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Member States Continue to Highlight Homelessness as a Priority for Delivering on Europe 2020

FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with Homeless People. It has more than 120 members in 30 European countries. FEANTSA's members are non-governmental organisations which provide a wide range of social services to homeless people including accommodation, housing, social, health and employment support. FEANTSA coordinates the European Observatory on Homelessness, which publishes a wide range of research for policy purposes. FEANTSA is the only major European network that focuses on homelessness. FEANTSA works closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Homelessness on the EU Agenda

Homelessness has risen steadily up the EU's agenda in recent years. The persistence of homelessness in European societies is widely recognized as unacceptable and a violation of fundamental rights. In the context of the crisis and its aftermath, making progress on tackling extreme forms of poverty such as homelessness has become a test for the credibility of the European Union.

In February 2013, the European Commission launched its Social Investment Package (SIP) to reinforce efforts to deliver on the social inclusion objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Homelessness is a clear priority, with the Commission calling on Member States (MS) to “*confront homelessness through comprehensive strategies based on prevention, housing-led approaches and reviewing regulations and practices on eviction*”¹. The package includes detailed policy guidance on homelessness.

The number of integrated homelessness strategies (at national, regional and local level) in the EU is gradually increasing. Various public authorities are developing social policy innovations to better address homelessness in an integrated, housing led fashion.

There have been repeated calls from different EU bodies (including the European Parliament², the Committee of the Regions³, the European Economic and Social Committee⁴) for an EU homelessness strategy, although no steps have yet been taken to develop one.

1.2 European Semester 2014

The European Semester is the annual cycle of policy coordination to support progress towards the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy by means of monitoring, analysis and recommendations. All Member States have committed to achieving the targets of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including reducing by 20 million the number of people at risk of poverty in the European Union. The EU targets have been translated into national commitments. However, the EU currently stands a long way off track for meeting the poverty target. The number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion in the EU (measured in terms of people at risk of financial poverty, experiencing material deprivation or living in jobless households) increased from 114 million in 2009 to 124 million in 2012⁵.

This review explores the extent to which MS have prioritized addressing homelessness in the context of their 2014 National Reform Programmes (NRPs), submitted to the European Commission in April. NRPs are key instruments of the European Semester. Each MS submits an annual NRP detailing relevant policy reforms and measures. NRPs are submitted alongside Stability or Convergence programmes, which cover medium term budgetary strategies. They are also complemented by supplementary Strategic Social Reporting.

Each Autumn, the Annual Growth Survey (AGS) launches the Semester by taking stock of the economic and social situation in Europe and sets out broad policy priorities for the EU as a whole over the coming year. The following 5 priorities were maintained in 2014:

1. Pursuing differentiated, growth-friendly fiscal consolidation
2. Restoring lending to the economy

¹ COM/2013/083 final

² P7_TA(2014)0043 and P7_TA(2011)0383

³ CDR 18/2010 and CDR 2234/2014

⁴ CESE 1592/2011 - SOC/408

⁵ COM(2014) 130 final/2

3. Promoting growth and competitiveness for today and tomorrow
4. **Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis**
5. Modernising public administration

Tackling unemployment and the social consequences of the crisis necessitates measures and reforms to address poverty, including homelessness. The 2014 AGS was published in a context of fragile, uneven economic recovery within the EU. In addition 2014 saw the launch of a mid term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy⁶, which has highlighted that the EU is failing to make progress towards its target of reducing poverty.

FEANTSA's monitoring indicates rising homelessness in a majority of MS, with families, migrants, and young people increasingly affected⁷. In this context, FEANTSA welcomed the fact that the AGS provided an opportunity to take better account of homelessness in the Semester framework, whilst underlining that the drive towards fiscal consolidation could contribute to a further worsening of the overall social situation and increasing poverty, including homelessness. FEANTSA also raised concerns that the reporting on homeless policies in the Joint Employment Report (which accompanies the AGS and focuses specifically on employment and social policies) was very partial and weak.

As a key stakeholder in the fight against poverty in the EU, FEANTSA monitors and provides input into the European Semester. In this context, we assess the contribution of the Semester to addressing poverty and social exclusion, including homelessness. The poverty target and the Social Investment Package require the fight against poverty to be a strong stream within the Semester. This would help promote smart, sustainable **and inclusive** growth. In reality, the social dimension of the Semester has often been secondary to macroeconomic stability and fiscal consolidation. FEANTSA hopes that by continuing to monitor, analyse and contribute to the Semester, it can help strengthen its social dimension and ensure that fighting poverty remains a central priority until 2020 and beyond.

