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(Translation from the original text in French)

Ms Camille Galliard-Minier

Minister responsible for Autonomy and Persons with Disabilities

Strasbourg, 28 August 2026

Dear Minister,

I would like to express my sincere thanks for the meeting you granted me on 16 June during my visit to France.

I appreciate the interest you showed on this occasion in the protection of the human rights of older persons residing in homes for dependent older persons (EHPADs). Our discussion helped me to deepen my understanding of the public policies implemented in this area.

I would like to continue our discussions and inform you of a number of matters which caught my attention. I welcome the recognition of the need to remedy the structural shortcomings in this sector and the measures that have been devised, among other things, to strengthen the oversight of EHPADs. During my visits to EHPADs in both the public and the private for-profit sectors and in discussions with professionals working in the sector, I was also impressed by the dedication of the staff concerned at all levels and their desire to respect the dignity, well-being and human rights of the people in their care. The full achievement of these requirements seems however to be hindered by a series of challenges, on which I could observe that there was broad consensus.

Firstly, the human and financial resources allocated to EHPADs are described by all stakeholders as largely insufficient. Understaffing and high staff turnover levels, which lead to a deterioration in working and living conditions, call for measures, particularly ones to improve staff/resident ratios as promptly as possible. In this connection, the authorities could draw on the recommendations of the Defender of Rights and the opinions expressed on this issue by care, support and management staff, departmental councils and residents' and families' associations. I believe that it would be appropriate to allocate the necessary financial resources for the recruitment of more professionals and for their initial and ongoing training. It may also be useful to consider measures to encourage staff retention.

During my on-site visits and working meetings with various stakeholders in the sector, my attention was drawn to the disrepair of some of the facilities, their cramped conditions and/or their lack of adaptation to climate change. It therefore appears that a financial effort will be required to address these issues as well. As I indicated in the [statement](#) published following my visit, the welcome emphasis on support for home care and community-based care should go hand in hand with a guarantee that the necessary resources are allocated to residential facilities to ensure conditions that respect the rights and dignity of older persons, including those who cannot benefit from care at home.

Secondly, the issue of inspections and assessments of EHPADs remains central to ensuring that residents' rights are fully respected and that the living and working conditions in these establishments are satisfactory. I note that significant efforts have been made by state authorities and departmental councils in the area of inspections since the *Orpéa* scandal. However, it is clear from the discussions during my visit that these inspections would benefit from taking place more frequently and, in more cases, unannounced. It also appears desirable to strengthen these inspections, on the one hand through increased co-operation between regional health authorities and departmental councils in this area, and on the other hand by broadening the scope of inspections to include – beyond technical and financial aspects – residents' quality of life, and respect for their rights and for internal democracy.

Instruments such as the Social Life Councils, care agreements and the charter of residents' rights should be allowed to fully play their roles in this regard. Several of the people I spoke with also expressed reservations about the external evaluations of the quality of EHPADs carried out by accredited evaluation bodies. It seems that the examination by these bodies of the documents forwarded in advance by establishments and their on-site visits, which are not conducted unannounced, do not always make it possible to gain a full picture of the actual living and working conditions in EHPADs.

Lastly, it would be important to establish effective means of combating ageism and guaranteeing that older persons' loss of autonomy does not reduce them to mere objects of care with no consideration for their status as full rights holders. In this regard, it is essential for older persons to be consulted and involved in decisions affecting them.

I look forward to continuing my constructive dialogue with you on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Michael O'Flaherty