

11 March 2020

Priorities for EU Response to COVID-19

regarding threat to Social Service provision (NACE Code 87-88)

- 1. Staffing Challenges, leading to eventual closure/freezing of formal care services**
 - Managing continuous payment of salaries to current and possible additional staff and experienced/skilled volunteers (those working and those unable to work – sick/in quarantine) and ensuring safe working conditions and labour conditions are met.
- 2. Shortages of Protective Equipment and Medicine in Care Services**
 - Many care workers lacking key protective equipment or having to buy their own equipment (masks, gloves, etc); leading to unsafe working practices.
 - Difficulties in procuring crucial medicine for people in care or vulnerable situations.
- 3. Lack of guidance to service providers on how to deal with emergency crisis a difficulties in coordination of expertise and response to specific challenges in social care and support**
 - Risk of leaving specificities of social care and support behind, leading to social emergency, in particular for vulnerable persons (older persons, persons with disabilities, etc).
 - (Risk of) lack of coordination between national authorities, regional and local authorities and the many small(er) private providers of care and support.
 - Lack of guidance, expertise and knowhow for service providers in dealing with emergency/precarious situations.
- 4. Particular challenges in countries/areas with weaker social protection systems.**
- 5. Importance of facilitating access to health and information for persons with disabilities and elderly people**, due to lack of knowledge in responding to needs of specific types of disabilities (for instance, down syndrome, alzheimer, etc.)

We strongly suggest:

- **Flexibility in Stability and Growth & State Aid**, used to cover costs linked to wages and running costs of social care and support service provision (and other elements).
- **Corona Response Investment Initiative** should include targeting of measures dedicated to ensure the continuous (and safe) provision of social care and

support provision across Europe, in particular regarding protective equipment and medicine in social care and support and ensuring access to health for persons with disabilities and older persons (for instance: accessibility, reasonable accommodation, easy-to-read, etc).

- **Access to EU funds** should be facilitated and less burdensome, including/especially unused EU funds to date.
- **Creation of knowledge centre** providing specific expertise, exchange of knowhow and professionals (trained experts in emergency responses, etc).
- **Creation of Exchange Platform for models of good practice** regarding how to support persons with specific support needs and elderly, how to support professionals, how to ensure continuity of the service, how to facilitate exchange of management and coordination procedures, how to ensure accessibility to health services and information for all (easy-to-read, accessibility, trained expertise, etc).
- **Continuous engagement with European Organisations representing social service providers and user organisations.**

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