FEANTSA reviewed the NRPs in 2012⁸ and 2013⁹. This 2014 review will be followed by a broader report exploring homelessness trends across the EU, analysing the extent to which the Semester has supported progress, taking stock of the Country Specific Recommendations and making suggestions for 2015 onwards.

2. ANALYSIS OF 2014 NRPs

The aim of this analysis is to establish to what extent addressing homelessness is considered by MS as a priority in delivering on the Europe 2020 strategy through the Semester process. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to draw conclusions about the quality of policies to tackle homelessness described in the different MS. Instead, the focus is on how much attention MS give homelessness in the Semester framework.

In 2014, most MS have continued to **prioritise confronting homelessness as an important part of their efforts to tackle poverty and promote social inclusion**. FEANTSA's analysis identifies four main approaches to homelessness in the 2014 NRPs:

1. Reporting on integrated national homelessness strategies
2. Reporting on national social inclusion or anti poverty plans, which include targeted measures to tackle homelessness

⁶ COM(2014) 130 final/2

⁷ See FEANTSA 2014 country fiches, available at <http://www.feantsa.org/spip.php?article853&lang=en>

⁸ FEANTSA (2012) *National Reform Programmes 2012 and the Europe2020 poverty target: Investment in homelessness reduction emerging as a priority in the Europe2020 growth strategy*

⁹ FEANTSA (2013) *Implementation of the Social Investment Package guidelines on homelessness through the Europe2020 Strategy: first results*

3. Reporting on broader social and housing policy reforms that impact on homelessness
4. Little or no information on homelessness policy in the NRP

2.1 Reporting on national homelessness strategies

A growing number of MS report on national strategies to tackle homelessness in the NRP. This demonstrates that they consider the fight against homelessness to be an important part of tackling poverty and social exclusion in the context of Europe 2020. Furthermore, it shows that the priorities of the Social Investment Package, in which the European Commission called on MS to develop integrated homelessness strategies, are being pursued and reported on in the Semester.

There is a general trend towards an increase in the number of integrated national homelessness strategies in the EU. The role of these strategies is to complement broader welfare and housing measures with targeted, integrated measures to address homelessness. It is important to note that decentralized competence means that such strategies are developed at regional level in some MS, and that these should as far as possible also be integrated into the Semester framework.

MS are at different stages in developing integrated homelessness strategies. Some have well established and operational strategies, whilst others are taking first steps towards a more strategic approach. Some face barriers in implementing an existing strategy. At least 7 MS (Bulgaria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxemburg and Portugal) provided information relating to the development of strategies to tackle homelessness in their 2014 NRP. All of these countries explicitly refer to homelessness as a priority issue.

Bulgaria's NRP potentially paves the way for a future strategy by committing to seek out a more effective way to tackle the problem of homelessness by providing access to housing.

The **Czech Republic** reports on its new 'Concept of Prevention and Addressing Homelessness in the Czech Republic until 2020'¹⁰. This is a new national homeless strategy, which was adopted in August 2013. In addition, the Czech Republic is developing a Social Housing plan, has committed to increasing availability of social work, and to the promotion of rental housing and the modification of the system of social services. Similarly, **Luxemburg** provides an update on its national strategy to counter homelessness and housing exclusion. In March 2014, a presentation on the implementation of the national strategy was made to civil society. The Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region carried out two censuses of the number of persons. A pilot project on Housing First was launched in May 2013. The government has begun preparatory work on setting up a permanent housing structure for long-term homeless persons. An in-depth review of the situation of homeless young people is also underway. A conference with professionals in the youth sector will be held in mid-June 2014. The 2014 draft budget for this effort amounts to 423,000.

Denmark gives detailed information on its strategy to tackle homeless in the NRP for the first time in 2014, explaining its rate adjusted funding pool earmarked for disadvantaged groups. The pool allocates DKK 72.5 million to strengthen efforts to fight homelessness, focusing on prevention and early intervention for young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The agreement on the Danish Budget Act 2014 earmarks DKK 20 million a year for 2014 to 2017 for further initiatives to fight homelessness among young people. Denmark has set specific national social targets to supplement its commitment on the EU poverty target¹¹. These include reducing the number of homeless people by at least 25 per cent to a level of no more than 4,000 people; and ensuring that the share of citizens who return to a shelter or care home for homeless people within 1 year of being assigned to their own home must not exceed 20 per cent. In 2011, this share was 31 per cent. **France** also describes a package of measures to fight homelessness and housing exclusion. It details recent

