Protecting the Right to Culture of Persons with Disabilities and Enhancing Cultural Diversity through European Union Law: Exploring New Paths (DANCING)

Report

The ERC DANCING Project
Organisation and Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an overview of the organisation and management processes that have guided the implementation of the European Research Council (ERC) funded project 'Protecting the Right to Culture of Persons with Disabilities and Enhancing Cultural Diversity through European Union Law: Exploring New Paths – DANCING'. It describes the internal procedures adopted by the Principal Investigator (PI), Prof. Delia Ferri, supported by the Project Manager, Ms Hilary Hooks, and the DANCING team to ensure academic excellence of scholarly outputs, high-quality standards of non-peer reviewed outputs, ethical compliance, inclusive practices and appropriate communication strategies throughout the project lifecycle.

DANCING comprises four different Work Packages (WP). Three of them are related to the key objectives of the project (experiential, normative and theoretical), while the fourth focuses on translating the research into practical tools that can effect societal change. As with all ERC projects, DANCING is curiosity-driven research but has endeavoured to display a societal and policy impact and to support the enhancement of disability rights in Europe. DANCING adopts a socio-legal perspective, i.e. pursues an analysis of law that is directly linked to the social situation to which the law applies. Consistent with this perspective, in order to achieve the three objectives indicated above, it combines legal doctrinal research, qualitative research and arts-based research.

All WPs were deployed, organised and led by the PI, within the framework of an efficient project management carried out by the Project Manager, who supported the PI in overseeing the workflow and timelines. The DANCING project complied with best practices in relation to authorship and internal review processes. All scholarly outputs are published in peer-reviewed outlets (either academic journals with a high impact factor or volumes published by reputable publishers). Non peer-reviewed outputs, such as blog posts, were subject to a quality check by the PI and reviewed by another member of the team and/or by other colleagues in the School of Law and Criminology or in the Assisting Living and Learning (ALL) Institute. Besides internal checks, reports were also subject to an informal peer review by colleagues in the School of Law and Criminology acting as 'critical friends'.

DANCING complied with European principles and rules in terms of acknowledgments, open science/data, and milestone verification. As discussed in previous reports, DANCING also committed to and abided by ethical research practices, including informed consent, data protection, and the anonymisation of sensitive data. Data collection and archiving has been carried out in line with the DANCING project's ERC Data Management Plan (DMP) (Ferri, 2021), which lays out the project's data management approach, consistent with the ERC commitment to Open Science, including Open Access (OA) for research publications and Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability (FAIR) data principles (ERC, 2019). DANCING published its academic outputs and deliverables opting for Gold OA, and, only when such option was not available, for Green OA using trusted repositories, such as the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). All reports were published on Zenodo, which is a reputed

open access repository, developed as part of the Open Access Infrastructure for Research in Europe OpenAIRE ecosystem. Zenodo ensures long-term preservation, provides a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), and has clear usage conditions and licensing under Creative Commons licenses. All outputs are also stored on the Maynooth University (MU) institutional repository (MURAL).

DANCING has also aligned with the values of diversity and inclusion, which inform the project itself, with specific attention to inclusive communication and accessibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory section outlines the DANCING project and its main tenets as well as the primary objectives of the present report and sets out its structure. Moreover, this introduction comprises a note on the terminology used in the project and this report.

1.1. The DANCING Project

The project 'Protecting the Right to Culture of Persons with Disabilities and Enhancing Cultural Diversity through European Union Law: Exploring New Paths (DANCING)' explores the right of persons with disabilities to take part in cultural life as an essential aspect of enhancing cultural diversity in the European Union (EU). The project is funded by the European Research Council (ERC) and is based at Maynooth University (MU) under Prof. Delia Ferri as a Principal Investigator (PI). It explores the extent to which the protection of the right of people with disabilities to take part in culture and the promotion of cultural diversity intersect and complement each other in the EU legal order. It aims to produce ground-breaking knowledge with a view to challenging the cultural exclusion often faced by people with disabilities and ultimately to making European society more inclusive and culturally diverse.

DANCING commenced on 1 September 2020 and is due to be completed on 31 August 2025. It has pursued three main objectives. Firstly, it has identified and categorised barriers to and facilitators of cultural participation experienced by persons with disabilities and how they affect the wider cultural domain (experiential objective). Secondly, it has provided 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 (normative objective). Thirdly, it has advanced the understanding of the legal concept of cultural diversity, which stems from the intersection of different sources of law, and, in the final phase of the project, will articulate a new theorisation of the promotion of cultural diversity within the EU legal order (theoretical objective).

These objectives (experiential, normative and theoretical) have been pursued by means of bespoke Work Packages (WPs). Furthermore, DANCING also comprises Work Package 4 (WP4), aimed at translating the academic research into practical tools that can trigger societal and policy change.

DANCING adopts a socio-legal perspective, i.e. pursues an analysis of law that engages with the social situation to which the law applies. Consistent with this perspective, in order to achieve the three objectives indicated above, it combines legal doctrinal research, qualitative research and arts-based research.

1.2. The Underpinning Tenets of the DANCING Project

DANCING is informed by the principles and rights set out in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In particular, DANCING embeds the concept of disability as laid out in Article 1(2) CRPD. The provision recognises 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'. DANCING also embraces the view that 'disability is a social construct' and 'is one of several layers of identity' (CRPD Committee, 2018a).

Consistent with the CRPD terminology, the report uses 'people first language' (i.e. persons/ people with disabilities), and Organisation(s) of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). For the purpose of this research, OPDs are defined in line with General Comment No. 7 of the CRPD Committee (CRPD Committee, 2018b).

The project acknowledges the current comprehensive definitions of culture and the cultural domain that connect to cultural rights but deliberately focuses on arts practices (encompassing different art forms, including literature, dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and heritage as forms of cultural expression (Caust, 2019), and uses dance as a selected art practice for the purpose of arts-based research.

The project conceives of the right to participate in culture in a comprehensive way, considering both its individual twofold dimension and collective aspect (Romainville, 2015; Chow, 2018). The individual dimension includes both the right to cultural consumption – meaning the right to access cultural activities, goods and services – and the right to active involvement in culture, which includes the engagement in the creation of cultural goods, services and activities. On the other hand, the collective aspect entails the right of cultural communities to be recognised and protected, as well as to enjoy and make use of their own cultural heritage and cultural expressions.

1.3. Aim of this Report

This report provides an overview of the organisational structure of the ERC DANCING Project, including the roles and responsibilities of key personnel, partner institutions, and collaborators. It also details the management framework adopted during the life of the project as well as the approach taken. It highlights challenges faced to ensure the smooth and efficient coordination of research activities and resource allocation. It also outlines risks management approaches. The report further discusses the decision-making processes, communication strategies, and reporting mechanisms that have supported the successful running of the project, as well as the strategies for monitoring progress and evaluating outcomes.

The idea of this report, that explores the complexities in the deployment of a large multi-annual research project, stems from a discussion within the Advisory Board of DANCING. The aim of such a report is not only to support transparency and accountability to various stakeholders, including the ERC and the wider academic community, but also to provide a

useful tool that may help other researchers who engage with an ERC project or a large project that involves a multidisciplinary team. In that vein, the report discusses the role of the PI in steering the project and accomplishing various milestones, and promotes a reflexive approach to research.

