



Brussels, 30 September 2019


## Disability impacts all areas, and so should the Commission service in charge of it

Dear President-elect Von Der Leyen,  
Vice-President designate Schinas,  
Commissioner-designate Dalli,

It is a sign of clear progress that there is a Commissioner-designate for Equality with an assigned responsibility for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is with concern, however, that we see that this is not backed up by a change in the Commission services. If the current structure is not modified, the Unit in charge of disability issues, under the supervision of Commissioner for Equality, will not be able to adequately fulfil its crucial role in mainstreaming the obligations enshrined in the Convention across all the relevant Commission's policies.

The full implementation of the Convention touches upon many different Commission responsibilities and policies: recruitment and selection of EU officials, internal market and digital market competences, transport, research and development, EU funds, international cooperation, and interinstitutional coordination, among many others. This is why the Unit in charge of disability needs to move to the **Secretariat-General**. It should, furthermore, be fully dedicated to disability issues. This move will ensure that the Unit has the horizontal perspective necessary to ensure the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities, and the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which the EU is a State Party.

Such a move is not unprecedented. In the Commission mandate 2009-2014, the Unit moved from DG Employment to DG Justice along with other Commission services tackling equality policies. The move was reversed in the mandate 2014-2019.



Moreover, this Unit should also be **properly funded and staffed**, if the EU is to realise its commitment to improve the lives of over 80 million Europeans with disabilities.

We therefore call on the elected Commission to establish a Unit fully dedicated to the realisation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the Secretariat-General, as soon as possible. We further ask that the Commission implements the necessary changes to ensure that they can fulfil its mandate adequately. It is an essential move to ensure that EU policies do not leave persons with disabilities behind.

## **Signatories**

MEP Jaroslaw Duda - European People's Party - Poland

MEP Dragoş Pîslaru – Renew Europe – Romania

MEP Maite pagazaurtundúa – Renew Europe – Spain

MEP Kim van Sparrentak – Greens/EFA - Netherlands

MEP Alexis Georgoulis – GUE/NGL - Greece

MEP Sira Rego – GUE/NGL - Spain

MEP Manu Pineda – GUE/NGL - Spain

MEP Rosanna Conte- Identity & Democracy – Italy

## **Organisations**

European Disability Forum

European Union of the Deaf

Autism Europe

European Dyslexia Association

European Federation of Hard of Hearing People

International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus

European Network on Independent Living

European Blind Union

Inclusion Europe