



EUROPEAN NETWORK ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

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Mr. Herman Van Rompuy
Permanent Representation of Belgium
Rue de la Loi, 61 - 63
1040
Brussels

Dear Mr. Van Rompuy,

My name is Jamie Bolling and I am the Executive Director of the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL), a European wide network of people with disabilities. I have the pleasure to congratulate you for your new appointment as President of the Council of the European Union, a post filled with challenges but also opportunities and expectations from the European Citizens.

ENIL represents a forum of all people with disabilities, independent living organizations and their non-disabled allies on the issues of independent living and the independent living movement.

ENIL and its member organizations believe that full citizenship and human rights for people with disabilities will only be achieved through increasing awareness, challenging traditional services and positive debate throughout Europe and internationally.

One of ENIL's role is to constantly remind our leaders of the challenges that people with disabilities face across the world in the form of discrimination, segregation and often abuse; even now in Europe people with disabilities are prevented from going to school and in finding employment because of the barriers our society is unwilling to remove.

The recent Strasbourg Freedom Drive 2009 was an outstanding achievement where more than 400 people from the Independent Movement from all over Europe gathered at the European Parliament and made ourselves heard; an event that culminated with our president Bente Skansgård handing over the ENIL demands to the current President of the European Parliament, Mr. Jerzy Buzek.

One of our demands is the ratification and implementation within the European organs of the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities; this is an essential demand because it can, amongst many things, help to lead to a Europe with community living and adequate Personal Assistance programs allowing for us to live independently across Europe.

We thank you for taking your time to read this letter and to remember the importance of our cause when promoting important EU issues at hand.

Yours sincerely,

Jamie Bolling
ENIL Executive Director

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