

Mr Johan ten Geuzendam
European Commission
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (EMPL/G3)
200 rue de la Loi (Rue Joseph II 54, 1/58)
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 04 January 2010

Re: Autism-Europe's contribution to the consultation on the new disability strategy 2010-2020

Dear Mr ten Geuzendam,

We are writing to provide you with Autism-Europe's contribution in the framework of the consultation on the new disability strategy 2010-2020. Please note that we have chosen not to answer to the online consultation partly due to the lack of accessibility of the electronic format.

Moreover, Autism-Europe considers that it is essential to give disability policies a clear direction and a framework for the future. In order to achieve these objectives, we strongly support the proposal of a **European Disability Pact** put forward by the European Disability Forum.

Indeed the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) by the European Communities creates a new political context which implies more responsibilities for the European Commission in terms of measures targeting persons with disabilities and mainstreaming.

The review of the Lisbon Strategy in 2010 also implies a European coordinated action including strategies on employment, social protection, education, growth, competitiveness, and research and e-inclusion policies.

Systematic consideration of the needs of persons with disabilities in relevant European policies must be planned. It presupposes that targets are defined, that coordination is ensured and that follow-up is carried out. The Disability Pact is an instrument which integrates this in one process.

Disability needs to be considered in European policies on equal terms with other issues – thus the Disability Pact is about mainstreaming human rights of persons

with disabilities with the objective of breaking down barriers to participation in society.

In addition, Autism-Europe would like to outline the following priorities identified for persons with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD):

- **Combat exclusion and poverty of persons with ASD and their families** by structuring effective education and health systems which are equipped to deal with the special needs of persons with ASD in term of life-long education and habilitation;

- **Improve the qualification of the staff** providing education and care to persons with ASD through structured training on specific education/habilitation strategies for ASD to be included in the University curricula of health and education professionals;

- **Create new high quality jobs** in the field of life-long education and care for persons with ASD in order to facilitate the transition from school system to work , both in sheltered setting or open labor market, depending on the individual needs and skills (case managers, job coaches);

- **Strengthen education** of children and adults with ASD through the adoption of evidence-based educational strategies meeting the special needs of persons with ASD, according to up-to-date, sound research studies in the field of neurosciences and cognitive functioning in ASD;

- **Support research programmes in the field of ASD** in order to enhance the efficacy of education and habilitation strategies for persons with ASD and foster their inclusion and active participation in society.

We are at your disposal should you need further information on these various issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evelyne Friedel', with a horizontal line underneath.

Evelyne Friedel
President of Autism-Europe