

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) 2014-2020

2012/0295(COD) - 12/06/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament **adopted** by 513 votes to 149, with 27 abstentions, **amendments** to the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

The matter was referred back to the competent committee for re-examination. The vote is postponed until a later plenary session.

The main amendments adopted in plenary concern the following points:

Definitions: Parliament amends the definitions of the ‘most deprived persons’ and ‘partner organisations’. It also added a definition of '**accompanying measures**' which covers measures beyond the distribution of food and basic material assistance, taken with the aim of **overcoming social exclusion and of tackling social emergencies**.

Objectives of the Fund: Parliament considers that the Fund shall promote social cohesion, **enhance social inclusion and combat poverty in the Union** whilst complementing the European Social Fund. It shall contribute to the **sustainable eradication of food poverty** and should also support efforts by the Member States to alleviate the **acute material deprivation** of the homeless.

The Fund should also provide support for national schemes, although without replacing or reducing national programmes seeking to sustainably eradicate poverty and social exclusion.

Right to use the Fund: the right to use the Fund **should apply to all Member States**.

Forms of support: Parliament stipulates the possible forms of support from the Fund: (i) support for national schemes whereby **food products and/or basic material assistance**, including starter packs, for the personal use of the end recipients are distributed to the most deprived persons; (ii) accompanying measures, complementing the provision of food and basic material assistance, contributing to the social inclusion of and a healthier diet for the most deprived persons; (iii) assistance for beneficiaries to make more efficient use of local food supply chains.

Implementation: support from the Fund shall be provided in close co-operation between the Commission and the Member States in co-operation with as well as the **competent regional and local authorities and partner organisations involved**. Member States and the bodies designated by them for that purpose, or where appropriate, the competent regional authorities, shall be responsible for implementing the operational programmes.

Arrangements for the implementation and use of the Fund, and in particular the financial and administrative resources required in relation to reporting, evaluation, management and control shall take into account the limited **administrative capacity of organisations that function in the main thanks to volunteers**, and shall ensure that the administrative burden placed on them is not greater than it was under the previous programme.

The Commission and the Member States shall ensure the effectiveness of the Fund, in particular through monitoring, reporting and evaluation and through the **close and regular consultation of local and**

regional authorities and partner organisations implementing the fund's measures in the impact assessments.

Avoidance of duplication: Parliament stipulates that in accordance with their respective responsibilities, and in order to **prevent double funding**, the Commission and the Member States shall ensure coordination with the European Social Fund, and with other Union policies and instruments, in particular Union actions in the field of health.

Member States shall take action to guarantee the **effectiveness** of the actions implemented.

Taking account of gender issues: Parliament calls for importance to be given to gender equality during the various stages of the preparation, the programming, management and implementation, the monitoring and the evaluation of the Fund, as well as in information and awareness-raising campaigns and exchanges of best practices, while using data broken down by gender, where available.

Aid granted in the framework of this Fund respects the dignity of the **most deprived persons**.

Nutritional quality of aid: Parliament also calls for the choice of food products to be based on principles of balanced nutrition and quality food, including fresh produce, and should contribute to a healthy diet of the end recipients. In this regard, it asks for **priority should be given to local and regional products**, taking climatic and environmental considerations into account, in particular with a view to the **reduction of food waste at every stage of the distribution chain**. This may include partnerships with companies throughout the food chain in a spirit of corporate social responsibility.

The choice of food products should be based on principles of balanced nutrition and quality food, including fresh produce, and should contribute to a healthy diet of the end recipients.

Moreover, Parliament underlines that:

- the partner organisations may, in addition, distribute food supplies coming from other sources including intervention stock made available under the CMO Regulation;
- the food and/or the items for basic material assistance shall be distributed **free of charge** to the most deprived persons **without any exception**.

Budget: in an amendment adopted in plenary, Parliament calls for the global resources available for budgetary commitment from the Fund for the period 2014-2020 shall not be less, in real terms, **than seven times the budgetary allocation**, adopted in the 2011 budget, for the aid for deprived persons programme.

N.B.: Parliament stipulates in a recital that the Fund should **not replace public policies** undertaken by Member State governments with the aim of limiting the need for emergency food aid and developing sustainable targets and policies for the full eradication of hunger, poverty and social exclusion.

Financing rate: Parliament maintains the co-financing rate foreseen by the Commission, in its proposal at 85% of the public eligible expenditure. **This rate may be increased** in the cases described in the proposal. Member States should be free to support the Fund's initiatives with additional national resources.

Operational programmes: Parliament considers that when each Member State submits to the Commission their operational programmes these should contain the following items (in addition to those already foreseen): a description of the mechanism used to ensure complementarity with the European Social Fund showing a **clear demarcation** line between activities covered by those two funds.

Operational programmes should be drawn up by Member States, or any authority designated by them, **in cooperation with the competent regional, local and other public authorities as well as all relevant stakeholders.**

Exchange of best practice: Parliament calls on the Commission to facilitate the exchange of experience, capacity building, networking but also **social innovation at Union level, thereby linking partner organisations and other relevant stakeholders from all Member States.** It calls for the organisations which represent the partner organisations at Union level on the implementation of support from the Fund to report **back at least once a year to the European Parliament** and to the Council and for the Commission to disseminate the results of these good practices.

Indicators: in the framework of common indicators of resources and outcomes set by the Commission in view of the submission of implementation reports drafted by Member States, Parliament calls for the development of a **deprivation index which allows for a more refined assessment of material deprivation of households,** based on indicators such as income level, income inequality, the ability to make ends meet, the level of over-indebtedness and the degree of satisfaction with living standards.

The Commission shall present a summary of the annual implementation reports and the final implementation reports to the European Parliament and Council in due time.

Evaluation: Parliament stipulates the scope of the evaluations to be carried out: they should cover, in particular, the contribution to the reduction of food waste; the contribution of the expected outputs to the objectives of the Fund; the effective engagement of relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of the operational programme. The Commission should present a mid-term assessment of the Fund to the European Parliament and to the Council by March 2018 at the latest.

Union support: Parliament wants the beneficiaries and partner organisations to inform the public about the support obtained from the Fund by placing either at least one poster with information about the operation or a **Union flag** of reasonable size, at a location readily visible to the public.

Audits: changes were introduced in regard to audits. In particular, Parliament called for all supporting documents on operations to be made available for a period of **five** years (as opposed to three years as proposed by the Commission).

Transitional provisions: the Commission and the Member States should ensure by means of transitional provisions that activities eligible for support can start as of 1 January 2014, even if operational programmes have not yet been submitted.