, insufficient preventative family support, and inaccessible social services. In Europe, over 1.5 million people still live in institutions.

EU funding has played a significant role in advancing deinstitutionalisation (DI) by supporting the transition from institutional to community-based care. Over the course of the past years, EU funds have been instrumental in closing institutions, developing community-based services, and promoting social inclusion policies. While progress has been made, significant gaps in implementation, best practice sharing, and strategic use of funds remain.

To implement robust DI strategies, it takes more than public and political recognition. Effective deinstitutionalisation requires clear timelines, measurable targets, and systematic data tracking to ensure sustainable progress. The EU and its Member States must prioritise funding mechanisms that prevent institutionalisation, promote community-based support, and hold governments accountable for achieving DI goals.

#### The Role of EU Funding in DI

The EU has been actively promoting deinstitutionalisation through key policies and funding instruments:

- **The Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, advocating inclusive, community-based support services.

- **The Guidance on Independent living and inclusion in the community .**
- **The European Child Guarantee**, supported by the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), aimed at ensuring access to services and promoting family- and community-based care.
- **The 2024 European Commission Recommendation on Integrated Child Protection Systems**, encouraging investments in non-residential services and strengthening foster care.

Despite these commitments, **challenges remain in how EU funds are allocated and used**. In some cases, funds have even supported institutional care rather than fostering independent living and community-based alternatives. To ensure effective deinstitutionalisation, the EEG developed a report on the use, accessibility and conditionality of EU-funds.[1]

### **Target Group**

The study session aims to engage:

- EU representatives (European Parliament, European Commission – DG JUST, Regio and Reform, DG EMPL, Member States).
- National and local government representatives (including co-legislators and managing authorities).
- Social and family support service professionals.
- NGOs advocating for deinstitutionalisation and community based services.
- Individuals and organisations with direct experience of using EU funds for DI and community-based living.

### **Format**

- **Open Online Study Session (Zoom).**
- **Three thematic sessions with presentations followed by Q&A.**
- **Each speaker has 10-15 minutes for their presentation.**

### **Date and Time**

17 June, 14:00-16:00 CET

## Structure

The study session consists of three thematic blocks, each covering a crucial aspect of preventing institutionalisation:

1. **Preventing misuse of EU funds** – No EU funding should support institutions.
2. **Steering EU investment towards community-based care and support** – Investments should prioritize independent living, housing, personal assistance, and accessible services.
3. **Strengthening monitoring mechanisms** – The EU and Member States must establish tracking systems for the number of institutionalised individuals and condition funding on achieving deinstitutionalisation goals.

Each session will address the importance of EU funding in relation to deinstitutionalisation, with input from key stakeholders such as authorities, social services, families, and civil society. Presenters will link their experiences to relevant EU policies and funding mechanisms, especially the Guidance on Independent living and inclusion in the community. The sessions will conclude with Q&A discussions.

## Output

A report summarising the presentations and discussions will be produced. This report will be shared with participants, relevant EU and national policymakers, and a wider audience to foster knowledge exchange and advocacy.

Agenda	
14:00 - 14:10	<b>Welcome and introduction</b> Kadri Soova, EEG Co-chair, Director of Mental Health Europe
14:10 - 14:25	<b>Introduction on the Guidance on independent living and inclusion in the community.</b>  Olga Martinez de Briones, Policy Officer, European Commission

<p><b>14:25 - 14:55</b></p> <p><b>Block 1: Preventing the misuse of EU funds</b></p>	<p><b>Framing the session: Presenting the EEG's position on EU-funding</b> (10 min)</p> <p>Milan Šveřepa, Chief executive, Inclusion Europe</p> <p><b>Examples of the misuse of EU funds</b> (15 min)</p> <p>Ines Bulić, Director, European Network on Independent Living</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b> (10 min)</p>
<p><b>14:55 - 15:15</b></p> <p><b>Block 2: Steering EU investment towards community-based care and support</b></p>	<p><b>Practice from the ground - Positive examples of how EU-funding is shaping the transition from institutional to community-based care in Bulgaria</b> (15 min)</p> <p>Desislava Georgieva, Head of the Programming and Contracting Department at the Managing Authority of ESF+ in Bulgaria</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b> (10 min)</p>
<p><b>15:15 - 15:40</b></p> <p><b>Block 3: Strengthening monitoring mechanisms</b></p>	<p><b>Monitoring the impact of EU funds for deinstitutionalisation</b> (15 min)</p> <p>Daphne Ahrendt, Senior research manager, Social policies unit – Eurofound</p> <p><b>Q&amp;A</b> (10 min)</p>
<p><b>15:40 -15:50</b></p> <p><b>Closing remarks</b></p>	<p><b>Call to action: What EU funding must look like in the future</b></p> <p>Helena Lambsdorff, EEG Coordinator</p>

## About the EEG

The European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based care was convened in February 2009 by the then European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs Vladimir Špidla in order to address the issues of institutional care reform in the European Union. More information [here](#). This group of 13 European civil society organisations regularly meets with EU policy-makers, organises training sessions on Deinstitutionalisation (DI), and develops joint advocacy around various EU policy and funding frameworks.