¹⁰ [Concept of Prevention and Addressing Homelessness in the Czech Republic until 2020](#)

¹¹ measured in terms of people with income below 60% of the median; people experiencing material deprivation, and people living in very low work intensity households

reforms that aim to lower house prices by promoting supply (land release, removal of restrictions, support for the construction of housing, optimization of stock), tax incentives, regulation of fees. Funding has been earmarked to create or make year-round 7000 places in shelter, and to create 7,600 places in “adapted” housing for excluded people from 2013. Finally, the investments plan for housing, presented March 21 2013, sets a production target of 150,000 social rented homes a year. **Belgium’s** NRP details a range of measures on homelessness and housing exclusion at national and regional level. Although there is no overarching national strategy (largely because of decentralized competence), steps have been taken towards a more strategic and integrated approach. These include launching a pilot project to test Housing First in five major cities: (Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels, Liège and Charleroi); a cooperation agreement on homelessness between the Federal State, the Communities and the Regions; changes to housing benefit entitlement in Flanders (now available to anyone on a social housing waiting list for 1 year); promotion of Social Rental Agencies; a housing grant to support people facing homelessness/housing exclusion and who move into a decent home; and various measures to address energy costs.

Portugal’s NRP describes measures to safeguard the most economically vulnerable through measures to increase income, ensure minimal resources and satisfy basic needs. Homeless people are mentioned as a specific target group. Preventative measures include the Social Insertion Income and social tariffs (transport, gas and electricity), exemption from user fees in health and exemption changes to personal income tax. Portugal developed an integrated housing-led national strategy to tackle homelessness in 2009 but this has not been implemented, partly because of the challenging context created by the crisis.

2.2 Reporting on social inclusion or anti poverty plans which include targeted measures to address homelessness

At least 7 MS’s NRP’s refer to national action plans/strategies to promote social inclusion and fight poverty, which in turn include specific measures on homelessness. In several of these MS, a national homelessness strategy is in place or being developed.

Ireland has an ambitious and well established national homelessness strategy. The Irish NRP reports on the ‘National Action Plan for Social Inclusion’ (NAPSI) 2007-2016¹², which includes the homeless strategy. In addition to the NAPSI, Ireland’s 2014 NRP reports on the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), introduced in July 2013, which will transfer responsibility for recipients of rent supplement with a long-term housing need from the Department of Social Protection to local authorities. Payments under the HAP scheme will be based on a local authority differential rent means test under which full-time employment restrictions do not apply. It will therefore remove a key barrier to persons on social welfare in getting back to work. **Spain’s** NRP reveals that it is launching a homelessness strategy in the context of its ‘National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2013-2016’¹³. Spain commits to ‘the design and roll out of a Comprehensive National Strategy for the Homeless, in line with European recommendations’, indicating engagement with the issue of homelessness in the context of Europe 2020. Key priorities include developing best practices, continuing to collect data and evidence to inform policy, and a range of service developments. In addition, the NRP gives details of a State Housing Plan 2013, which includes measures to facilitate access to rental housing for vulnerable households; and to protect vulnerable people from eviction.

Some MS highlight homelessness as a priority without detailing planned actions. **Greece’s** NRP refers to the ‘Social Inclusion Green Paper’. This clearly defines homeless people as a distinct group that has been neglected in terms of social support in the past. Funding has been committed to a homelessness programme. In addition, the World Bank is supporting a pilot minimum income scheme in two regions of Greece, which aims at alleviating extreme poverty. **Hungary** reports on its

¹² [National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 2016](#), Ireland

¹³ [National Action Plan on Social Inclusion for the Kingdom of Spain 2013-2016](#)

implementation of the 'National Social Inclusion Strategy' (NSIS)¹⁴. The NSIS commits to ensuring that interventions to fight poverty reach those living in extreme poverty, and particularly children and Roma. One of the specific objectives of NSIS is to improve housing conditions and housing security, and to extend housing opportunities, particularly by developing rented accommodation. The NSIS states that there is 'no effective response to the problems of those affected or endangered by the challenge of homelessness and other forms of housing exclusion'. Furthermore, it claims that "the Government is in the process of identifying a short- and medium-term action plan for the prevention and management of housing exclusion".

Several of the social inclusion/anti poverty plans outlined in NRPs include the provision of targeted services for homeless people. **Poland** reports on the planned adoption of the 'National Programme for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2014-2020'¹⁵, which includes homelessness and housing exclusion. **Croatia's** '2014-2020 Strategy for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Croatia' is being adopted and will be followed by the creation of a three-year Implementation program. It includes specific measures to address homelessness, notably an obligation for large cities and county towns to fund accommodation and meal services for homeless people.

