***WRITTEN SUBMISSION:*** *On the occasion of its 28th session, scheduled to be held in Geneva from 6 to 24 March 2023, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will hold a day of general discussion on 7 and 8 March 2023 with a regional focus on persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.*

Regarding the general comments and recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, we the Berlin-based Human Rights Defenders e.V. association, would like to make the following observations and recommendations, especially with regard to the reporting of inhuman and discriminatory, humiliating and degrading treatment of persons with disabilities in Greece and taking necessary preventive measures.

As you know, Greece is one of the starting point of the refugee flow to Europe and the country of entry into European Schengen Area. This is why millions of people cross into Greece every year and then disperse through Greece to other European countries.

Asylum-seekers with disabilities, the elderly and pregnant women who require specialized health or rehabilitation services or assistive devices are at primary risk. Their greatest need is for prompt access to preventive treatment, medical treatment, and care services due to their vulnerable health situation.

Among the refugees arriving in Greece there are hundreds of children and adults with disabilities. Due to this huge burden and responsibility on Greece, it is not possible for the Greek government and state to deal with this problem alone and to be sufficient for all refugees or migrants with disabilities. Therefore, it is imperative that the United Nations support and funding for refugees is directed to Greece and that the Greek state is supported.

The disabilities and handicaps of migrants arriving in Greece should be recorded and a detailed guide should be prepared on non-governmental and governmental organizations in Greece to which people with disabilities in their families can apply.

Professional guidance and information guides on accessing such medical support and treatment for migrants with disabilities should be made available in all camps and should not be left to the will or arbitrariness of individuals in the camps. Even access to information on where to obtain necessary treatment is vital for refugees. This would allow people with disabilities to have direct access to relevant organizations without having to waste time and energy.

Staff in camps and reception centers should also be trained on disability rights and the rights of persons with disabilities in Greece. In this way, the staff can be able to guide persons with disabilities in the right way.

Funds should be allocated for concrete projects on psychological and social support services needed by asylum seekers and other migrants. Migrants seeking refuge in Greece may suffer from trauma, anxiety or depression, either in themselves or their family members, as a result of violence in their home countries, dangerous journeys, family fragmentation, uncertainty and insecurity in the camps. Psychological and social rehabilitation opportunities should be increased in the camps. Factors such as existing health problems, malnutrition, difficulty in accessing medication and medical treatment cause even greater traumatic consequences for people with disabilities.

The main problems faced by persons with disabilities are hygiene and access to bathroom and toilet facilities. Concrete support should be provided to refugee camps to provide physical facilities in these areas, which is crucial to prevent the spread of epidemics in camps and to prevent people with disabilities from getting sick more frequently and intensively. Projects to build disabled toilets and bathrooms, and disabled ramps to access these facilities should be supported.

Project support and assistance should be provided to volunteer organizations in Greece that help migrants with disabilities. In particular, funds should be allocated by the United Nations to non-governmental organizations for medical medicines, medical supplies, orthopedic support materials, medical support tools and devices, wheelchairs, crutches, prosthesis support.

Chronic physical and mental health conditions such as chronic kidney disease, the need for dialysis, diabetes, assistive devices for the hearing and visually impaired, epilepsy, etc., require medication and are often managed with simple painkillers.

Refugees with disabilities arriving in Greece should be integrated into the Greek health system as soon as possible and necessary referrals should be made to prevent further deterioration in the health status of refugees with disabilities. Disabled refugees, who are disadvantaged and vulnerable in terms of access and access to medical services available to the Greek population, should be provided with the necessary facilities.

Civil society organizations and volunteers should be provided with concrete support for access and transportation to refugee camps.

The health facilities in refugee camps in Greece are far from meeting the needs of people with disabilities. When even normally healthy migrants fall ill, they are treated with simple painkillers and cold medicines.

Providing access to rehabilitation services and early treatment opportunities for children with disabilities is vital in preventing further deterioration in the health of people with disabilities. Generally, due to health problems in their bodies, getting sick easily, weak immune systems, inadequate nutrition, problems in accessing medication, one problem after another lead to more and more problems.

As NGOs working on Human Rights, we are all aware of the heavy burden on Greece. We therefore urge that United Nations funds be directed to the region to support the Greek health system and NGOs to support vulnerable and disadvantaged migrants with disabilities.