



Estonian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union



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EESTI PUUETEGA INIMESTE KODA
THE ESTONIAN CHAMBER OF DISABLED PEOPLE



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Structural and investment Funds and post 2020 Cohesion Policy

Document for information and discussion

Purpose

- Update Board members on the recent development about European Structural and Investment Funds and the future Cohesion Policy.
- Share information among EDF members on how they have been involved in European projects.
- EDF members to propose key demands and messages for EDF campaigning on the future Cohesion Policy (i.e. Structural Funds) and related regulations.

Questions to members

- Have you been involved in EU projects in your country? What type of projects? (trainings, employment, independent living projects) How was accessibility and reasonable accommodation taken into consideration?
- Would you like to share any information on structural funds in your countries? Or following your participation in monitoring committees or in expert meetings?
- Do you have additional recommendations than the ones listed in Annex I? In particular with regards to the following questions: What should be funded by the next Cohesion Policy? What is working and what should be changed?

State of play and next steps

The end of 2017 is a crucial moment for the European structural and investment funds: on one hand national authorities are called to report on how they have been using the Funds until now, including what actions have been taken to promote accessibility of persons with disabilities; on the other hand, European institutions are working on the future regulations and are discussing how much money the EU should invest on Cohesion Policy.

EDF is continuously monitoring the implementation of the partnership principle and the ex-ante conditionalities within the European Structured Dialogue group of experts and of the Social Platform task force on the Funds. We actively contributed to the



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Social Platform recommendations on the Structural Funds. To fulfill its role to inform the European Commission of irregularity, EDF members can alert the secretariat every time a problem arises in their country. EDF is very active in the European Expert Group on deinstitutionalization and other actors are collecting data and advocating for the implementation of the funds at this regard. EDF is part of the Structural Funds Watch project elased by the University of Galway with the aim to monitor use of Funds for community living. A report has been prepared and it will be launched on the 22 November at the European Parliament.

EDF campaign on ESIFs

EDF should enter the debate on the future Cohesion Policy with clear demands, based on its members' direct experience in using the Funds, highlighting positive elements to maintain in the future and calling for stronger provisions to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and the CRPD further.

In July, we met with Commissioner Cretu for Regional Development and we presented her our first recommendations developed in consultation with the EDF expert group on the Funds (see annex I). We will use the meeting with Commissioner Cretu as a starting point for our advocacy in the upcoming months. And the recommendations in the annex as a basis for our political demands.

In order to build a solid case for EU Funds to be used to finance implementation of the CRPD and promote the rights of persons with disabilities where national financial resources are not sufficient, we will

- Organise a meeting with experts to draft EDF demands for the future Cohesion Policy
- Meet with European Commission officials working on the future regulations
- Regular consult Email expert group on European Structural and Investment Funds
- Create an online observatory on the use of the Funds
- Explore synergies and collaboration with other partners active in this area
- Continuously engage within the EEG group on transition from institutional to community based care.



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- Continuously engage within the Social Platform task force on ESIFs
- Actively participate in the European Structured Dialogue group of experts with the European Commission
- Support to members actions in their countries and transmission of related information to the European Commission.



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Annex I EDF Recommendations

EDF calls for:

1. The European Union should not reduce cohesion policy budget in Multiannual Financial Framework.
2. keep ex-ante conditionalities: The General ex-ante conditionality on “disability” should be re-designed. Among prerequisites should be included the following:
 - a) a certification mechanism for the accessibility of deliverables with the participation of DPOs, b) the establishment of national legislation for accessibility of infrastructure and services (conventional and electronic) according to the UNCRPD provisions.
3. Keep the partnership principle and the code of conduct on partnerships
4. strengthening of provisions regarding technical assistance for DPOs
5. Keep the general principle promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including that accessibility for persons with disabilities shall be taken into account throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.
6. Keep accessibility as a transversal provision, defining accessibility requirements accordingly to the Accessibility Act, without limiting the scope of the Funds to the scope of the Act.
7. In every annual report, a specific reference to the progress which has been made in implementing the criterion of accessibility and the principle of non-discrimination should be included. (This should be obligatory). A special reference to the accessibility of information-communication activities should be added.
8. Develop meaningful indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, to monitor use of the funds
9. Keep promotion of deinstitutionalisation and prevent use of the funds for segregating services.
10. A reference to Community Led Local Development, territorial investments and disability should be added, with specific focus on accessibility.
11. European Commission should play an active role in monitoring implementation of ex ante conditionalities, disability related provisions, including non discrimination, accessibility, and involvement of DPOs.