



## **Ten-point Manifesto of the European Council of Autistic People for the European Elections and the European Parliament legislature 2024-2029**

We, autistic people living in Europe, as a minority of neurodivergent and disabled people, face discrimination because our experience is often dismissed and our voice remains unheard. Many of us are deprived of enjoying full human rights, being seen only through the eyes of non-autistic people. We ask for our right to self-representation to be respected and the voices of autistic people's organisations to be rightfully heard. We hold that all autistic people are human beings with full rights, enshrined in the UN CRPD and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

We therefore respectfully ask you, members and future members of the European Parliament, if you will support:

1. the right to **self-determination** of all autistic people in accordance with the UN CRPD and the European Charter of Human Rights;
2. the **freedom of choice** for autistic people and their families in matters of therapies, education and forms of support, including by ensuring that aversive and often harmful behaviour modification therapies such as Applied Behavior Analysis are not unquestioningly imposed as a norm;
3. more investment in **scientific research** on autism that focuses on the priorities of the majority of autistic people, listens to their expressed needs, wishes and lived experiences, and aims for their well-being;
4. legislation and measures to promote deinstitutionalisation and **independent living** for all autistic people in agreement with the UN CRPD, by providing them with the means to live independently;
5. Development of legislation and policy **against degrading and inhuman treatments** and punishments of autistic people under the guise of therapy or education, in accordance with Chapter 1 Article 4 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
6. legal safeguards **against forced sterilisation and sexual violence** against autistic people;
7. a **European policy on mental health** that promotes a person-centred approach to autistic people's specific mental health needs and includes necessary adjustments;
8. **quality inclusion practices** in all areas and for all ages: effective support, healthcare and services that address the real needs of autistic people and listen to them;
9. **equal access to diagnostic services** and support, including people who are often unsupported or underdiagnosed, such as women and minority groups, and autistic people with and without intellectual disabilities, across the European Union (in accordance with European Parliament Resolution 2023/2728(RSP));
10. the **meaningful participation of autistic people** in all matters that concern us; making autistic voices heard by supporting autistic people's organisations as representatives of autistic people and giving them the means to be active at EU and other levels.



## Ten-point Manifesto of the European Council of Autistic People - long version

We, autistic people living in Europe, respectfully ask current and future members of the European Parliament, for your support. This document details some suggestions for ways to genuinely support our goals.

### 1) The right to self-determination

- Recognise and uphold that all autistic people are human beings with full rights, enshrined in the UN CRPD and the European Charter of Human Rights; neurodivergent with different levels of disability and a broad range of co-occurring conditions, facing discrimination as a minority; often dismissed, our voices still remaining largely unheard. Support our wish to live our lives fully and freely, taking our place in society and contributing to it in our own ways;
- Uphold the European Parliament Resolution on harmonizing the Rights of Autistic People ([2023/2728\(RSP\)](#)), to which we have contributed, and include autistic people's organisations in the development of future resolutions concerning us.

### 2) Freedom of choice

- Promote freedom of choice for autistic people and their families concerning therapies, medical treatments, habilitation, special education and other interventions, including freedom to refuse treatment;
- Ensure that EU funding is not used to disproportionately promote a narrow range of approaches with the effect of limiting freedom of choice, especially with regard to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and related behavioral approaches, widely opposed and criticized by autistic people, as described in our [survey](#) and [Position Statement](#) on ABA.

### 3) Scientific research on autism

- Promote investment in research in line with the needs and priorities of autistic people and demonstrably improving our quality of life, using our [Autistic Priorities survey](#) and peer-reviewed literature as guidelines; diminish the gap between investment in biomedical research and in priorities such as developing service provision and combating stigma;
- Ensure that EU-funded research projects on autism are independently assessed, particularly [AIMS-2-TRIALS](#) and its possible offshoots, with involvement of autistic people's organisations and with close attention to the quality and sufficiency of participatory practices;
- Draw attention to the regulation of the Innovative Health Initiative and Horizon Europe programmes to prevent EU funding of autism research that does not respect autistic rights;
- Call for a review of the [European Medicines Agency's guidelines on the development of medicinal products for autism](#) to harmonize these with current knowledge, including knowledge on what autistic people consider to be desirable targets for medication.

### 4) Deinstitutionalisation and independent living

- Work to uphold the objectives 1 and 4 of the [ENIL Manifesto](#);
- Guarantee the right to Independent Living by adopting an EU Directive on Independent Living, requiring Member States to put in place personal assistance, peer support, support to access housing and employment, accessible mainstream services, and other services that will replace institutions.
- Guarantee that EU funds support Independent Living, not segregation, by ensuring that the next Common Provisions Regulation and the Regulations establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), as well as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support development of such services instead of funding institutions.

### **5) Legislation and policy against degrading and inhuman treatments and punishments**

- Recognise that violent, degrading and pseudoscientific practices are widespread in a broad range of autism services, used by European professionals in many fields and disciplines;
- Promote EU legislation and policy that clearly defines what constitutes degrading treatment and torture in the context of autism interventions, to prevent such acts being perpetrated on autistic people under the guises of treatment, therapy, habilitation, social skills training, or education;
- Call for the promotion and enabling of autism interventions that constitute degrading treatment or torture to be added to the EU list of crimes so that they can be banned, including distribution of literature that encourages such violent or degrading practices, classifying this type of literature as hate speech.

### **6) Legal safeguards against forced sterilisation and sexual violence**

- Commit to the efforts to modify the Directive on Combating Violence against Women.
- Work to uphold objective 7 of [the Manifesto of the European Network on Independent Living](#): Reinforce legal safeguards against forced sterilization and sexual violence by supporting efforts to have gender-based violence added to the EU list of crimes.

### **7) European policy on mental health**

- Call for a European Union policy to include specific attention to the autistic population in the area of mental health, with attention to the high incidence of mental health issues and suicide among autistic people, exacerbated by obstacles to accessing mental health services;
- Promote inclusion of neurodiversity and autism within the Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health of the European Commission.

### **8) Quality inclusion practices in all areas and for all ages**

- Promote collaboration with autistic people and families in developing social care and support services;
- Promote inclusive policies in mental health care, access to safe education, access to effective health care and access to social care and support that respond to the real needs of autistic individuals.

### **9) Equal access to diagnostic services and support**

- Uphold the European Parliament resolution of 4 October 2023 on harmonising the rights of autistic persons ([2023/2728\(RSP\)](#)), particularly with regard to collection of disaggregated data that would allow the monitoring of key human rights of autistic people;
- Draw attention to the lack of diagnostic services and lack of recognition of autism in adults across Europe, particularly prominent in eastern European countries, leading to exclusion and discrimination in areas such as employment, disability services and benefits systems.

### **10) Meaningful participation of autistic people**

- Support our right to self-representation in European policy work and public discourse by involving autistic people's organisations in decision-making processes on issues concerning us and our families;
- Establish contacts with autistic people's organisations and groups in your country, and promote their involvement in decisions on legislation and policies;
- Allocate part of the funding available to you as MEP to create platforms that allow autistic people to be heard, such as for example the [Autism By Autistic Voices conference](#);
- Promote making funding from EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and CERV available to autistic people's organisations, including by revising application and reporting processes to be accessible;
- Promote the establishment of a permanent EU disability council, consisting of disabled people and including autistic representation, modelled on existing EU Committees such as the [EESC](#), in line with Article 4(3) UNCRPD and General Comment No. 7.