

To: President Barack H. Obama
The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,
Washington, DC 20500. United States of America

24 July 2009

Dear Mr. President

Subject: The United States' Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

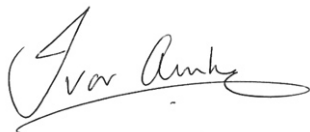
Let me briefly introduce our organisation. The *European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) asbl*, registered in Brussels, Belgium, is a non-profit association of organisations and individuals from the private, public and NGO sectors. Our mission is to make European tourism destinations, products and services accessible to all visitors and to help promote Accessible Tourism around the world.

We are writing to you, after learning of your intention to sign, today, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities on behalf of the United States. **ENAT** would like to offer its sincere congratulations to you, to your Administration and the American people on this notable occasion.

The UN Convention and its additional Protocol present the world with a vision and a promise to make all aspects of life accessible to people with disabilities. **Article 30** of the Convention specifically addresses the rights of people with disabilities to have equal access to leisure, including participation in tourism activities. In the European Union it is estimated that about 27% of the population or over 127 million people require good access when travelling, including people with disabilities, persons with long-standing health problems, older people, and the families, friends and assistants who accompany them on holidays and business trips. Yet in Europe and around the globe, tourist information, transport, infrastructure and services are not yet sufficiently accessible to allow all tourists to travel unhindered. Notably, experience shows that where measures are taken to ensure good accessibility for people with disabilities, everyone benefits in terms of safety, convenience and ease-of-use.

Recognising the importance of the USA's example in promoting disabled access during the past two decades, Europe - as a co-signatory of the UN Declaration - looks forward to working together with US public, private and non-governmental organisations in pursuit of our shared goals, making the USA and the world accessible for all tourists.

Yours sincerely,



Managing Director

Working together to make tourism in Europe accessible for all

ENAT asbl.

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