

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Brussels, 9 Septembre 2016**

# Time for the EU Investment Plan to do more for social services

EASPD organised in the European Parliament (EP) the seminar "[Implementation of the European Fund for Strategic Investment: unlocking investment for social services](#)" [8-09-2016]. During the Seminar participants discussed how to ensure that EFSI can contribute significantly to social inclusion in Europe, in particular through investment in high-quality social services.

The European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) aims to mobilise over EUR 300 billion of private investment in the real economy in the next few years. After one year implementation, the EIB claims that social infrastructure accounts for 4% of EFSI expenditure. According to research made by EASPD, this percentage primarily includes investment into hospitals and social housing projects, with little evidence of sufficient investment into social services.

Mr **Luk Zelderloo**, EASPD Secretary General, stressed that *"the social sector is in need of substantial investment due to the rising demand for quality care and support services throughout Europe"*. *"Most service providers find it difficult to get access to private funding, loans and bank guarantees"*, he added.

Ms **Romana Tomc**, host and member of the European Parliament, highlighted that *"the main aim of EFSI should be to create growth, a dynamic labour market and well-being for EU citizens. There is a lot of demand for investment in social services. There is also money available with the banks. We now need to find ways of bringing them together"*. She then called on EFSI to be a relevant tool to do so.

Mr **Thomas Bignal**, EASPD Policy Officer, stressed the need to *"modernise social services by investing not only in the development of community-based infrastructure but also in the training of staff"*. He presented three recommendations that have arisen from the EASPD study "[Unlocking the EFSI for social services](#)" to help unlock EFSI investment into social services: (1) better targeting instruments to sector's needs and capacity; (2) creating national/regional platforms to bring relevant stakeholders together and (3) the further inclusion of social services experts in EFSI procedures to better assess the quality of projects.

In addition, speakers stressed the importance to build coalitions and networks between small and large social service providers to attract private investors. The representative from the banking sector pointed out that building on the capacity of service providers to understand and work with private financing is necessary if investment is to be unlocked.

During the second panel, participants addressed the issue of monitoring and assessing the use of the fund and effectiveness of the mechanism. In that sense, Mr **Georgi Pirinski**, Member of the European Parliament, stressed that *“there is a clear and urgent need first to introduce strict public accountability for the operations of EFSI in general and regarding the social services sector in particular. This is imperative given the severe needs for such investment and the fact that in this case EFSI is operating with resources provided by the EU budget”*.

All these messages come at an important time, only one week before Jean-Claude Juncker’s state of the union speech in front of the European Parliament [14 Sep] as President of the European Commission; as well as at the beginning of talks to extend EFSI beyond 2018.

### Related documents

- [EASPD Study: Unlocking the EFSI for Social Services](#)
- EASPD State of Play Briefing on EFSI and Social Services in [English](#) / in [French](#)
- [Photo gallery of the seminar](#)
- [Video gallery](#) and [Presentations](#).

### Note to editors

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities is a non-profit European umbrella organization, established in 1996, and currently representing over 12,000 social and health services for persons with disabilities. EASPD advocates effective and high-quality disability-related services in the field of education, employment and individualised support, in line with the UN CRPD principles, which could bring benefits not only to persons with disabilities, but to society as a whole.

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