

# European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care

## Mission Statement, Objectives and Activities

### Our mission

To promote person-centered, individualized, quality and empowering models of services and formal and informal care that fully respect the human rights of all people with care or support needs and their families, by providing expert support in the development of EU policies, legislation and funding programmes, and supporting national efforts to this end, in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in particular with Article 19) and in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The group is guided by the recommendations of the Report of the ad-hoc expert group on the transition from institutional to community-based care<sup>1</sup>.

### Who are we?

A broad coalition gathering stakeholders representing people with care or support needs including children, people with disabilities, people experiencing mental health problems, their families; as well as service providers, public authorities and intergovernmental organizations.

The Group is united by its commitment to a rights-based approach to social services, and its concern that out-dated models of care, characterized by de-personalization, rigidity of routine, block treatment and segregation, infringe the human rights of the people they are designed to support. It is predominantly, though not exclusively, institutions that display such an institutionalized culture. The Group shares a concern that those people with care or support needs and their families must be involved in deciding the service needed. Empowering models of services recognize and nurture the capacity of *all* people with care or support needs to be involved in decisions affecting them regardless of age or intellectual ability.

The Group comprises representatives of European networks and organizations that work together at EU level to provide expert support on EU policy, legislation and funding. All members of the group provide a link to operational expertise at the national, regional and local level through the direct involvement and empowerment of their member organizations.

### Objectives

- (1) **To raise awareness at EU level** of the needs of different groups with care or support needs and to draw the attention to infringements of the human rights of people in institutional care;
- (2) **To ensure that EU and national policies and funding mechanisms** support the transition from institutional care to community-based services, including investment in family support and the development of high quality services on the ground;
- (3) **To offer expertise and impartial advice to Member States and the EU institutions** that are considering, planning, reviewing or implementing de-institutionalization policies and funding programmes, and **to encourage Member States to fully involve user groups** and their families in this process, as well as other stakeholders such as service providers, public authorities, civil society and the research community - both within their borders and internationally;
- (4) **To gather and enhance knowledge** on the transition from institutional to community-based services **and to gather and promote practical examples of good practice** demonstrating the social and economic value of high quality family-based or community-based alternatives, as well as how de-institutionalization reforms can be best carried out.

---

<sup>1</sup> Drafted by a group of independent experts convened by Commissioner Vladimír Špidla in February 2009 to address the issues of institutional care reform. Available via the [website](#) of European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

## **Activities**

- (1) Share information and expertise between the networks and their respective members at national level through the organization of regular 'expert group' meetings. Specifically the group will analyze the current state-of-play of de-institutionalization and transition to community-based services in Europe; draw attention to cases of violation of rights of people living in out-dated institutional care and other inappropriate services; and assess the feasibility and desirability of joint action.
- (2) Organize regular meetings with EU officials, UN representatives and national government representatives to strengthen EU support for national policies and programmes that support de-institutionalization. Provide access to the necessary advice and expertise at national level through effective communication and involvement with the Group's member organizations.
- (3) Facilitate joint actions as agreed on an ad-hoc basis on specific EU or national policies and funding that can contribute to promote de-institutionalization e.g. structural funds, fundamental rights, EU disability strategy, data collection.
- (4) Present examples of good practice to EU officials through informal meetings and/or written materials.