



Ylva Johansson  
Commissioner for Home Affairs

Brussels, March xx

Dear Commissioner,

RE: Call for urgent and sustained action to support asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees from the Ukraine war

The European Disability Forum expresses its most urgent call for urgent and sustained action to bring peace in our region and ensure the protection and safety of people in the war on Ukraine. We address you as Commissioner for Home Affairs to take measures to ensure the protection and safety of children and adults with disabilities arriving in the EU as asylum seekers, migrants and refugees from the war in Ukraine.

There are 2.7 million persons with disabilities registered in Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of people are fleeing this war and children and adults with disabilities are arriving every day seeking safety.

It is highly important that the EU and its Member States provide a coordinated and inclusive response to this refugee inflow. The European Union as a regional organisation and all its Member States have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and therefore EU and Member States' institutions and policies are bound by the obligations enshrined in this Convention, in particular in Article 11 on the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

We call for the EU and Member States to:

- **Provide urgent, accessible, humanitarian attention to refugees with disabilities** and their families.
- Ensure that plans and programmes relating to this inflow of refugees are **gender and disability responsive** and grounded in human rights-based principles.
- Ensure that **arriving asylum-seekers and migrants are assessed and information are collected** so their most urgent needs can be identified and fulfilled. This must include assessment of and support to people with pre-existing disabilities and those who acquired a disability because of wound or harm from the war.
- **Ensure all services open to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are accessible to those with disabilities**, including shelters, medical care and the overall asylum-seeking procedures.
- **Allocate additional funding to cope with this refugee crisis** and consider the rights and needs of asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities in all EU, Member States and UN agencies' actions, and in particular through the EU Asylum Agency.
- **Ensure humanitarian, human rights and organisations of persons with disabilities have access to hotspots, shelters and refugee camps** to provide assistance and monitor the human rights situations of refugees with disabilities.
- **Build the capacity of representative organisations of persons with disabilities and all partners** (including organisations of women with disabilities, LGBTI and child rights and women's rights organisations) to implement an inclusive response and monitor adequately the rights of asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities and their access to humanitarian assistance.
- **Work in cooperation with organisations representing persons with disabilities** both to develop and implement policies but also to provide advice, support and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities, including by ensuring sufficient funding to do this work.

The European Disability Forum stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure that refugees with disabilities arriving from the Ukraine war are provided with adequate immediate and long-term support. We hope for a swift end to this war.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ioannis Vardakastanis', written in a cursive style.

Ioannis VARDAKASTANIS, President, European Disability Forum

*Contact: EDF Director catherine.naughton@edf-feph.org*