

Brussels, 19 May 2020

## Statement PETI Committee, Petition n°470/2020

Dear members of the Committee,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present our petition to protect the rights of people with intellectual disabilities during and after the Coronavirus emergency.

I will be speaking in the name of Inclusion Europe, the European movement of people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

The reason for our petition is to draw your attention to the several cases of national laws and practices incompatible with European legislation and the CRPD.

It is important not only right now to address the discrimination that people with disabilities are subjected to, but also to learn lessons for potential future emergency situations.

First, we would like the EU to investigate.

Throughout the health crisis, our members from have reported cases of discrimination and violations of their rights such as discriminatory triage guidelines, medical discrimination in hospitals or cases where, when called, ambulances would not even come for people with disabilities.

If sometimes there were no express guidelines, health care workers chose not to care for people with disabilities, just because they had a disability.

These decisions are discriminatory and based on the thought that the life of a person with a disability would not be worth anyway.

We believe the EU should conduct investigations on these abusive procedures and behaviours that led to denial of care, to ensure compensation for families and individuals and condemn such practices.

It is time that disability in Europe is no longer seen from a purely medical perspective and that health professionals stop judging the value of a life based on discriminatory prejudices.

As for residential institutions, which were terrible hot beds for infection, we would like the EU to investigate and provide concrete information on what happened.

For instance, investigate whether people received adequate protection, the adequate healthcare when sick and to provide data comparing the death rates from the same period of the last 3 years and now.

We would also like to have the death rates of people with disabilities, disaggregated by type of disability, age and gender so that targeted support measures can be developed to prevent the situation of persons with disabilities worsening.

Secondly, we would like the EU to allocate means and funds to prevent further harm to people with disabilities.

As many recovery plans and solutions are being drafted to save our economies, to guarantee access to public services, to re-open schools and so on, we ask that these plans not only take into account people with disabilities, but to specifically address their particular needs by introducing an earmark EU funding from the European Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative.

The EU should ensure that people with disabilities do not get further isolated during the exit phase; because as some may not be able to practice physical distancing, governments might take the easy route and recommend that people with intellectual disabilities stay home. This would create more segregation.

Funds should specifically be allocated to community-based disability support services and services supporting them in emergency and health settings to ensure the same health and safety protections as other.

The Commission should develop guidelines to ensure that EU countries focus on particularly vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and their families when using those funds.

For instance, guidelines to ensure that children with intellectual disabilities get back to school first when they re-open.

EU must also ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities are not the first ones be left out of employment, by adopting for instance minimum income measures to take into account the disability-related costs.

Thank you for your attention.