

Social Services Europe

How do Social Service Providers contribute to Sustainable Growth?

EASPD Secretary General and Social Services Europe (SSE) President, Luk Zelderloo intervened in a Public Hearing organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to share the service providers' views on the upcoming EU policy agenda for Social Enterprise

On 3rd September, EASPD Secretary General and SSE President, Luk Zelderloo, took part in a **Public Hearing organised by the EESC**. The event aimed at handing over policy recommendations for the next European Commission and the newly elected European Parliament to set-up a more appropriate framework for the Social Enterprise's sector.

Social innovation, the cornerstone of social enterprises

EASPD Secretary General pointed out the importance of ensuring that "resources allocated to social innovation are used **in the best way possible to make progress towards the Europe 2020 targets**". This would only be possible if social service providers "are sufficiently supported through access to funding streams and capacity building schemes under EU financial programmes such as the forthcoming EUPSCI programme or the [Structural Funds](#)". Indeed, this would be crucial to ensure the future of social enterprises, while creating both new jobs and effective responses to social needs and upcoming challenges.

Employment and working conditions

As a result of demographic and societal trends, it is clear that the demand for social services is growing and will continue to do so over the next few years and even decades. Even though, the social services sector has a **huge job creation potential**, the European policy framework has still to be developed in order to fully take advantage of this situation. Enhanced working conditions can improve the quality of the services and also unlock the job creation potential of the social services sector. In this regard, Luk recommended to "establish the right political, legal and financial framework to ensure that the Social and Health Services sector maximises its potential to create millions of jobs and help fight poverty and social exclusion in Europe".

TTIP: a threat to the quality of social services in Europe

Regarding the *Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)*, Luk Zelderloo highlighted that "**opening up access to Public Procurement transnationally –beyond EU borders- could be hugely damaging to the quality of social and health services**". He also emphasised the need to remove the Investor-to-State Dispute Settlement mechanism from the negotiations as, such a system has no place in a trade deal between the EU and the US, two areas of the world with well-established legal systems and an effective level of protection for foreign investors.

Creating the right political, financial and legal framework

Luk remarked the importance for the added value of the Social sector to create sustainable growth, and to fight against social exclusion and poverty. Indeed, the EC should commission a study **to make this added value more recognised, visible and tangible**.

Taking into account all the above, Luk pointed out that **Social Services sector is a key actor in the Social Enterprise Economy**. As such it should be further involved in any future steps taken by European, National, Regional or local authorities on the Social Business agenda. He added that "the EC should recognise and support the diversity of social enterprises" and recommended that "at European level, this could start by us being represented in the Expert Group on Social Entrepreneurship (GECES), starting from 2015".

During the event, European representatives from the social sector had the opportunity to address their views and identify the new priorities **on the future agenda for the social business' sector**. Social enterprise is one of the main pillars of the European Social model which, through social innovation, can provide solutions to tackle social problems, improve communities and people's life chances.

Please find more information:

[Social Services Europe: Taking stock and what is next on the Social Business Agenda?](#)

[TTIP briefing](#)

[Social Innovation: the Role of Social Service Providers](#)

Contact person

Silvia Mir

Silvia.mir@easpd.eu

+32 2 282 46 19

Social Services Europe brings together nine Europe-wide networks of not-for-profit providers of social and health care services who each have a track record in providing value-driven services for the most vulnerable in our societies. The network aims to strengthen the profile and position of social services, and promote the role of not-for-profit social service providers in Europe.

For more info: www.socialserviceseurope.eu