Lithuania's 'National Action Plan for Increasing Social Inclusion 2014-2020' will promote the social integration of homeless people to some degree, although it does not specify any targeted measures. The NRP additionally reports on measures to expand social housing, plans for the implementation of the prepared Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European aid to the most deprived persons; plans to promote deinstitutionalization in relation to child/youth care; plans to support households acquire housing through provision of state-funded housing credits and compensation of a part of costs incurred for the rent of housing leased on the market or of lease expenses for families (individuals) entitled to social housing.

2.3 Reporting on broader social and housing policies that have an impact on homelessness

A third group of MS do not specifically highlight measures to address homelessness directly in the NRP or by citing a broader anti poverty strategy. Instead, they concentrate on broader social or housing measures which are relevant (directly or indirectly) to homelessness and housing exclusion.

Italy reports on the introduction (initially on an experimental basis in 12 major cities) of a Labour Market Inclusion Programme ('sostegno per l'inclusione attiva' - SIA) to fight extreme poverty. The aim is to facilitate re-entry into the labour market for those currently excluded through adequate income support; development of inclusive labour markets and access to quality social services. The programme currently focuses on poor households with children, and priority must be given to a range of vulnerable groups, including those *in poor housing conditions*. There are plans to extend the scheme throughout Italy by the end of 2014.

Several MS' NRPs focus on housing measures which are relevant for preventing or addressing homelessness. **Italy** has developed a programme of investments in social housing for more disadvantaged families. This includes a € 100 million increase in the national fund for supporting access to homes for rent, a €226 million increase of the fund for tenants in rental arrears through no fault of their own; changes to flat tax rate on controlled rent agreements; and resources of the Rent Fund being used to develop social rental agencies. **Sweden's** NRP describes changes to housing benefit. In 2014 the housing allowance for households with children was increased by SEK 466 million, which together with the increase in 2012 has given a total increase of 48 per cent compared with 2011 for an average family. **Finland's** NRP includes a range of measures that could help to address tight housing markets in metropolitan regions, notably an increase in the housing allowance maximum. Additional measures include a 5-year plot reserve with possible sanctions; greater scope for pension funds to fund housing projects from 2015; a 20-year rental housing construction model.

¹⁴ *National Social Inclusion Strategy – Extreme Poverty, Child Poverty, the Roma (2011–2020)*, Hungary

¹⁵ *„Krajowy Program Przeciwdziałania Ubóstwu i Wykluczeniu Społecznemu 2020. Nowy wymiar aktywnej integracji.*

Malta is renewing investment in social housing. Between January and February 2014 the Housing Authority paid € 164,005 in rent subsidy to private rented residences. The budget allocated for 2014 is being set to € 970,000 in view of the increasing demand on this scheme. **The Netherlands** has taken a number of important measures to reform its housing market, including social rental housing. Rent increases based on income have been introduced with a view to encouraging move on of higher income households. Low income households will be (partially) compensated for rent increases through housing benefit. Tenants whose income falls after an income based rent increase will be granted a rent reduction. Social housing companies will also have to separate their SGEI and non-SGEI activities. The **UK** NRP describes various interventions in the housing market including changes in rental regulation, changes to building regulation and planning processes.

Some MS do not specifically mention homelessness but broader social policy reforms that could impact on homeless people. **Austria** describes measures to improve employment opportunities for recipients of the means-tested minimum income benefit and qualification measures for low-skilled or unskilled workers. In **Cyprus**, the economic and social crisis has led to substantial increases in poverty and social exclusion; creating pressure on the Social Welfare System (SWS), which the Government has now committed to reforming as part of the Economic Adjustment Programme. One of its main aims is to minimize the consequences of the economic crisis on the most vulnerable groups. **Estonia's** NRP refers to the development of social services, and to measures to help the low-skilled unemployed people enter vocational training. **Latvia** is reforming its social security system and social assistance system, and will determine a new minimum income level. Latvia also commits to improving the social services system and social work system, with a particular emphasis on deinstitutionalization. The **Dutch** government's poverty and debt policy has had an intensification of 20 million euro in 2013, and there is a particular focus on the most vulnerable. The Netherlands' NRP also cross-references its National Social Report (NSR), which provides detailed information on its integrated strategy to tackle homelessness (see below). The **UK** reports on the introduction of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms. **Romania** describes a range of measures targeting groups vulnerable to social exclusion including reform of social benefits for families and children, ensuring social protection for vulnerable consumers, improving social work, funding services, and supporting the transition from institutional care to community-based care for children. .

