socialplatform

May 18, 2012

Re: Social Platform call to uphold the general ex-ante conditionalities under Annex IV of the Commission's proposal for the common provisions on the Structural Funds

Dear Mr. van Nistelrooij and Ms. Krehl,

As Rapporteurs for the Commission's proposal for a Regulation on the common provisions on the Structural Funds, we sent you our proposed amendments on March 30, 2012. We now address you with a specific concern regarding the current Council discussions to delete the ex-ante conditionality from the Structural Funds (Annex IV).

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 46 pan-European networks of NGOs, We campaign to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives.

We call on the Council/Parliament to uphold the General Ex-Ante Conditionality in the Annex IV of the proposal on the General regulation COM (2011) 615, in particular:

- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty
  - uphold the inclusion of "measures for the shift from residential to community-based care"
- Anti-discrimination
- Gender equality
- Disability

Why?

- **The ex-ante conditionalities allow for a process which ensures that the objectives of the Structural Funds are achieved by the beneficiaries and respected in coherence with the EU Treaties and legal frameworks.**

- **The general ex-ante plays a central role in bringing the EU closer to the Europe 2020 goals by supporting the impact of the Structural Funds on employment, education and social inclusion.** The EU Structural Funds are capable of activating the full participation of the most vulnerable people living in Europe, in particular those at risk of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.

- **The general ex-ante on anti-discrimination, gender equality and disability can help member states to comply with EU commitments on the;**

  - **Principles of the Lisbon Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights** to *eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women*, as well as to *combat discrimination*[1]. The EU and the majority of member states are also party to the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** which requires an effective implementation

  - **Headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy;** by investing in diversity and equality which can be a driving force leading to economic development, growth and social cohesion

[1] as recognized in Article 2 of the Treaty on EU, Article 8, 10, 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, and Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights

- **Uphold the inclusion of "measures for the shift from residential to community-based care" to** as residential settings can sometimes be segregating, deny the users' fundamental right to self-determination, and can have a negative impact on their self-confidence and autonomy[2]. It is also a more costly form of care service provision as it will prolong the time people require support[3]. During the Current and past Structural Funds programming periods it has been shown that an appropriate combined use of the ERDF and the ESF can play an important role in supporting member states' efforts in moving from institutional to community-based care ('deinstitutionalization') and in extension to reach the social inclusion objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Social Platform support the call by

- **Our members EWL, EDF, EAPN, ENAR and others** (see their letter; *Important provisions for social cohesion, economic growth employment and poverty reduction under threat in Council discussions on the Structural Funds legislative package for 2014-2020*)
- **The European Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care (EEG)** (see their letter: *Parliament and Council of the European Union have a duty to support community care*)

We trust that you will give these issues your utmost attention and include concerns in your report.

Yours sincerely,



Conny Reuter
President



Pierre Baussand
Director

[2] Our member AGE Platform Europe has developed a *European Charter of the rights and responsibilities of older people in need of long-term care and assistance*
[3] FEANTSA, *Empowering ways of working,* September 2009