1.4. Structure of this Report

Following these introductory remarks, this report moves on to section 2, describing how the project was organised, in terms of roles and responsibilities, coordination within the team, and collaborations. Section 3 details the research management of the project, outlining the PI's approach to compliance, the publication strategy, and the approach to authorship. The section also discusses the dissemination strategy and results. Section 4 provides some brief concluding remarks.

2. THE DANCING PROJECT ORGANISATION

Prof. Delia Ferri as PI – and all the DANCING team – committed to producing groundbreaking and high-quality research and deliverables in compliance with the Grant Agreement and the ERC ethos. The project organisation – which is explained below – reflected this commitment.

2.1. The PI and the Team

2.1.1. The Team

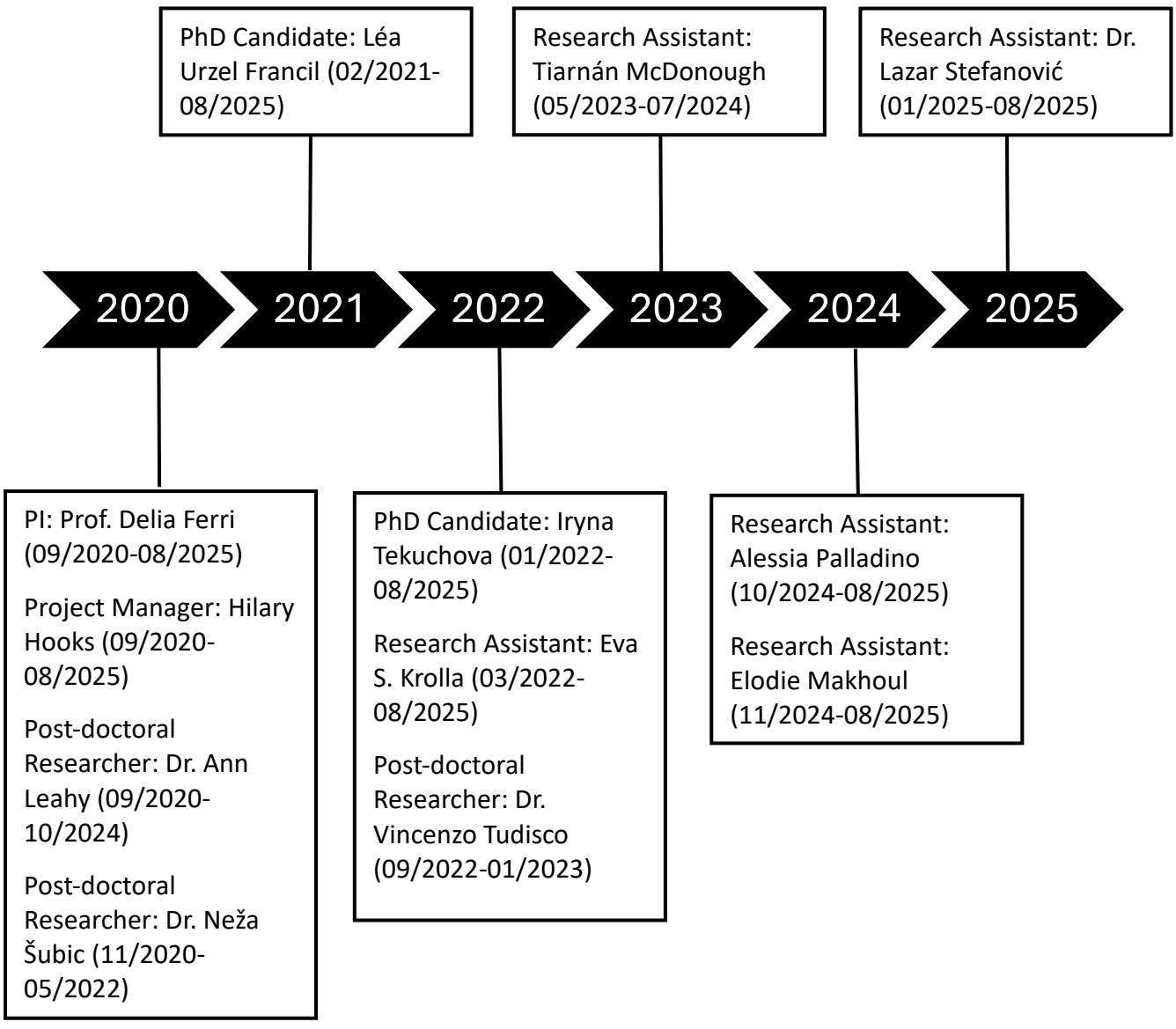
The DANCING Project has been carried out by a team of researchers led by the PI, Prof. Delia Ferri.

Picture of PI Prof. Delia Ferri.

At the time of writing, the research members of the DANCING team include: Ms Eva Sophie Krolla (Senior Research Assistant), Ms Léa Urzel Francil (PhD candidate), Ms Iryna Tekuchova (PhD candidate), Ms Elodie Makhoul (Research Assistant), Ms Alessia Palladino (Research Assistant), and lastly Dr. Lazar Stefanović (Research Assistant). The research team is supported by Ms Hilary Hooks (Project Manager). Former researchers in the DANCING team included: Dr. Ann Leahy (Post-doctoral Researcher), Dr. Neža Šubic (Post-doctoral Researcher), Dr. Vincenzo Tudisco (Post-doctoral Researcher) and Mr Tiarnán McDonough (Research Assistant).

While many of the researchers had a background in law, with a focus on disability law, human rights law and EU law, some members had bespoke complementary expertise in qualitative research methods, arts-based research and European studies. This allowed for a balanced team that supported the accomplishment of the three main objectives of the project – experiential, normative and theoretical – but also the deployment of all dissemination activities.

Collage of all DANCING team members, past and present.



The recruitment of the team followed open competitions and was carried out in compliance with relevant rules and policies. All processes were supported by the Research Development Office (RDO) and MU Human Resources offices as well as the School of Law and Criminology. Onboarding processes were supported by administrative offices in the School of Law and Criminology and in the Assisting Living and Learning (ALL) Institute.

2.1.2. Roles and Responsibilities

The PI led and coordinated all research activities, ensuring alignment with the project's scientific goals and oversaw all the administrative aspects of the project. She took strategic decisions to ensure that the project fully captured the *Zeitgeist* and investigated most recent legal developments, such as, for example, the enactment of the Directive establishing the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities, and the release of the CRPD Committee's Concluding Observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of the EU, maximising the impact of the project.

Clear roles, tasks and responsibilities were allocated by the PI to team members. The PI guided and supported the DANCING team members in all their activities. Overall, the project was managed through a collaborative structure designed to ensure both scientific excellence and effective coordination within the team. Project activities carried out in alignment with the proposal were discussed in team meetings and expounded by the PI to promote transparency, accountability, and smooth cooperation in the team.

