

The President

Ms Dolors MONTSERRAT, MEP
Chair of the Committee on Petitions
SPINELLI 10E101
BRUSSELS

D 305790 27.05.2020

Dear Ms Montserrat,
Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter informing me about the problems experienced by persons with disabilities living in the European Union.

I take note in particular of the concerns raised by Mr Wheatley on behalf of the Union of the Deaf to allow the submission of petitions in national sign languages.

As public services, websites of European Parliament are to be addressed to all citizens of European Union. Web accessibility allows everyone, including people with disabilities, to perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the Internet.

As rightly pointed out by the petitioner, EU institutions have the obligation to be front-runners in the area of accessibility in Europe.

I acknowledged the reply conveyed by the Director General of INTE. In addition, my cabinet has been in touch with DG ITEC, that is keen to provide a suitable solution to enhance the accessibility of the petitions portal for petitions expressed in national sign language. This solution would allow petitioners to start submitting petitions in all the EU's national sign languages immediately, efficiently, and ad no or negligible cost to petitioners. This practical solution would also allow DG LINC's interpreters to access these Petitions instantly and seamlessly from anywhere in the world.

Furthermore, in order to increase the accessibility of European Parliament websites and web applications to all audiences, the project "EP Web Accessibility" has been created as part of the Strategic Execution Framework under DG COMM. The aim of the project is to increase the quality of European Parliament websites and web applications by ensuring that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to access the content and services offered by the European Parliament and that they enjoy their right to participation in public and political life. The expected outcomes of the project are:

- More accessible websites and mobile applications;
- Harmonised web accessibility policy definition for the European Parliament;
- Set up of a continuous accessibility improvement process;
- Compliance with applicable regulations and standards.

An inter DGs "Web Accessibility Working Group" has been set up and is responsible among others for identifying the needs of expertise, organising the acquisition of tools and external consultancy services, defining the strategy of the compliance process, setting-up trainings and providing support for all teams concerned, coordinating and monitoring the implementation phases.

In order to be able to react as soon as possible to the petitioner concerned and to the concerns raised by EDF related to the web accessibility of Parliament's website, I will forward both documents to the "Web accessibility working group" and ask them to analyse all concerns raised as well as to provide a holistic approach on the accessibility of the EP webportal in general and the PETI committee portal in particular.

I count that our institution will continue to lead by example and will address at best all identified concerns raised by persons with disabilities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Maria SASSOLI". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Maria SASSOLI

CC: Mr Klaus WELLE, Secretary-General