



Brussels, 16th October 2019

Ref: EDF 019-59

To: Margaritis Schinas
European Commission Vice-President-designate
for Protecting our European Way of Life

Subject: Request for meeting to discuss your work on the rights of persons with disabilities in the coming mandate.

Dear Vice-President-designate Schinas,

I am writing to you as both President of the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the National Confederation of Disabled People Greece (ESAEA) to, first and foremost, congratulate you on your nomination as Vice-President-designate for Protecting our European Way of Life.

EDF is an umbrella organisation defending the interests of over 80 million Europeans with disabilities. Run by persons with disabilities and their families, EDF is a strong, united voice of the disability movement in Europe, coordinating advocacy on the rights of all persons with disabilities at the EU level and supporting our members, representative organisations of persons with disabilities at national level and European level.

EDF's vision of Europe is a Europe where equality and human rights are guaranteed for all. While progress has been made and the EU and all its Member States have committed to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities by ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), persons with disabilities are far more likely to face discrimination, exclusion and poverty than the general population. Women and girls with disabilities face even great discrimination than men

European Disability Forum, Square de Meeus 35, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Contact: catherine.naughton@edf-feeph.org

with disabilities, as they face intersectional and multiple forms of discrimination based on their gender and disability. Refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities have been left unidentified when arriving to Europe and as a result do not receive the necessary support to claim asylum and to be included in society on an equal basis with others.

We are therefore writing to you to request a meeting to discuss the role that you can play as Vice-President for Protecting our European Way of Life in working towards fulfilling the rights of all persons with disabilities in Europe, and in supporting Commissioner for Equality Dalli as the Commission's CRPD focal point.

We would also like to take this opportunity to discuss the importance of assigning the CRPD focal point to DG Justice, the services for which Commissioner for Equality is responsible, as it was before 2014. In this way, you will recognize that the rights of persons with disabilities is a human rights issue, and not merely an employment one (as the CRPD focal point is currently under DG Employment). It will allow to mainstream the rights of persons with disabilities in DG Justice's work on inclusion and equality, alongside its other equality units. Finally, DG Justice has the horizontal oversight needed to adequately coordinate the implementation of the CRPD across the EU institutions. You can take the initiative to ensure that the CRPD focal point has the necessary mandate, human and financial resources to do so.

The meeting would also be an opportunity for you and your team to outline what support you would like to see from EDF to help you achieve the best results in your work, and how we can collaborate going forward in the interest of all persons with disabilities.

We would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Yannis Vardakastanis

President

European Disability Forum

National Confederation of Disabled People Greece

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