



EUROPEAN EXPERT GROUP ON TRANSITION FROM INSTITUTIONAL TO COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

organises an event co-hosted by **Ádám Kósa**, MEP (HU, EPP), Chair of the Disability Intergroup (1999-2014) and **Helga Stevens** MEP (BE, ECR)

‘From institutional care to life in the community’

How can the EU promote family-based care and independent living?

10 December 2014 | 16.00-18.00
European Parliament | Brussels
Room: PHS 1A002

#EndInstitutionalCareEU

PROGRAMME

- 16.00-16.30 Introductory remarks** – session chaired by **John Halloran** (European Social Network)
Welcome by the hosting MEPs **Ádám Kósa**, MEP (HU, EPP) and **Helga Stevens** MEP (BE, ECR), Video message from **Corina Crețu**, European Commissioner for Regional Policy, **Hasan Bermek**, Adviser, Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights,
- 16.30-17.00 Experiences of institutional care and the transition towards living in the community:** - session chaired by **Jan Pfeiffer** (Mental Health Europe)
Ivanka Vasileva Taneva (Bulgaria)¹, **Jim Crowe** (UK, Learning Disability Wales)
- 17.00-17.30 Opportunities for the European Union to promote the transition from institutional to community-based care** - session chaired by **Roger Singleton** (Lumos)
Andriana Sukova-Tosheva, Director, EC, DG for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, **Michael Ralph**, Adviser, EC, DG for Regional and Urban Policy, **Maria Luisa Cabral**, Head of Unit, EC, Rights of persons with disabilities.
- 17.30-18.00 Conclusion: the way forward** – session chaired by **Jean-Claude Legrand**, (UNICEF) - **Danute Jasjko**, Director, Ministry of Welfare, Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, **(tbc) MEPs from S&D**

¹ *Ivanka’s testimony is supported by the Hope and Homes programme in Bulgaria & the Opening Doors partnership

BACKGROUND

The need for a transition from an institutional model of care to person-centred community-based services, in line with international human rights standards

Across the European Union, millions of people with disabilities, mental health problems, older people, homeless people or abandoned and vulnerable children live in segregating residential institutions. Such institutions were originally created to provide care, food and shelter, but by now evidence has shown that they cannot ensure person-centred services and appropriate support needed to bring about full inclusion. The physical separation from communities and families severely limits the capacity and preparedness of those living in or growing up in institutions to participate fully in their community and wider society.

Countries must move away from institutional care to a system of family and community-based care and support. This is a complex process, which includes the development of quality services in the community, the planned closure of long-stay residential institutions and the transfer of resources from the institutional system to the new services, thus ensuring long-term sustainability. Importantly, it involves ensuring that mainstream services such as healthcare and childcare, labour market services, education and training, housing and transport are accessible and available to everyone. This process is often referred to as “deinstitutionalisation”.

The current situation and the issues that remain

The Social Investment Package adopted in 2013 provides guidance on modernising social protection systems, including as regards developing quality, affordable and adequate services in the community. One year ago, the European Commission adopted the new Regulations for the EU Cohesion Policy Investment for 2014-2020, which clearly state that European Structural and Investment Funds must be used for developing community-based alternatives to institutional care. Moreover, with the adoption of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership in January 2014, the European Commission issued a strong signal to Member States that any future investments of EU Funds should be planned and implemented in close cooperation with civil society and other stakeholders.

Today, some Member States, at various levels, are positively engaged in a deinstitutionalisation process, in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders. However, there is still a long way to go. Too often, the transition to a model of care and support based on person-centred community-based services, as part of the move towards a more inclusive society, is not given the relevant level of priority when planning and implementing investment of EU Funds. Consultation of relevant stakeholders often remains insufficient. Most importantly, there is still a lack of awareness of the human rights issues at stake, a lack of knowledge of the possible alternatives, and a lack of understanding of what is a successful transition process from institutional care to community-based support.

EU institutions can play a key role in promoting the transition from an institutional model of care to person-centred community-based services and in supporting the Member States in the implementation of relevant reforms. Will the new European Parliament and the new European Commission give relevant priority to promoting these urgent reforms?

The European Expert Group (EEG) on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care

EEG is a broad coalition gathering stakeholders representing people with care or support needs and their families, including children, people with disabilities, homeless people, people experiencing mental health problems; as well as service providers, public authorities and intergovernmental organisations.

The Group provides expert support on EU policy, legislation and funding. All members of the Group provide a link to operational expertise at national, regional and local level through their direct involvement and the empowerment of their member organisations.

The Group has as its mission the promotion of person-centred, quality and empowering models of services and formal and informal care that fully respect the human rights of all people with care or support needs. The Group supports national efforts to implement the necessary reforms, in compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in particular with Article 19), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Fundamental Rights Charter.

In November 2012, the Group published the “Common European Guidelines on the transition from institutional to community based care”, as well as an accompanying “Toolkit”, updated in 2014, with the aim to assist all public authorities in Europe involved in the programming and implementation of EU Structural and Investment Funds (www.deinstitutionalisation.eu). In 2013 and 2014, with the support of the European Commission, the EEG has organised training seminars on the transition from institutional to community based care in twelve European countries.



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