

19 January 2010

REGULAR MEETING

Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transition from Institutional to
Community-based care

CHLG
Rue Royale 35, Brussels

Jan Pfeiffer (CHLG, Children's High Level Group, chairman)

Linnéa Arvidsson, from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, was welcomed

Carmen Epure (CHLG)

Geert Freyhoff (Inclusion Europe)

Participants: Silvio Grieco, DG EMPL, Unit G3 - Integration of People with Disabilities

Josée van Remoortel (Mental Health Europe)

Céline Simonin (COFACE, Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU)

Luk Zelderloo (EASPD, European Association of Service Providers)

Minutes

Subject 1: Purpose and operation of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on transition from institutional to community-based care

- The Ad Hoc Expert Group on transition from institutional to community based-care ("the Group") remains an informal independent structure, focused on the implementation of the Recommendations of the Report and mainstreaming de-institutionalisation into relevant EU policies and structural funds;
- The strength of the Group consists in bringing together 4 subsectors of the social sector: children, persons with disabilities, ageing and mental health sectors. It is a wide cross-sectoral coalition, where families and service providers are main stakeholders and that promotes de-institutionalisation as part of creating an inclusive society. The members of the Group are maintaining their commitment to work together and CHLG was invited to continue acting as a liaison and support organisation, and also in representation capacity. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has also expressed its commitment to support the group. Eurochild is welcome to joining the Group. However it was decided not to further enlarge the group for the time being;
- European Coalition for Community Living is a cross-disability initiative that promotes community based services as an alternative to de-institutionalisation; it brings together disability organisations, academic networks and has a coordinating role. ECCL continues to be financed by Open Society Institute only until the middle of the year, due to a shift in financing priorities. The important role played by ECCL was emphasised. A possible scenario was suggested where the Group could take on some of ECCL's functions for short time if needed. The subject remains opened to further discussion as it is too early to assess the situation at this stage;
- The Ad Hoc Expert Group is still an initiative in the making, and its members are going to openly explore its functions further while keeping a strong focus on the purpose for which it was set.

Subject 2: Current stage of work and further action

An update from Mr. Silvio Grieco:

- A new Disability Strategy for 2010-2020 is going to be adopted in July. Between February and March the views of the stakeholders will be gathered in a large consultation exercise. De-institutionalisation will be included in the Disability Strategy and further contact and work is foreseen with the Group. There are two possibilities to involve the Group: 1) to organise a specific meeting (in February/March); 2) to invite one or more representatives of the Group at the Stakeholder Workshop to be organised in mid-February. Mr. Grieco will later communicate the alternative chosen;

- However, the purpose of the Group is far more ambitious, it targets all relevant policy fields and structural funds. The innovative proposal was to use the positive experience of Bulgaria and raise awareness among desk officers dealing with Structural funds in the countries. A more comprehensive awareness-raising effort was also envisaged, consisting in a training seminar, where DG REGIO, DG EMPL, AidCo, DG AGRI are all present (envisaged for February – March 2010). However at the moment nobody in the EC has taken the lead of organising the training seminar;
- The Call for proposals on social experimentation is an opportunity to get EC's support for projects that promote de-institutionalisation; the members should consider potential proposals. The limits of the definition of "Social experimentation" and the difficulty to propose projects to operate within these limits were mentioned. A brief presentation on the social experimentation and previous Call for proposals organised by the Commission was made.

The discussion has focused on the following:

- The importance of keeping and boosting the EC's Commitment on de-institutionalisation at the same time with gaining parliamentary support; to carefully consider the role of the European Parliament while keeping the ownership of the initiative on de-institutionalisation with the Commission;
- Promoting the Report on de-institutionalisation by organising a joint event European Commission - European Parliament with Commissioner's support in March 2010.

Future meetings:

The next meetings of the Ad Hoc Expert Group are set for:

- 9 February, at 14h00;
- 2 March, at 10h00.

Action Points and Conclusions:

1. To contact the secretariats of the Parliamentary Intergroups: 1) Disability, 2) Ageing and Intergeneration Solidarity; 3) Family and the Rights of the Child and invite them to the next meeting of the EU Ad Hoc Group of 9 February 2009 for co-organising the launching event of the Report on de-institutionalisation; At the same time to establish contacts with the members of the new Cabinets;
2. CHLG is mandated by the Group to meet DG REGIO, DG EMPL and other relevant directorates or units as well as members of Parliament;
3. To raise awareness on de-institutionalisation and the Report at the event organised by Eurochild at the Parliament on the theme of children without parental care on 27 January, where Jan Pfeiffer and Jan Jarab are panellists;
4. Silvio Grieco expressed the wish to involve the Group in the preparation process of the disability strategy. The contribution of the Group will be asked either during a focused meeting with the Disability Unit or during a general Stakeholder Workshop to be organised by the Disability unit in February, where one or more representatives of the Group will be invited;
5. To gather ideas from the members of the Group on potential proposals to be submitted under the upcoming Call for proposals on social experimentation.