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# Creating Conditions for Independent Living: Autonomy or Dependency?





## Thinking about Economic Autonomy?

1. Employment
2. Social protection and incomes
3. Support for independent living
4. Autonomy in an Economic Crisis?

## Employment

**‘work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market ... that is open, inclusive and accessible’ (Article 27)**

- A significant disadvantage in European labour markets
- A significant lack of reliable data for comparison
- Lack of attention to accessibility in the workplace
- Much variation in active labour market policies
- Movement away from sheltered employment?
- Extensive use of wage subsidies
- Targeted skills training
- Support for flexible working
- The welfare-work problem (autonomy-dependency?)

## Employment

- Disability in national Labour Force Surveys.
- Targets for the employment rate of disabled women and men.
- Activation projects with clear objectives.
- Focus on creating accessibility in the working-environment.
- Mainstreaming disability in labour market policies.
- Flexible routes in and out of the benefit system.
- Awareness of accessibility amongst employers.
- Focus on the gap for young people between school and the labour market, including education, training and employment.

## Social protection and incomes

‘an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families’ (Article 28)

- A key target group for national benefit reforms.
- Some recent increases in disability benefits...
- ...but still not a safety net against the poverty trap.
- Tackling disability in childhood poverty.
- Exclusion from education has lasting effects on income.
- Tension between cutting eligibility to work-related disability. benefits and responsibility to ensure adequate incomes.



## Social protection and incomes

- Highlight the impact of education and employment policies on incomes.
- Create policies for flexible working without loss of income.
- Compensate the actual costs of disability-related expenses.
- Focus on priority groups at risk of exclusion.
- Consider the poverty of households (disabled families).
- Highlight examples of good practice.
- Implement non-discrimination beyond employment.
- Involve disabled people and their representatives as active partners in developing strategy and policy.

## Support for Independent Living

**‘to live in the community, with choices equal to others...  
community support services’ (Article 19)**

- New relationships between the individual, the state and service providers.
- Some progress on choice and control.
- There are still significant investments in institutional care.
- Examples of good practice in self-directed support.
- There is a lack of knowledge about independent living in some countries.
- Free movement remains a significant problem.

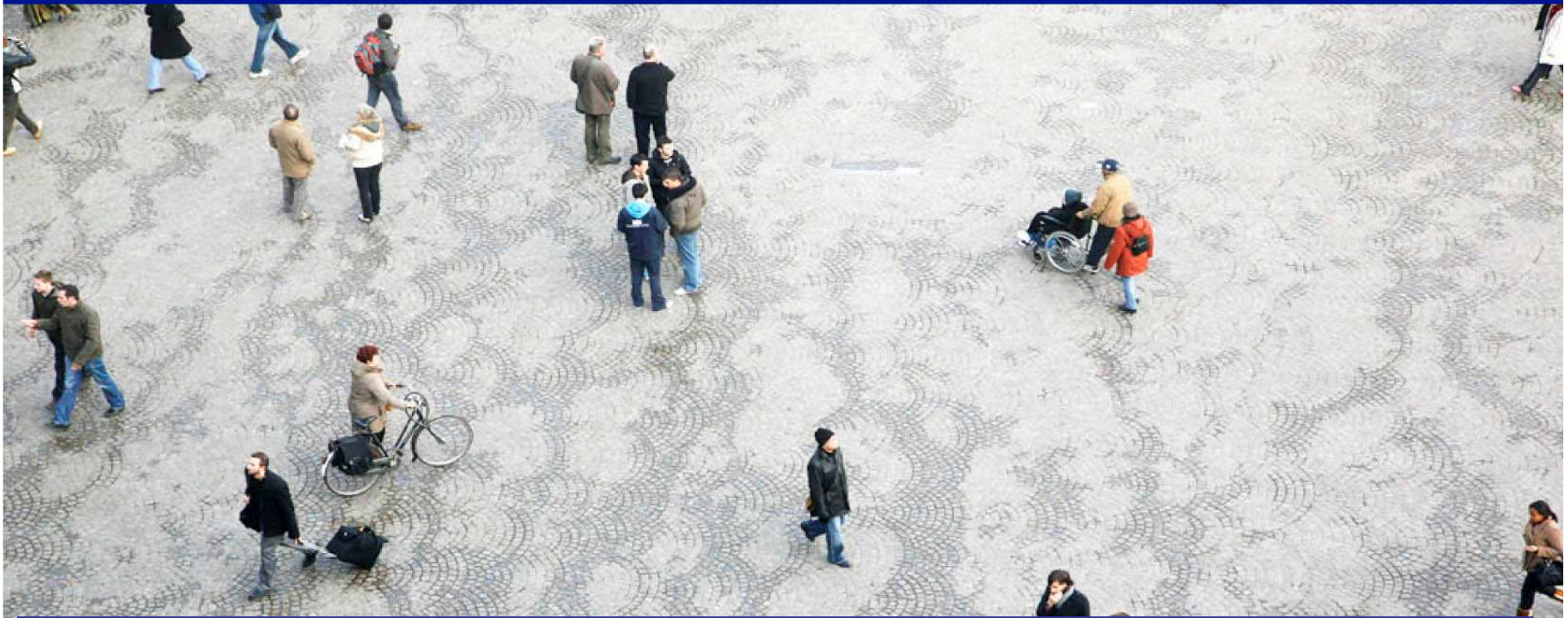


## Support for Independent Living

- Share examples of self-managed personal budget and direct payment schemes.
- Consider the economic autonomy of people with all types of impairments (not only a few).
- Structural Fund projects should develop economic autonomy through choice and control in the management of support.
- Develop co-operation and mutual recognition of personal assistance rights between regions and countries.
- Invest in independent living centres and the collective expertise/support of disabled people's organisations.

## Autonomy in an Economic Crisis?

- Less evidence of immediate impact than expected, but...
- Unemployment concerns in some countries.
- Disability-related benefits frozen, cut, or... increased.
- Limiting eligibility to disability-related benefits.
- More functional or medical assessments of work capacity.
- Less progress on the re-organisation of public employment services?
- Increased use of wage subsidies.
- Opportunities for job creation in the support sector.
- Opportunities for investments in accessibility?



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