The Project Manager, Ms Hilary Hooks, supported the PI and the team by monitoring internal deadlines, helping the PI in the project implementation activities, and overseeing financial aspects. She contributed to periodic reports and supported their submission. She kept all communication channels active and updated, including maintaining the project website (as discussed in the Report on WP4). She also undertook the key role of accessibility manager. In conjunction with the PI, Ms Hilary Hooks played a vital role in making all aspects of the research process inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. This included overseeing accessible communication, digital content, event planning, and workspace accommodations. By embedding accessibility from the start, the Project Manager helped Prof. Delia Ferri to uphold the DANCING project's legal and ethical commitments and to comply with the CRPD principles, while also fostering genuine participation from people with disabilities throughout the project lifecycle.

In the final two months of the project, the Project Manager prepared the post-project phase and provided guidance to Research Assistant Ms Elodie Makhoul who will support the PI during that time.

2.2. Coordination in the Team

One of the most significant, yet challenging, organisational aspects was the coordination of the research team. As noted above, the DANCING project included researchers with diverse expertise and backgrounds, diverse working styles, at different stages of their careers, and that joined at different junctures of the project.

The PI defined clear roles within the team. Each member was assigned responsibilities aligned with their expertise, including legal research, data collection and analysis, literature reviews, and dissemination tasks. This organisational approach minimised task overlap and encouraged accountability. It also fostered collaboration and prevented further challenges down the line. The PI also ensured communication and collaboration through regular meetings and other communication channels.

2.2.1. Team Meetings

The meetings have been organised on a weekly basis. They have been chaired and led by the PI and have offered an opportunity to discuss ongoing matters, coordinate actions across WPs, and maintain a shared view of project progress.

The PI drafted agendas for each meeting and circulated them in advance. Team members have been welcome to suggest agenda items and there has always been an opportunity for Any Other Business (AOB) discussions at the end of these meetings.

The Project Manager took minutes at meetings and was also responsible for the organisation of the meetings and diary management.

In addition to team meetings, several *ad hoc* meetings were organised to discuss specific facets of the research. These *ad hoc* meetings complemented the regular team meetings by providing a flexible and responsive forum for addressing issues and emerging needs as well as new opportunities within the DANCING project. They also enabled focused discussions on specific research challenges, event planning, or collaborative tasks, ensuring timely decision-making and progress. These *ad hoc* meetings brought together relevant team members as needed, and encouraged cross-disciplinary dialogue. Their informal and targeted nature also promoted a proactive problem-solving culture, reinforcing the dynamic and collaborative spirit of the DANCING team.

DANCING Team Meeting.

The PI also carried out regular individual meetings with each member of the team. These one-on-one sessions provided a dedicated space to discuss research progress, address personal and research challenges, and set short- and long-term goals tailored to each researcher's role and development. They also allowed the PI to offer targeted and comprehensive feedback, monitor well-being, and ensure alignment with the overall objectives of the DANCING project. This individualised attention – while time consuming – helped build trust, enhance motivation, and support the professional growth of each team member.

In the first part of the project – which started amidst the COVID-19 pandemic – all meetings were held online. When the return to campus was allowed, meetings were held in person or in hybrid format. In fact, Prof. Delia Ferri noted that face-to-face interactions greatly helped build trust and empathy, as well as friendship among team members.

In addition to bespoke meetings, the PI also organised informal coffee or lunch meetings as a valuable team-building tool to support an inclusive space for collaboration, reflection, and relationship-building among team members. These gatherings fostered a sense of shared purpose, and proved a valuable option to strengthen mutual trust and understanding.

On the whole, combining the flexibility of online meetings with the relational depth of in-person gatherings, while requiring advance planning, time and consideration, worked very well and in the long run supported team cohesion.

Informal Lunch Team Meeting.

2.2.2. Communication

Internal communications were structured around timely exchange of information via email and Microsoft Teams outside of in-person meetings. Emails have been a primary tool for direct communication between the PI and team members. They were especially useful for keeping a written record of decisions, timelines, and responsibilities, which supported accountability and project management.

All project members have been encouraged to follow the principles of efficient and respectful use of emails. Additionally, members paid special attention to guaranteeing the security of sensitive information and respecting confidentiality of information received, where appropriate.

2.2.3. Documentation

Team members have used Microsoft Teams to share and store documents for collaboration and reference.

The Project Manager created a suite of MS Excel spreadsheets used for tracking the following indicators: project activities, deliverables as per the grant agreement, dissemination outputs

and activities, external presentations relating to the project, and publications at various stages of development. A spreadsheet was also used by the Project Manager for risk management, to track risks and issues, and lessons learned.

2.3. Flexibility and Contingency

Despite the PI and DANCING team's best efforts, unforeseen challenges inevitably arose during the life of the project, particularly some delays in data collection due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the first years of the project.

Changes in team composition created a significant challenge for the PI. However, with the support of the RDO, the risks were mitigated by timely recruitment processes. Delayed progress of certain tasks due to changes in the teams were mitigated by careful organisation and contingency planning by the PI. When key team members – such as post-doctoral researchers in law – left, undoubtedly a slight disruption of workflows occurred. However, the delay in timelines was mitigated by adjustments in the planning of the DANCING project to embed contingencies. The PI also facilitated new team members in acquiring the needed academic skills and project knowledge by tailoring their tasks and providing feedback.

The ability to adapt, revise plans, and communicate changes effectively was crucial, and involved a significant amount of time and thinking. The PI endeavoured to exert flexibility and address challenges proactively and constructively. She effected a rigorous and iterative approach to research management. She identified practical problems developing and discussed solutions and alternative approaches with the team.

Research and organisational flexibility were also crucial for the rest of the team, who would prioritise urgent tasks and support other team members in their respective work when necessary.

2.4. Reflective Practice

Reflective practice enables a better understanding of past actions and decisions, which can therefore encourage a proactive approach and improve the project performance overall.

Looking back, for the PI, one of the major challenges but also one of the main learning processes was linked to anticipating potential challenges and delays to best mitigate them and if possible, avoid them completely through a proactive risk management approach. However, by the same token, by reflecting on her own experiences as well as on DANCING activities and milestones, the PI was able to ensure the smooth completion of all tasks. As a supervisor of the rest of the team members, by reflecting on the experiences and performance of each member, the PI was able to attribute tasks in a way that would play on their strengths, ensuring greater results and individual professional growth.

Team members also benefitted from reflective practice throughout the DANCING project, by learning new skills, assessing their own strengths, identifying areas to be improved, and, overall, reflecting on their past performances and anticipating potential future challenges.

2.5. Mentoring

The PI placed great emphasis on her mentoring role. She conceived this as part of her duties and an opportunity to guide and support the development of early-career researchers and team members. As the scientific leader of the project, the PI fostered a collaborative and intellectually stimulating environment, encouraging innovation, critical thinking, and independent inquiry.

Prof. Delia Ferri also encouraged a mentorship model where senior team members, such as Dr. Ann Leahy, supported early-career researchers – especially at the beginning of their tenure in DANCING. Throughout the life of the project, the PI also supported and organised training, networking opportunities, and provided career development guidance. For example, in collaboration with Dr. Joe Garrihy of the School of Law and Criminology, a bespoke training session on qualitative interviews was organised at the outset to help the team address specific challenges related to WP1. By setting high standards of research integrity and excellence, the PI endeavoured to nurture the next generation of researchers and contribute to the long-term impact of the ERC on the overarching European research environment.

Qualitative Training Presentation in Collaboration with Dr. Joe Garrihy.

