

Seminar of the European Coalition for Community Living 2007

User Involvement: Involving People with Disabilities in the Development, Provision and Evaluation of Quality Community Based Services 20th -21st April 2007 Zagreb, Croatia.

ECCL Welcoming Speech, John Evans OBE, ENIL

It is my pleasure on behalf of the ECCL Management Partners to welcome you all here in Zagreb for the second annual conference of ECCL on User Involvement in the development, provision and evaluation of quality community based services. We are very thankful that the Croatian Association for Promoting Inclusion, has supported ECCL in staging this event, and will also welcome you shortly.

We are very pleased to have organised an extremely comprehensive programme with contributions from many experts, both disabled people and professionals, covering many diverse aspects of the current strategic shift and thinking from institutional care and community based services. We very much value their input and time and feel strongly that it will instigate further constructive dialogue and debate in the development of ECCL's objectives in creating realistic community based options for disabled people in Europe. I believe we have contributors from 15 different European Countries in the programme, representing a variety of disability organisations. As well as this of course, we have yourselves the participants, also representing your own organisations both European NGO's and national organisations.

I am sure many of the presentations and focus groups will provide you with examples of some very good practices, and at the same time challenge you in your thinking and organisation of community based services. I have personally been involved in this work for over 20 years, and my organisation ENIL, which represents the wishes and aspirations of many disabled people throughout Europe wanting to achieve an Independent life style with quality and freedom. Independent Living has been pioneering solutions to institutional living now for almost 30 years, just to give you an example. It is not a new idea, but it has never been taken as seriously as it is today, and with such a wide scope.

I really do hope our agenda here for the next 2 days, together with your immense experience, knowledge and strategic thinking will help us network and explore new possibilities and horizons in realising the dreams and objectives of ECCL. I wish you all a constructive and enjoyable Conference. I look forward to meeting you personally during these next days.

Thank you, John Evans, ECCL
20th April 2007