

Brussels, 8th April 2020

To the Attention of

President of the European Council Charles Michel

President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen

Copy:

Commissioner for Equality Helena Dalli,

Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit

Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms Elisa Ferreira

Subject: Request to take immediate actions to mobilise CRII & EU Funds to guarantee the continuity of care and support services in Europe during COVID-19 pandemic

Dear President of the European Council Charles Michel

Dear President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen,

Multiple international organisations, such as the [World Health Organisation](#), the [United Nations](#) and the [Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights](#), as well as the [European Disability Forum](#) and the [European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities](#) (EASPD) have highlighted the threat to the human rights of persons with disabilities and other persons with support needs due to COVID-19, in particular due to difficulties in accessing care and support services.

The closure of thousands of care and support services across Europe impacts the living conditions of millions of persons with disabilities in

Europe who benefit directly from care and support services, their families and caregivers, as well as the 11 million professionals who work in these services who are at risk of losing their jobs.

The primary reason for the closing of many care and support services - often by not-for-profit and user-led organisations - is the lack of guaranteed funding by public authorities, including in the use of EU funds such as the European Social Fund. Due to the pandemic, many services have swiftly adapted to ensure care and support within the current circumstances and rules (social distancing, etc.). The fact that this adaptation was not foreseen in their pre-crisis contracts with authorities (and authorities are not providing flexibility) is leading to uncertainty and lack of access to the needed funding; thus putting at risk the continuity of care and support services.

As such, we call on the European Commission to take new actions to mobilise essential investments and resources to guarantee the continuity of care and support services, in line with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII and CRII +) must therefore include specific guidance to help Member States ensure such resources, including the European Social Fund, which are used to support persons with disabilities and other persons with support needs.

We also recommend targeted efforts to ensure that both front-line professionals in care and support and the users they support have access to personal protective equipment thus enabling them to work safely.

We thank you in advance for your consideration

Signatories

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MEP Alex Agius Saliba (S&D/Malta)

MEP Alfred Sant (S&D/Malta)

MEP Alice Kuhnke (Greens-EFA/Sweden)

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