2.6. Collaborations

In addition to the various outputs published, both academic works, but also tools dedicated to more general audiences, the DANCING project benefitted greatly from four key collaborations which have contributed to the deployment of WP4 – Tools for Change.

DANCING collaborated with Stopgap Dance Company (Stopgap), an innovative and inclusive dance company based in the United Kingdom (UK). Stopgap created the performance 'Lived Fiction'. This contemporary dance piece embeds accessibility and gives a plastic representation of the new theorisation of cultural diversity. With dance being a powerful tool of non-verbal communication, 'Lived Fiction' was able to reach out to a wide audience. The 'Lived Fiction' premiere included a lively post-show Questions & Answers session with Stopgap as well as the PI who discussed their research collaboration and the creative process behind the piece (Ferri & Leahy, 2024).

James Kelly from Feenish Productions Ltd. produced the documentary for DANCING entitled *Steps to Change: Following the DANCING Project 2020 – 2025*. The filming occurred at different moments throughout the whole duration of the project to capture the most important research challenges, strengths, and findings. The documentary promotes an understanding of the interrelation between culture and disability. This audio-visual representation encompasses all milestones leading to the achievement of the experiential, normative and theoretical objectives of the project. The documentary was shown at the DANCING Final Conference. This was followed by a roundtable at the conference discussing the experience of the documentary and reflecting on its impact. The roundtable participants included: James Kelly as director of the documentary; DANCING's Project Manager, Hilary Hooks; and Monique Dior Jarrett and Lucy Bennett from Stopgap's perspective.

DANCING collaborated with the Accessibility Designer Norbert Croonenberg who created all of DANCING's infographics and cartoons, designed the DANCING photobook, and provided graphics and suggestions for improving the website. Norbert Croonenberg also provided guidance on the design and accessibility of other outputs, notably on the various toolkits developed for WP4 as well as the DANCING Interactive Map showcasing the core tenets of the project in an innovative and interactive way. His work has helped raise awareness of the project, bringing it to a wider audience which would not have been possible otherwise.

Tiziano Pantano, a blind artist from Milan, created the artwork 'Odisseo-Ulysses' for the DANCING project. The artwork consists of two side-by-side panels, one is a collage of paper in colour, and the other is identical but in white so that the artwork, "… *can be appreciated in different ways by diverse people and can be 'experimented' with and touched by people who are blind or have a visual impairment*". This artwork is now showcased in the TSI Building on MU Campus and was officially unveiled at the DANCING Final Conference by PI Prof. Delia Ferri and MU President Prof. Eeva Leinonen.

2.7. The Advisory Board

2.7.1. Composition

The DANCING Advisory Board is composed of six external experts with recognised expertise in the fields addressed by DANCING:

Prof. Anna Lawson, Professor in the School of Law at the University of Leeds, where she is also the Joint Director of the university-wide interdisciplinary Centre for Disability Studies.

Emeritus Prof. Bruno de Witte, Professor of European Union Law at Maastricht University and part-time Professor at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence.

Prof. Laverne Jacobs, Professor of Law at the University of Windsor, where she is also the Founder and Director of the Law, Disability & Social Change Project. She is also elected member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Prof. Eilionóir Flynn, Established Professor at the School of Law and Director of the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (CDLP) at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Emeritus Prof. Mark Priestley, Professor of Disability Policy at the University of Leeds.

Prof. Sarah Whatley, Director of the Centre for Dance Research at Coventry University.

Prof. Laverne Jacobs joined the esteemed DANCING Advisory Board following the untimely passing of friend of the project and former board member Dr. Damjan Tatić in January 2024.

Dr. Damjan Tatić was a founder and associate of the National Organisation of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia, and guest lecturer at the Legal Clinic at the Faculty of Law of University of Belgrade and ERA – Academy of European Law – in Trier. He also served as an expert member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) from 2011 until 2019.

2.7.2. Role and Responsibilities

Upon the request of the PI, the Advisory Board has provided independent scientific feedback on specific outputs or deliverables and provided support on how to maximise the project's findings and dissemination.

The Advisory Board participated in key project meetings and events, including the DANCING Mid-Term Academic Conference in September 2023, the World Premiere of the DANCING-commissioned choreography 'Lived Fiction' in April 2024, and the DANCING Final Conference.

A bespoke meeting with the full DANCING team and the Advisory Board was organised on 12 April 2024 to discuss the interim results and to gather advice on the final phase. The meeting was an important opportunity for Prof. Delia Ferri and the DANCING team to explain the project's progress, and to present the schedule of the final phase. The meeting proffered also

an important opportunity for receiving constructive criticism and feedback, which informed the final phase of the project.

As mentioned, on 19-20 June 2025, the majority of the Advisory Board also attended the DANCING Final Conference at Maynooth University which celebrated the end of the project, and included a documentary screening, presenting the findings of the project highlighting the arts-based research conducted (Stefanović, Ferri & Krolla, 2025).

3. RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

The DANCING project has embraced an interdisciplinary approach to research within the remit of a participatory research strategy, that acknowledges the importance of lived experiences of people with disabilities. In doing so, DANCING rejected tokenistic approaches to participation of persons with disabilities in research. In line with this approach, the PI and all researchers (particularly in WP1) reflected on their own positionality, both individually and as a team. In the arts-based research and through additional artistic collaboration, persons with disabilities have contributed to shape the research in DANCING and worked together with the PI to achieve the core objectives of the project.

Furthermore, the PI has engaged in conversations about authorship, representation, citation practices, and engagement strategies with the team and collaborators. The PI has also actively implemented a collaborative approach involving early-career researchers in core project activities, including data analysis, writing, and coordination tasks. As discussed above, she has supported their participation as part of her broader commitment to inclusive leadership, growth and careful mentoring. As it will be outlined in section 3.2., she has encouraged opportunities for authorship and visibility. She has involved all team members in settings that contribute to their professional development, including the opportunity to speak at conferences. This approach boosted morale and led to multiple peer-reviewed publications.

3.1. Compliance

With regard to the empirical and arts-based research, DANCING has complied with relevant rules and ethical standards, as discussed in the bespoke report on data collection and archiving (Ferri, McDonough & Palladino, 2024).

3.1.1. Research Ethics and Integrity

The PI and all the research team abide by the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, 2023), and its guiding principles:

Reliability, understood as the use of rigorous, well-documented methods and transparent procedures across all research tasks.

Honesty, referring to accuracy and fairness in data collection, analysis, publication, funding declarations, and the communication of limitations.

Respect, which involves recognising participants' rights, cultural contexts, intellectual contributions, and environmental or societal impact.

Accountability, defined as taking responsibility for actions and decisions throughout the research process, both individually and collectively.

3.1.2. Data Protection and Ethics in Data Collection

As detailed in the Qualitative Data Collection and Archiving in the DANCING Project Report (Ferri, McDonough & Palladino, 2024), the project complied with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as well as with the Data Management Plan (Ferri, 2021). Moreover, the project was in compliance with the Maynooth University Research Ethics Policy and with relevant research policies. Explicit and informed consent was sought from all participants. An information sheet and consent form were shared with all participants ahead of the interviews and focus groups conducted within WP1 and WP2. The information sheet detailed the DANCING project's aims. The consent form asked participants whether they consented to take part in the research and whether they agreed to an anonymised version of their transcript being stored for archiving. The information sheet and consent form were also available in various accessible formats.

