

# "From Stagnation to Innovation: A New Approach to an Inclusive Social Domain"



## **"Bridging the Gap Between People with Disabilities and the Labor Market."**

January 1, 2025

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

After **six years** of intensive research, I have come to the conclusion that the social domain has been stagnating for more than **30 years**, despite significant investments and numerous policy initiatives. This stagnation is the result of deep-seated structural problems, such as the lack of cooperation between organizations, the excessive self-interest in the struggle for subsidies, and the fragmentation that hinders innovation. Subsidies, originally intended to stimulate cooperation and innovation, in practice actually lead to competition and fragmentation.

What is particularly worrying is that countless initiatives in the social domain have arisen from companies and individuals who have no direct experience of what it means to live with a disability. As a result, they often lack the insight and empathy needed to create a realistic and inclusive approach. This lack of perspective is also reflected in the development of software and technology that often fails to meet the actual limitations and needs of vulnerable groups. Consequently, **the "Forgotten 1.6 billion People"** – people with disabilities worldwide – remain insufficiently served and represented.

Moreover, the absence of a cohesive, **pan-European strategy** has perpetuated inefficiencies and barriers. Fragmented efforts across member states have not only failed to scale impactful solutions but have also fostered inequality in access and opportunity for people with disabilities. This systemic stagnation calls for bold and innovative thinking.

My research shows that this vicious circle requires a fundamental revision of our policy and approach. That is why I propose a pan-European strategy focused on cooperation, innovation, and true inclusion. This model combines culture-specific, tailor-made solutions, a reform of the subsidy system, and the active involvement of experts by experience. Only by putting the people concerned at the center can we develop solutions that truly meet their needs and contribute to an inclusive society.

In addition to policy reforms, we must prioritize the integration of advanced technologies that enhance accessibility and inclusion. Artificial intelligence, when developed ethically and inclusively, holds immense potential to bridge the gap between technology and human needs. However, we must address biases and design flaws to ensure equitable access for all users.

During presentation, I will not only share the most important insights from my research but also outline my vision on how we can break through the barriers that have hindered the social domain for decades. This vision emphasizes the synergy between digital innovation, inclusive practices, and sustainable partnerships among EU member states. **Together, we can create a social domain that truly works: one that is sustainable, innovative, and fair for everyone.**