**Protecting the Right to Culture of Persons with Disabilities and Enhancing Cultural Diversity through European Union Law: Exploring New Paths (DANCING),** is a project exploring the right of persons with disabilities to take part in cultural life as an essential aspect of enhancing cultural diversity in the EU. DANCING uses interdisciplinary and participatory approaches to produce ground-breaking knowledge. Our work challenges the cultural exclusion often faced by people with disabilities, contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society.

The project is funded by the European Research Council (ERC) and is based at Maynooth University under Professor Delia Ferri as a Principal Investigator.

DANCING investigates the extent to which the protection of the right to take part in culture of people with disabilities and the promotion of cultural diversity intersect and complement each other in the EU legal order.

It disrupts the conventional approach adopted by EU law scholarship by using a combination of legal, empirical, and arts-based research to pursue three complementary objectives, experiential, normative and theoretical respectively.

First, it aims to identify and categorize barriers and facilitators to cultural participation experienced by disabled people and how they affect the wider cultural domain.

Secondly, it aims to provide a normative exploration of how the EU has used and can use its competence to combat discrimination and its supporting competence on cultural matters, in synergy with its wide internal market powers, to ensure the accessibility of cultural activities, to promote disability identities, while achieving cultural diversity. In doing so, it bridges the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Thirdly, it advances the understanding of the legal concept of cultural diversity, which stems from the intersection of different sources of law and will propose a new theorization of the promotion of cultural diversity within the EU legal order.

DANCING is informed by the open-ended definition of disability affirmed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which states that persons with disabilities “include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

**Article 30, UNCRPD recognises ‘the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life’.**

Furthermore, DANCING looks at the right to participate in culture in a comprehensive way with reference to its twofold individual dimension and its collective aspect. The twofold individual dimension encompasses the right to access cultural activities, goods and services, i.e., the right to cultural consumption, and the right to active involvement in culture, which includes the engagement in the creation of cultural goods, services and activities. The collective aspect entails the right of cultural communities to be recognised and protected as well as to enjoy and make use of their cultural heritage and cultural expressions.

DANCING is a participatory and interactive project. It aims to create synergies with various stakeholders and endeavours to enhance civic participation, and to foster legal change and effective policy responses.