3.1.3. Commitment to Open Science

DANCING aligns fully with the EU commitment to Open Science as a way to foster transparency, accessibility, and the reuse of knowledge with publications that can be read online, downloaded and printed free of charge and that are accessible to any user.

In line with the Open Science commitment, the PI has shared not only datasets, research outputs, and methods throughout the DANCING project, but she has also aimed to make all stages of the research process as transparent and open as feasible, while respecting anonymity of participants and the GDPR, fostering a more inclusive and equitable scientific community.

DANCING has adopted a pragmatic and structured approach to Open Access (OA) in line with the ERC Guidelines on the Implementation of Open Access, prioritising Gold OA where available. Accepted manuscripts were uploaded on the Maynooth University institutional repository (MURAL). As mentioned above, non-peer reviewed outputs and reports were published in a trusted public archive (Zenodo).

3.1.4. Compliance with EU Rules and Processes

The ERC has a requirement for four interim reports in addition to the final report due after the end of the project. Financial reports were submitted in a timely manner in months 18, 36 and 54. A further technical report was submitted in month 30. All the reports were approved by

the ERC. In conjunction with the PI, the Project Manager has inputted data on a regular basis into the 'continuous reporting' module of the SyGMa portal of the ERC.

Time records have been maintained by the PI and the project team in line with the requirements of the Grant Agreement.

The RDO and School of Law and Criminology offices have supported the PI and the DANCING team in the area of compliance. The RDO provided valuable help as first port of call for queries on relevant ERC requirements and reporting.

3.2. Publication Strategy

To maximise the impact and dissemination of DANCING research findings, in line with the project proposal and the Grant Agreement, the PI implemented a comprehensive publication strategy, one that ensured that DANCING reached a wide academic and non-academic audience and maximised the impact of our findings.

During the life of the DANCING project, different scholarly outputs were prepared to disseminate interim and final findings of different strands of the project. These outputs have been tailored to different aspects of the DANCING research, with several outputs discussing the qualitative research conducted in WP1 and other outputs focusing on EU law aspects. Scholarly outputs entailed primarily peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and books. They also included working papers published in reputed working paper series in law, particularly STALS (Sant'Anna Legal Studies), and academic blog posts. These scholarly outputs were complemented by a series of reports focusing on bespoke organisational, methodological or dissemination aspects or on specific milestones in the project (such as the two main conferences organised within the DANCING project).

3.2.1. Journal Articles

On the basis of a thorough review of journals whose remit is relevant to the DANCING research, the PI identified and prioritised submission to high-impact, peer-reviewed journals with a broad international readership, offering the option of Gold OA. With regard to the latter, the PI availed also of Irish Research e-Library (IReL) agreements where feasible. IReL is a consortium of Irish research libraries, established in 2004 and hosted by MU. It provides participating member institutions with, *inter alia,* access to OA publishing agreements with over twenty publishers, and open research infrastructure. A diversified publication strategy that targeted journals with diverse readership maximised the impact of the DANCING project but also aimed to showcase and make known different facets of the research. Interdisciplinary articles presenting various aspects of the DANCING socio-legal analysis were submitted to generalist journals that provide a forum for interdisciplinary legal studies and offer intellectual

space for cutting edge research. These include, for example, the International Journal of Law in Context and the Journal of Human Rights Practice.

Before submission to a given journal, articles were circulated among colleagues outside the DANCING project for informal feedback. Their feedback was incorporated to strengthen the clarity, rigour, and presentation of the work. 'Critical friends' were acknowledged in the dedicated section, or in footnotes, as appropriate. Their support was key to identify weaknesses, strengthen arguments, and improve the overall quality of the work before formal submission to a journal.

3.2.2. Books

The DANCING project has produced two books – one monograph and one edited collection – under the remit of WP1 and WP2 respectively. The choice of publisher was based on the reputation and appropriateness of the publisher, taking into account the subject matter of the books. Publication ensued the positive outcome of the peer review process.

The monographic work titled '*Dismantling Barriers and Advancing the Right of Persons with Disabilities to Participate in Cultural Life A Socio-Legal Analysis*', co-authored by Prof. Delia Ferri and Dr. Ann Leahy brought together all the findings from the multifaceted research conducted under WP1 and fulfils the 'experiential objective' (i.e. to advance understanding of the barriers to participation in culture, the causes of exclusion of people with disabilities from the cultural domain, the facilitators of participation). The book expanded the reflections conducted within previous articles published within the remit of WP1. The book adopted a socio-legal approach, which placed empirical findings in the context of international human rights law, specifically connecting them to the normative content of Article 30 CRPD. In light of its content, rationale and innovative value, the book was published in the *Routledge Interdisciplinary Disability Studies Series* which includes numerous books from reputed authors in the field of disability studies as well as books authored by disability law scholars. The global reach, prestige and breadth of the series was an important factor in approaching the publisher.

The edited volume titled '*Actors and Roles in EU Disability Law*' co-edited by Prof. Delia Ferri and Ms Eva Sophie Krolla, is one of the outputs of WP2 and constitutes a bespoke deliverable of the project. It evolved from existing collaborations of the PI and ensued from discussion and themes of the DANCING Mid-Term Academic conference. It includes several authors in an academic dialogue that goes beyond the remit of the DANCING project. In that regard, the volume has the ambition to contribute to the consolidation of EU disability law as a distinct field of enquiry. It further aims to support innovative approaches to studying EU law and the process of European integration, and complements from a discrete perspective (that of disability) existing scholarship on actors in EU law. In light of its scope, approach, topicality and novelty, the volume was published in the prestigious *Hart Modern Studies in European*

Law Series which publishes innovative work rooted in doctrinal analysis, but also scholarly books that embrace inter-disciplinary approaches.

Covers of the two DANCING books.

3.2.3. Book Chapters

The PI, often in collaboration with members of the DANCING team, also wrote academic book chapters for bespoke edited collections. These book chapters, peer-reviewed by the editors and by other academics, offered the unique opportunity to situate DANCING research within broader scholarly debates and themes. Writing for edited collections further allowed the PI to make DANCING known to peers working on disability or cultural policies or EU law. The PI, by contributing to reputable edited collections, also fostered connections and boosted the impact of the DANCING project.

3.2.4. Other Scholarly Outputs

DANCING working papers intended to disseminate interim legal research, as well as wider desk-based research that supported other outputs and project activities. Working papers aimed to stimulate discussion, facilitate feedback on specific legal issues investigated in the project, but also to allow for quick dissemination of interim research findings.

Blog posts were used to disseminate research findings, highlight specific issues, make evident the way in which DANCING addressed new developments and enhance the visibility of researchers and their work, potentially leading to further opportunities for publication and collaboration.

While non-peer-reviewed *stricto sensu,* these outputs were all reviewed by the PI and another member of the DANCING team before submission as well as received comments from editors.

3.2.5. Approach to Authorship

Ensuring accurate authorship recognition in research publications gives credit and informs readers (UK Research Integrity Office, 2017). In this regard, Prof. Delia Ferri embraced a collaborative approach to authorship that safeguarded recognition of all contributions and supported early-career researchers in the DANCING team. Such an approach aimed to ensure inclusive, fair, and transparent authorship, acknowledging both intellectual and practical contributions. When the publication includes different authors, each author contributed to drafting part of the work or revisited it critically, adding content.

