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With support of the member organizations:



## 200 organizations call for protection against discrimination of disabled persons in German migration policy

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In response to the drastic legislative restrictions in German migration law, the Berlin Center for Independent Living of Disabled Persons (BZSL) in the Berlin Network for Vulnerable Refugees (BNS) has initiated a nationwide appeal (so called Brandbrief "fire letter") with the support of its umbrella organization of the Independent Living Centers in Germany ISL. Within just under two weeks, over 270 signatures were collected from various organizations and individuals with more signatures being accepted later. The "fire letter" with its political proposals was submitted to the responsible ministers and senators for integration at the 19th Conference of Integration Ministers on March 15, 2024.

The initiative is based on the recent restrictions of the Asylum Seekers Benefits Act and Citizenship Act, which the Bundesrat approved on February 2, 2024. "In particular, the rights and concerns of refugees and migrants with disabilities (including chronic illnesses, mental health needs, older persons with care needs) and their caring and assisting relatives were disregarded. The denial of their necessary need for social benefits, which is essential for creating an equal basis with others, **violates their physical integrity and democratic capacity**," says BZSL advisor Gina Schmitz.

The BNS offices are experiencing a particularly dramatic situation for **refugee children and young persons with disabilities**, who will now be exposed to a blatant lack of support for three years: "We have been experiencing the life-threatening extent of the previous restrictions for years – however, the current tightening has developed such a concerning dynamic that immediate action is needed in order not to jeopardize the basic and human right to health and socio-cultural inclusion. We have therefore requested a written statement from the Conference of Integration Ministers, which we have now received" says Nicolay Büttner, responsible for political work and advocacy for the BNS network.

Despite these alarming developments, BZSL and BNS are encouraged by the widespread support for the letter: "It is the **first alliance of its kind to be launched from a self-advocacy and grassroots level**. We are particularly thrilled that so many self-advocacy organizations in the field of disability and (forced) migration have joined forces," says self-advocator Badran Ramadan.

However, other actors such as human rights organizations, welfare organizations, social service providers, occupational associations, medical and psychotherapeutic, legal and academic actors as well as other social organizations at federal level (45), state level (81), regional level (75) and as individuals (150) have also shown solidarity and contributed to a **diverse alliance of 350 actors**.

"We hope that this commitment will now contribute to mobilizing politics and administration and send a long-term signal for recognizing and combating the experiences of discrimination of the so often invisible and forgotten group of refugees and migrants with disabilities," adds Gina Schmitz.

### Responsible according to press law (V. i. S. d. P.)

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