



EUROPEAN UNION

Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

Ambassador

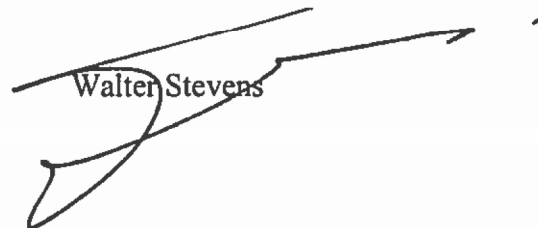
Geneva, 9 October 2019

Subject: European Commission reply to a joint communication by three Special Procedure mandate-holders related to the publication of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)

Dear Ms Balbin-Chamorro,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith a reply by the Director General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, Ms Paraskevi Michou to the letter of 21 August by Ms Catalina Devandas-Aguilar, UN SR on the rights of persons with disabilities, Mr Dainius Puras, UN SR on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and Ms Fionnuala Ni Aolain, UN SR on the protection and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, related to the publication of a Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) paper on understanding the mental health disorders pathway leading to violent extremism.

Should you have any question on this letter, please contact Ms Jana Micova (jana.micova@eeas.europa.eu) at the Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations in Geneva.


Walter Stevens

Annex: EC letter

Ms Beatriz Balbin-Chamorro – Head of the Special Procedures Branch
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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL MIGRATION and HOME AFFAIRS

The Director-General

Brussels,

Ms Catalina Devandas-Aguilar
Special Rapporteur on the rights of
persons with disabilities

Subject: Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health; and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Mrs Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities,
Mr Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health,
Mrs Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 August 2019 relating to the publication of a Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) paper entitled "Understanding the mental health disorders pathway leading to violent extremism." I read with attention the concerns you express and would like to provide you with the following clarifications.

The RAN is a network of practitioners established by the Commission in 2011. It is organised in thematic working groups, which bring together experts and practitioners with different professional backgrounds from all Member States of the European Union. In 2015 a working group was set up to bring together practitioners focusing on raising awareness within the health and social care sector. The work program is proposed by the RAN and approved by the Commission. The *Strategic Orientations on a coordinated EU approach to prevention of radicalisation for 2019*¹ stated that the overall objective of the RAN regarding mental health issues is to raise awareness and contribute to a better understanding of manipulation strategies and their effect on vulnerable people.

The paper to which you refer reports on a meeting of the working group reflecting on the views and experiences of psychiatrists and psychologists who attended the meeting to exchange on challenges they face.

The main purpose of the meeting and its ex post paper is to raise awareness among practitioners so that they make assessments in full knowledge of mental health specific potential vulnerabilities that are or can be exploited by extremist or terrorist groups and that interventions with radicalised people or offenders take these factors adequately into account.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetailDoc&id=38729&no=1>

As you rightly point out, there is no empirical evidence showing that people with mental health issues are at increased risk of committing offences. To the extent that some formulations in the paper might have given a different impression, I hope that the above explanations have clarified any possible misunderstanding.

Please remain reassured that the European Commission is very vigilant to avoid any stigmatisation of persons with mental health disabilities.

Yours faithfully,

Paraskevi MICHOU
[*E-signed*]