Recognising that visibility in authorship and solo authorship plays a role in shaping academic trajectories, and notwithstanding her conceptual input and contribution in all publications related to the project, the PI supported some solo authorship by early-career researchers within the project for selected outputs.

The project followed reputable guidelines for its authorship strategy, notably the *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Recommendations* which recommends that authorship should be based on the following four criteria (ICMJE, 2025):

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work, OR the acquisition, analysis, OR interpretation of data for the work;
- AND Drafting the work or reviewing it critically for important intellectual content;
- AND Final approval of the version to be published;
- AND Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

If certain contributors do not meet all 4 of the above criteria for authorship, then the team ensures they are at least properly acknowledged in the paper.

3.3. Dissemination

Sharing the work done under DANCING effectively and highlighting the challenges that people with disabilities still face when trying to participate in Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) were priorities in the DANCING dissemination strategy. The PI, in conjunction with the DANCING team, participated in several international conferences and other events. They also created bespoke non-academic outputs for OPDs and cultural organisations and organised different events within the DANCING project. In doing so, they made sure to consider who the target audience of each event or dissemination tool would be and to adapt the format, content, and

language of the output to best reach the desired audience and encourage them to create change.

The PI aimed to reach civil society to raise awareness in the general public thereby encouraging change, particularly to increase better inclusivity of people with disabilities within CCS. The DANCING team also connected with people with disabilities directly as they are the primary constituency concerned by the research. To do so, the team ensured that the DANCING outputs had accessible versions, either through subtitles on videos, descriptions on pictures, easy-to-read versions and audio narrated versions of reports and of some academic papers. Additionally, to reach general audiences, DANCING was mindful of the language and concepts used. While the research has mostly been socio-legal, the DANCING team tried to ensure that key notions were accessible for all. The team did this, first, by using the terminology in line with the EU and with the CRPD. This was further achieved by including in each report and toolkit, introductory sections which would highlight what the DANCING project stood for, and explain to non-legal audiences the key legal tenets driving the project.

The PI and the DANCING team have furthermore promoted the project, its events, findings and all academic and non-academic outputs through designated Twitter/X and LinkedIn accounts, as well as through institutional press releases and news published on the School of Law and Criminology and ALL Institute websites. The School of Law and Criminology also included notices about DANCING milestones and events in their social media and bespoke research newsletters.

3.3.1. International Conferences and DANCING Events

3.3.1.1. International Conferences

The PI and the team presented preliminary results at major national and international conferences. The choice of different conferences and venues allowed the PI and the team to present DANCING interim results or specific parts of the research to different epistemic communities and different cohorts of academics. Other events allowed for reaching non-academic audiences. These presentations are listed on the DANCING website.

3.3.1.2. DANCING Conferences

Other key aspects of the project were the two conferences organised by the project, namely the DANCING Mid-Term Academic Conference, and the DANCING Final Conference.

The DANCING Mid-Term Academic Conference which took place on 4 September 2023 aimed to mark the halfway point of the project. The conference had two primary objectives, namely taking stock of the research that had been conducted up to that point and situating that research within broader scholarly debates (Krolla & Ferri, 2023).

The DANCING Final Conference on 19-20 June 2025 marked the end of the five years of research conducted under DANCING. It aimed to reflect on the key achievements of the project, but also to explore future directions for research, policy, and practice related to EU disability law and the right to cultural participation of persons with disabilities (Stefanović, Ferri & Krolla, 2025). Some bespoke external outputs on the Final Conference were also created to support further dissemination of the findings and the overall project to previously untapped audiences. One of the outputs was published in English and the other one in Italian broadening the potential readership.

DANCING team together with Accessibility Designer Norbert Croonenberg.

For both conferences, the DANCING team had to show great collaboration, teamwork and organisational skills. The PI was in charge of the setting the driving vision of the conferences, notably by drafting the programmes, defining the attendance lists, reaching out to the relevant contacts necessary to make the conferences happen, but also by making the closing decisions in all relevant regards. The PI was also in close collaboration with other team members such as the Project Manager who would notably be in charge of all budget-related questions, as well as the rest of the researchers in charge of ensuring the smooth organisation and plain sailings of the conferences by keeping in touch with attendees, booking travels and accommodations, and more. The DANCING team also worked with the School of Law and Criminology which provided support and guidance.

3.3.1.3. DANCING Events

In the course of the project, the DANCING team also organised various different events to foster engagement with the academic community and stakeholders outside the format of conferences. These events were thematically more focused to delve deeper into specific aspects of the DANCING research or relevant on-going research and work by peers, colleagues and collaborators. The DANCING Academic Conversation (DAC) series featured leading scholars who gave a bespoke presentation of 20 minutes followed by a moderated conversation between attendees and the speaker. The DAC events were usually held in hybrid format with participants attending online and in-person on MU campus. This facilitated many to attend from abroad and contributed to establishing lasting connections across Europe. Similarly, the succinct format of no more than 60 minutes in total supported attendance as it only required a limited time commitment of both speakers and attendees. Moreover, the conversational format encouraged insightful and engaged discussions in a safe space that contributed to the exchange of ideas and inspired and refined on-going research in the DANCING project.

Other events were stakeholder-oriented and engaged DANCING collaborators in the form of colloquia or workshops. These events drew diverse attendance from the academic community, students, CCS professionals and others with an interest or lived experience. As such they were valuable venues for bridging academic research with real-life experiences and practical applications of legal norms and developments.

All events organised by the DANCING team were accessible and produced relevant posters, flyers, invitations and practical information in various accessible formats. Events that were held in-person only were hosted in accessible venues on MU campus. Where applicable, the DANCING team also provided reasonable accommodation for speakers and participants after close communication with the person(s) concerned to ensure everyone could freely and independently join, contribute to and engage in DANCING events.

3.3.2. Reports and Other Outputs

In addition to publishing various academic outputs, the DANCING team also made sure to convey the project achievements and findings in accessible, reader-friendly formats. All reports and other outputs underwent several rounds of internal reviews and consulting external reviewers that are experts in the field to maintaining a high-quality standard of work thanks to multidisciplinary perspectives and a holistic approach. In particular once the draft prepared by the PI and members of the DANCING team was finalised, it was reviewed by other team members and colleagues in the School of Law and Criminology. Once internal feedback was addressed, the reports were also shared with external trusted collaborators knowledgeable on the matters at stake to share their own insights as well. Finally, once all

feedback was implemented, the output underwent a final review and was published on the project website, Zenodo, and MURAL.

As of the time of writing, DANCING published five reports respectively titled 'The ERC DANCING Mid-Term Academic Conference', 'Role and Findings of Arts-based Research in the DANCING Project '…Usually in the world it is the other way around…', 'Qualitative Data Collection and Archiving in the DANCING Project', 'The ERC DANCING WP4 Tools for Change', and 'The ERC DANCING Final Conference'. This is the sixth report that will be published. Following the publication of this present report on management and organisation, DANCING will also release a final report looking back on the 5 year-journey of the project. Overall, these reports have shed light on certain angles of the DANCING research in a new and accessible way for the general public.

