

## Web meeting

Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018

10:30 – 12:30 CET

## EU Flash Policy Webinar

*Report*

### Participants

Gry Nielsen	Arbeid & Inkludering i NHO Service (Work & Inclusion)
Marleen Schiffer	Berufsförderungswerk Köln gGmbH, BFW Köln
Raúl Rebollo	Fundación INTRAS
Renzo Andrich	Fondazione Don Carlo Gnocchi
Laura Jones	EPR
Alicia Gomez Campos	EPR
Romane Vanhakendover	EPR

### Summary of the Webinar

- Main goal of the Webinar: to disseminate information to EPR members on the EU funding programmes post-2020, 2018 European Commission' Country-Specific Recommendations and obtain feedback from EPR members to respond to the long-term unemployment public consultation launched by the European Commission.

The European elections are coming next year and new funding programme proposals are being discussed by the different bodies governing the European Union. What will be the future focus of Europe and how will changes affect social services across Europe? Laura Jones, as Secretary General; Alicia Gomez Campos, as Policy Officer and Romane Vanhakendover, a student doing an internship at EPR, presented different parts of the content to participants.

- **EU funding programmes post-2020**

The discussion was structured around selected EU funding programmes of particular interest to EPR members' work, i.e. Erasmus +, Horizon Europe (new programme for previous Horizon 2020), Rights and Values, Digital Europe and ESF+ (new programme for previous ESF). Changes concerning the structure, budget and nature of the previous programmes were addressed. General thoughts on the changes that are

welcomed or that represent a challenge were previously identified and presented to EPR members. A dedicated document including a brief explanation of the key points of the new funding programmes can be consulted on our website.

✓ EPR welcomes...

- The net increase in funding in most programmes.
- The references made to social inclusion in different programmes.
- The simplification and more direct management from the EU, which permits single entry points for applicants, removing obstacles for funding.
- The 25% of the Management Strand within the ESF+ fund dedicated to social inclusion priorities.

× EPR finds the following challenges...

- The lack of clear alignment of merged funding programmes with the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- The market-driven approach and over-focus on employment for social inclusion.
- People with disabilities are not systematically included in the target groups.
- As a result of merging the Health programme within the European Social Fund, reference to 'health care' is broadly used. Clear references to 'social care' and 'social services' need to be included.

➤ Suggestions from EPR and partners

- 30% should be dedicated to social inclusion priorities in the Management Strand of the ESF+.
- A closer alignment of objectives with the Social Pillar should be achieved.
- A holistic approach on social inclusion issues should be adopted.
- People with disabilities should be systematically specified as a group of interest rather than to be under the more general umbrella of 'disadvantaged groups'.
- A clear delimitation and clear mentions of social care, social services and health care.
- Beneficiaries should be involved in the process of the operational design of the programmes to contribute to making the management of the funds easier.

• **European Semester Spring Package: 2018 Country-Specific Recommendations**

A brief reminder about the European Semester and Europe 2020 was presented to EPR members leading to a presentation of the European Semester "spring package", recently published and containing the 2018 Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs). A discussion shed light on the CSRs directly concerning the countries of webinar participants. These were presented (see the presentation for more information) and a discussion with participants followed.

Input was given with regards to novelties applied on this years' CSRs after the proclamation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Concrete recommendations have been given this year on the following topics:

- Housing, Child poverty, Long-Term Care (hardly addressed by national governments and only from a cost perspective).
- ✓ CSRs have now built on the European Pillar of Social Rights, a number of them reflect the priorities and principles of the Pillar. Social issues are gaining ground: they represented 50% of the 2017 recommendations and this year they represent 59% of the recommendations.
- × A weaker point is the focus on increasing employment and activation while quality of employment is not mentioned.

• **Long-term unemployment**

The webinar included a session of interactive questions with the participants related to the European Commission's public consultation on the measures agreed by all EU heads of government in the European Council on this topic. The recommendation focuses on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market. The consultation will offer insights into the impact of the recommendation and commitments

by national governments and ultimately envision possible directions for future actions to support long-term unemployed people.

Questions about the role of social services and employers were touched upon, and the benefits and/or challenges of integrating concepts such as in-depth individual assessments and guidance and Job Integration Agreements were also debated on the basis of those questions.

- The EPR Secretariat will put together a joint response to the consultation based on input received from EPR members.

### Future steps and moving forward

- EPR will continue to work together with the Social Platform and Social Services Europe on the funding programmes proposals, addressing the challenges and pushing for some adjustments beneficial for social service providers to be taken into account.
- Elections 2019 Your vision for Europe: a survey put together by the Social Platform will be sent to members to address questions such as ‘how do local and national not-for-profit organisations working in the social field see the European Union?’ and what are their main priorities and agendas.
- Accessibility Act (September 2018): monitor the process and inform members about any development of interest
- Develop an Employment paper focusing on people with disabilities.
- Focus the [Skills paper](#) on trends and digital skills.
- Gather input from EPR members for the public consultation on long-term unemployment. (end July).