

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

2012/0295(COD) - 27/03/2019 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a staff working document on the executive summary of the mid-term evaluation of the Fund of European Aid for the Most Deprived.

The document presents the main findings and conclusions of the mid-term evaluation of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) for the period up to the end of December 2017.

The evaluation falls within the period of preparation of the 2021-2027 EU Funds, and preliminary results of this evaluation (including the results of the structured surveys of end recipients) have informed the impact assessment for the future European Social Fund Plus that will integrate FEAD and provide support to the most deprived.

Background

As a reminder, FEAD was set up in 2014 and follows on the EU's previous food distribution programme for the most deprived people (MDP). Unlike MDP, FEAD benefits all Member States. Under FEAD, EUR 3.8 billion are available in current prices and are complemented by a minimum of 15 % in matching funding allocated by the Member States, bringing the total value of the Fund to approximately EUR 4.5 billion. Up to 2017, 27 Member States accounted for EUR 1 973 million in cumulated eligible public expenditure, representing 44 % of the total resources of the Member States' operational programmes.

FEAD is estimated to support on average 12.7 million persons per year between 2014 and 2017. Women make up about half of the total number of people receiving support. Children are a large target group representing about 30 % of all recipients. Migrants and other minorities (11 %), people aged 65 years or over (9 %), disabled persons (5 %) and homeless persons (4 %) are also key target groups.

Overall, more than 1.3 million tonnes of food were distributed between 2014 and 2017.

Main findings

The FEAD is:

- providing much needed food and basic material assistance to a large number of the most deprived;
- coherent and complementary to national poverty alleviation systems and is coherent with the Europe 2020 strategy and with the newly proclaimed European Pillar of Social Rights;
- efficient in that it the rules governing FEAD's implementation make it simpler to address 'social emergencies' than European Social Fund rules. However, due to the different types and frequency of support provided, and the nature of target groups, there are large variations in costs per food and costs per person across Member States. The administrative costs for monitoring, distribution and delivery are still considered to be high. There is consistent evidence of 'gold plating', leading to excessive requirements, such as the requirement imposed by most Member States (mostly on the partner organisation) to register end recipients. The two flat rates introduced by FEAD for administrative, transport and storage costs and accompanying measures are useful for simplifying management (compared to real costs);

- creating a notable positive effect in nearly every Member State in particular concerning new target groups, new activities, and greater territorial coverage;

- relevant given that poverty remains a persistent problem. There have been positive developments in recent years, however, FEAD cannot be expected to fill funding gaps. Member States remain responsible for their public policies to fight poverty and social exclusion.

More generally, the report concluded that a merger of FEAD and the European Social Fund that builds on FEAD delivery mechanisms would allow for synergies and open up potential pathways from basic support to social inclusion support that lead to people getting training and finding work, when the target groups are the same.