Secondly, DANCING developed innovative tools dedicated to catered audiences under WP4, notably the DANCING Toolkit for Cultural Organisations, the DANCING Resource List, and the DANCING Policy Brief. These tools translate academic findings into practical tools and reach specific stakeholders, such as cultural organisations and policymakers. The Toolkit aims to support cultural organisations in their 'inclusivity journey' and in encouraging greater diversity in their cultural spaces; the Resource List is non-exhaustive and showcases existing initiatives improving the cultural participation of people with disabilities; finally, the Policy Brief addresses policymakers both at EU and national levels to support them in developing policies enabling a better systematic inclusion of people with disabilities in CCS.

3.4. Inclusive Communication

DANCING has implemented inclusive communication in order to reach diverse audiences effectively. A communications strategy was devised at the beginning of the project, encompassing academic dissemination, internal communications, and awareness raising. All public and internal documents used a terminology informed by the CRPD. Gender-neutral forms (e.g. "they/them" instead of "he/she") were used consistently where appropriate. The PI and team prepared reports and other deliverables in multiple formats, including formats not geared to scholarly audiences as well as communication materials aimed at being understandable by non-specialists.

As mentioned above, the Project Manager had primary responsibility for accessibility. The use of accessible formatting (alt text, headings, contrast, readable fonts) was implemented across all dissemination activities and on the website and all graphic content on the website comes with a text description or other accessibility features. The Project Manager used the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 for best practice such that the website was designed with accessibility in mind from the start as developed in the 'ERC DANCING WP4 Tools for Change' report. Indeed, as the Project Manager of DANCING was responsible for the website, she has carried out periodic accessibility checks and has frequently updated the

website, taking into account the most recent studies, guidelines, and best practices on web accessibility (Hooks, 2024). She has also collaborated with Accessibility Designer Norbert Croonenberg on the two major revamping processes of the website to enhance accessibility, effective communication and to ensure an elegant aesthetic for the website.

3.5. Other Dissemination Outputs

In the remit of DANCING's fourth, cross-cutting WP, titled 'Tools for Change', various means and outputs were created to reach the broadest audience possible, and especially people with disabilities. These outputs are all showcased on the DANCING website. While the DANCING WP4 report delves into the dissemination impact of these outputs, this section aims to highlight the collaboration process and quality control that DANCING employed each step of the way.

3.5.1. Website

The DANCING project's website serves as the main outlet and archive which showcases the achievements and outputs of the project, and raises awareness on the right to cultural participation of persons with disabilities. To be accessible to the broadest audience, content on the website comes with an accessible version whenever possible. While the website will not be further updated once the project ends on 31 August 2025, it will stay live and available as a valuable archive of resources advancing the state of cultural rights for people with disabilities.

To ensure the best performance of the website, it is frequently updated to include the latest progress of the research, but also is regularly monitored for any bugs which might come from specific programme updates, which could randomly change the formatting of the website and its content. The Project Manager Ms Hilary Hooks was the key person in charge of website maintenance and updates but all members of the DANCING team provided support in order to maintain high quality standards.

As discussed in the DANCING WP4 report, the PI led two main revamps of the website which were carried out by the Project Manager in conjunction with the DANCING team and the Accessibility Designer. The objectives and ideas of each revamp were defined by the PI to reflect her vision and the progress of the project, while Ms Hilary Hooks and the MU Information Technology (IT) services focused on the programming perspective. Accessibility Designer Norbert Croonenberg provided insights on how to best uphold accessibility while improving the aesthetic appeal of the website.

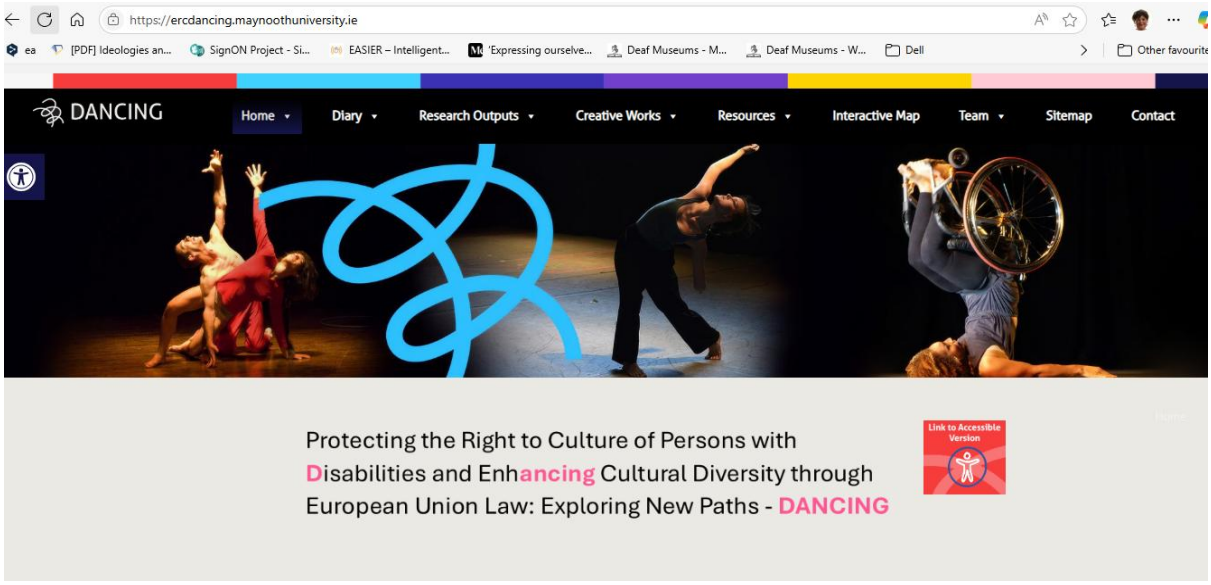


Image of the Home Page of the DANCING website.

3.5.2. Social Media Strategy

An obvious way to best disseminate all the outputs and achievements shared on the website is through a strong social media presence.

