



European Expert Group

on the transition from institutions
to community-based support

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Recovery Means Community: Supporting Ukraine's Commitment to Deinstitutionalisation

The European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based support (EEG) welcomes Ukraine's continued commitment to deinstitutionalisation and the development of community-based support systems despite the immense challenges caused by Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine.

At a time when many countries would be tempted to postpone social reforms, Ukraine has chosen a more difficult path: continuing efforts to ensure that children, persons with disabilities, older persons and other groups can live, participate and receive support in families and communities rather than in institutions.

This commitment is not only an important social reform. It is a contribution to building a more inclusive, resilient and democratic society. It is also closely linked to Ukraine's path towards European Union membership and alignment with European values, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the EU's growing commitment to independent living and community-based support.

As discussions on Ukraine's recovery continue, reconstruction efforts mustn't recreate or modernise systems of segregation. Recovery should support families, strengthen communities and invest in accessible, community-based services, including early intervention, rehabilitation, personal assistants, inclusive education, mental health support and other services that enable people to live independently and participate fully in society.

As Kyrilo Nevdokha, Head of the Children and Youth Office "DlyMO", stated during the 2025 Ukraine Recovery Conference:

"Children's beds should be at home, not in institutions."

This principle extends far beyond children. Every person should have the opportunity to live in the community, maintain relationships, exercise choice and receive support in ways that respect their dignity, autonomy and human rights.

Recent EU initiatives, including the strengthened Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2030 and the planned Alliance for Independent Living, demonstrate a growing recognition that institutionalisation must be addressed through practical implementation, investment, and cooperation among governments, civil society, service providers, and people with lived experience.

At the same time, recent public debates in Ukraine show that progress cannot be taken for granted. Continued political leadership, adequate investment and sustained support from international partners remain essential to ensure that reforms move forward and that institutional models are not re-established under new names or through new investments.

The EEG encourages Ukrainian authorities, European institutions and international partners to continue prioritising deinstitutionalisation and community-based support as an integral part of recovery, reconstruction and EU accession efforts.

Recovery is not only about rebuilding infrastructure.

Recovery is about rebuilding communities.

The EEG stands ready to support Ukraine, the European Union and international partners in advancing rights-based reforms that enable all people to live, participate and thrive in their communities.

The European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based support (EEG) is a coalition of European organisations committed to promoting community-based support, independent living and social inclusion for all people at risk of institutionalisation.

More information about the EEG: www.deinstitutionalisation.com