Social Services Europe

The European Parliament Elections 2014

10 Recommendations to Put Social and Health Care Services at the Heart of a Stronger Social Europe

I. INTRODUCTION

Social Services Europe represents 100,000 not for profit social and health care services active across Europe promoting social inclusion and social cohesion. The sector, employing 10% of the EU workforce, has a long-term commitment to vulnerable people and is constantly searching for innovative and cost effective solutions to providing services. We seek to ensure that the specificity of not-for-profit social and healthcare service providers, which rests on values of democratic solidarity, and principles of reciprocity, be recognized and that economic, social and legal conditions exist for high quality, sustainable, accessible and affordable social and health care services.

The need for such social and health care services includes but also goes beyond the needs of the most marginalized in our communities and ensures the well-being of all. Social and health care services are essential throughout the life cycle and support integration and participation in everyday life for every person.

Social and health care services contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy by creating employment, tackling poverty and reducing early school leaving. The European Parliament can use its powers to protect and support social and health care services and promote their strategic importance not only for social and economic policy but for the well-being of the people of Europe as outlined in Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union[1].

We call on prospective members of the European Parliament to commit to support the provision of social and health care services, in particular the not for profit social and health care services sectors, in the following ways if elected to the European Parliament. We believe that every person in the European Union is entitled to high quality, accessible, sustainable and affordable social and health care as and when they are needed and invite the European Parliament to work with us to make that a reality.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recognise the **specificity of not for profit social and heaeth care service providers** and work for an operating environment – legislatively, economically, politically and operationally - that allows such providers to work on an equal basis while retaining our values of solidarity, reciprocity and the right of all people to the care they need without conditions.

2. Ensure that social and health care services are provided within **a rights-based framework**, drawing on the provisions of existing legislation such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the European Social Charter and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

3. Monitor the implementation of relevant EU legislation and consider the impact of new legislative initiatives to ensure they do not adversely affect social and health care services, including applying the principles **of quality, accessibility, sustainability and affordability** to all legislation

4. **Reject the current reductions in funding for social and health care services** and promote an alternative approach based on the social investment logic, **promoting a long-term view**

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[1] Art. 3 TEU: "The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance.

It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child.

It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States.

It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced."

of social policy development and expenditure and potential savings, to ensure availability and sustainability of services as close to the user as possible.

5. Support our call for **investment in employment and training across the sector** as well as the engagement of the not for profit social and health care services sector as a key partner in social dialogue.

6. Strengthen the role of the not- for-profit organisations in the **creation of different forms of decent employment.**

7. **Prevent the "creaming" of profitable services** over less profitable ones by service providers as well preventing "creaming" of easier-to-reach service users over more disadvantaged ones when providing services

8. **Promote quality in the design & delivery of services** through supporting the implementation of the Voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services.

9. **Promote non-discrimination, participation and partnership between not for profit service providers and other providers in all matters concerning funding.** Ensure the equal participation of all providers in developing the architecture of funding mechanisms and remove all barriers to not for profit service providers in accessing funding at local, regional, national and EU levels. Promote the strengthening of the partnership principle in the European Social Fund and other structural funds supporting social and health care services.

10. **Establish an Intergroup on Social Services and Social Innovation** to address the role of social services in social cohesion, social protection and solidarity**.** Do this in close consultation and partnership with SSE, bringing together the relevant actors in the area, and supporting the active participation of people benefiting from social services. The Intergroup should engage directly with the relevant Parliament committees and agree the priority areas for discussion and action in the coming parliamentary term.