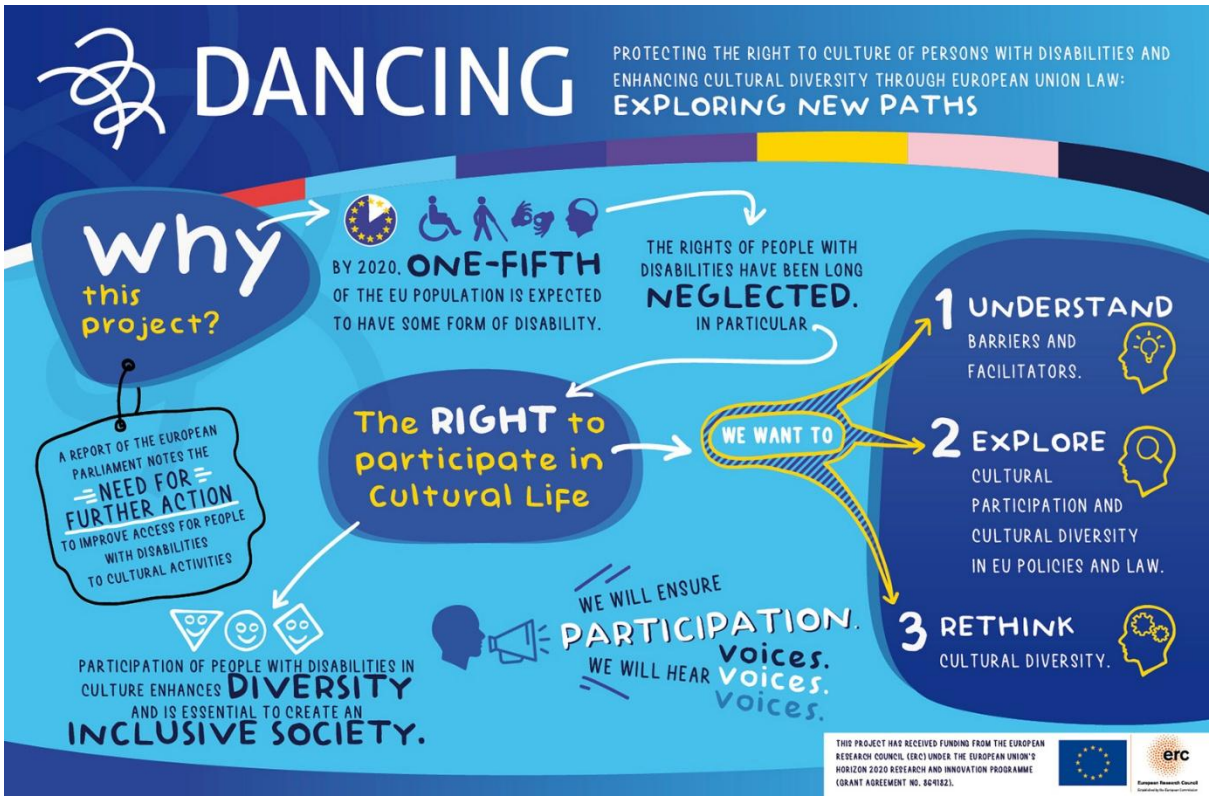
In 2020, a Twitter/X profile was set up to reach out to a range of professional audiences, including academics, policymakers, OPDs and civil society to share project milestones and key outputs. In the final year of the project, DANCING also deployed a LinkedIn page to enhance impact and diversify our social media portfolio. Furthermore, as the DANCING project is based within the ALL Institute and the School of Law and Criminology, the DANCING team have engaged regularly with the LinkedIn pages of these entities. Our Twitter/X page is managed by the PI and the Project Manager, and the LinkedIn page is managed by Ms Hilary Hooks and Research Assistant Ms Alessia Palladino. The aim is to be active on social media and make a dedicated post for most if not all new outputs.

Active social media participation allowed the team to highlight and raise awareness of project activities. For example, for the DANCING Final Conference, the visuals of the LinkedIn page increased by 264.9% and the number of single visitors increased by 331.8% in the weeks preceding and following the event. At the time of this report, the Twitter/X account has collected 596 followers, and the LinkedIn page has 164 followers. As the project is close to wrapping up, DANCING's last tweet on X/Twitter was on 7 July announcing that the page would no longer be active. The post encouraged viewers to continue following the updates of the project directly on the LinkedIn page, which will similarly be discontinued after the project concludes.

3.5.3. Cartoons, Infographics & Interactive Map

In an effort to raise awareness of the project through outputs accessible to a diverse range of people, the PI has commissioned several graphic design based tools. These outputs include the DANCING cartoons, designed as a primary way to raise awareness of the research progress and of the project's milestones; the DANCING infographics, which have been deployed to raise awareness about key goals, methods and findings of the project as well as translating academic publications graphically and in easy and appealing formats; and finally, the Interactive Map, which enables user interactivity with DANCING research and content, meaning individuals can navigate through the research, zoom in and out and click on integrated links.

These outputs reflect the vision of the PI and her commitment to open and accessible research. The PI identified and defined the aims of these outputs and the content to be showcased. The text was prepared in conjunction with one or more team members and further discussed with the Accessibility Designer Norbert Croonenberg. All outputs underwent one or more rounds of revisions and a final quality check by the PI.



Infographic 'Why this project?' designed by Norbert Croonenberg Accessibility Design. Ideas and text by PI Prof. Delia Ferri.

3.5.4. Videos and Documentary

As mentioned, the DANCING project utilised various and diverse tools to showcase research processes, methods and findings, such as videos, both in short format and the end-of-project documentary, which were produced in accessible formats to ensure access to all. These videos have been created by Feenish Productions Ltd. and director James Kelly.

Commissioned by DANCING, these videos are born from the PI's vision on innovative ways to showcase the work that was carried out within the project. After shooting these videos, Feenish Productions Ltd. shared a first cut of the videos with the PI which was usually followed by conversations on details to be changed, moments to highlight, and reviews to ensure that the trajectory and message of the videos embodied the PI's request. Other team members were also involved in this process to provide feedback and review final details. Finally, the videos were shared with all who have consented and appeared in the footage to get their approval before the videos were published on the website.

3.6. Maximising Impact of the Project

The purpose of the impact strategy was that of maximising the academic and societal impact of the project and was linked to the publication and dissemination of the project expounded above. Further, the PI built relationships with other projects, research networks and groups from the outset, inviting them to contribute to publications, events and dissemination activities.

From an academic perspective and besides achieving its research goals (experiential, normative and theoretical), DANCING has made three main overarching contributions: epistemic, methodological, and legal/normative. DANCING contributed to bridging different semantics and epistemic communities and has given a better understanding of how law interacts with social realities in relation to disability and culture. DANCING also contributed to advance non-doctrinal methodological approaches that combine social science research with traditional legal methods. Furthermore, DANCING contributed significantly to the building of EU disability law as stand-alone academic discipline and advanced our knowledge of how disability sits within the process of EU integration.

From a practical and societal point of view, DANCING policy recommendations and innovative awareness-raising tools can prove valuable to EU institutions, national governments, and civil society actors aiming to enhance accessibility in the cultural sector. Furthermore, the artistic outputs of the project served as powerful communication tools to illustrate the lived experiences of people with disabilities, furthering public engagement and policy relevance.

DANCING's overall impact is indicated by the large number of outputs. Notably, several outputs are currently forthcoming, or being finalised and/ or under peer review and will come to fruition in the very last stretch of the project or in the post-project phase. However, to

showcase the impact of the project, it seems worth to highlight that, as of the time of writing this report, the output of the project include (but are not limited to):

- 29 Academic Publications
- 5 Reports
- 26 Blogposts
- 78 Conference Panels
- 5 Videos including the DANCING Documentary
- 6 Infographics
- 16 Cartoons all combined in a Cartoon Booklet
- 4 Policy Contributions
- 3 Toolkits
- 1 Interactive Map

All of these outputs are displayed across over 100 pages that constitute the DANCING website, and are promoted upon publication through DANCING's social media pages, specifically on X and LinkedIn.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The careful organisation and management of the ERC DANCING Project has been central to achieving its ambitious research goals. This report has outlined the key structures, processes, and principles that have underpinned our approach to collaboration and coordination.

The DANCING project's organisation reflects a commitment to transparency and inclusivity. As the project reaches its conclusion, this report aims to serve as a tool to support other interdisciplinary research projects within the ERC community and other PIs in their efforts.

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