Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to express my appreciation and thank the European Commission for the opportunity to be here. I am here also from my own decision and I’m enjoying it. I like to speak. But I am here from exact reason - to witness in the name of all children with disability and all the children who do not have possibility to self-advocate.

17 years ago I was born with SB a H. Many children with the same disability still don’t survive in Europe because of bad healthcare, lack of knowledge and no support for their families.

I can sit here because my parents decided to give me an opportunity to be born and also thanks to good healthcare and the best available education. As I can see - it is not a rule for every child with disability.

Today is the anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention has made a difference in the daily life of millions of children around the world, including children with disabilities, like me. However many children with disability still do not have their rights accepted.

They rise in institutional care – it is a horrible place for children, and I’m very angry that it still happens in Europe, in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Many times during my life, decisions were made by adults on my behalf. Can you even imagine anyone deciding about you? What you can do or what you cannot?

Albert Einstein once said: “If we judge fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

I have to agree because many times it happened to me that someone has focused on my weaknesses, not my strengths. It doesn´t require much effort to explore my disability – it is evident. Can you explore my abilities? Can you explore abilities of other children with disabilities? Please, do that. To do that, you have to make me and all other children with disabilities your partners – we have a strong desire to be taken seriously.

Twenty-five years after the Convention was passed we still need your support to make sure children can live better, happier, and healthier.

Thank you for your attention!