2.4 Little or no information on homelessness in the NRP

Several countries pay little or no attention to homelessness in the NRP. There are various explanations for this. In some MS, it probably reflects a lack of political commitment to prioritize the fight against homelessness. However, in many cases it relates more to the fragmentation of the Semester process. Several MS report on their homelessness policies in the National Social Report (NSR) rather than in the NRP. For example, **Finland's** long term homelessness strategy is described in the NSR but not referred to in the NRP. **Austria** has developed a specific indicator on registered homelessness in the context of the national Europe 2020 poverty target. This is described in the NSR, along with a range of policy measures but is absent from the NRP. Some MS like **Germany** and **the Netherlands** explicitly refer the Commission to the NSR for details on measures to tackle poverty, including homelessness. In the NRP, they limit reporting to progress on the poverty target and very brief descriptions of measures.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Homelessness is as a priority for MS

The above analysis shows that most MS consider homelessness a priority for the fight against poverty in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy. At least 7 MS give specifically refer to homelessness and outline the implementation of/progress towards integrated strategies (Bulgaria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal). A further 7 refer to broader strategies to promote social inclusion/fight poverty that focus on homelessness (Ireland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Greece, Lithuania, Spain, Poland). Some of these, such as Ireland and Spain, have integrated homelessness

strategies in place or have committed to launching them. At least 10 MS outline broader social or housing policy reforms which have an impact on homelessness.

3.2 Some MS could strengthen reporting on homelessness policies in the NRP

As the analysis above shows, there is considerable diversity in the extent to which MS concentrate on homelessness as a strategic priority in the fight against poverty in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy. Some include very minimal or no information on policies to tackle homelessness. There are different explanations for this. In some MS, political engagement with homelessness as a priority issue may be lacking. In several MS, decentralized competence for homelessness makes reporting more challenging as strategic policy making happens at regional rather than national level. A number of MS are in reality developing or implementing integrated strategies to tackle homelessness, which are not reflected in the NRP (e.g. Finland, the Netherlands). This is linked to a lack of integrated governance at various levels within the Semester.

3.3 Social reporting within the Semester is too fragmented

FEANTSA is concerned that reporting on social issues like homelessness in the Semester framework is too fragmented.

One problem is a lack of consistency and cross-referencing between NRPs and Strategic Social Reporting (as indicated above). In the 2014 National Social Reports (NSRs) MS were asked to provide detailed information on their homelessness policies. At the time of writing, most National Social Reports (NSRs) have not been published by the European Commission. However, FEANTSA has been able to analyse NSRs for some countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands and Sweden). All report in considerable detail on their policies to confront homelessness. However, it seems that NSRs are not exploited to their full potential for the Commissions analysis and recommendations within the Semester.

Furthermore, the additional instruments that feed into the Semester, notably the Employment and Social Scoreboard, do not take account of extreme forms of poverty like homelessness which are not captured by EUSILC. This level of fragmentation in social reporting means that issues like homelessness risk passing under the radar at EU level. This is unacceptable given that the Semester is supposed to deliver inclusive growth, is advanced as the main mechanism for implementing the SIP, and should address the social consequences of the crisis.

3.4 The Social Investment Package needs to be operationalized

In its assessment of progress towards the Europe 2020 social inclusion objectives, the Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion concluded that 'the key challenge for the next period will be to ensure that the agenda spelled out in the SIP is effectively built into the Europe 2020 governance process'¹⁶. In order to achieve this, the Network recommends that the Commission develop a concrete programme to operationalize the SIP, with work plans on key priorities such as confronting homelessness, active inclusion, investing in children, adequacy of universal social protection systems and minimum income, in-work poverty and addressing the poverty risk of people living in very low work intensity households. FEANTSA wholeheartedly supports this recommendation and considers it to be a necessary condition for implementing the SIP.

It is clear from the analysis of the NRPs above that MS consider homelessness a priority within the Semester. However, the reporting on homelessness policies remains excessively fragmented and there is currently no framework that would enable real progress in terms of monitoring and supporting MS to address homelessness line with the policy guidance laid out in the SIP.

¹⁶ Network of Independent Experts on Social Inclusion (2014) [Assessment of progress towards the Europe 2020 social inclusion objectives](#)

4. FEANTSA RECOMMENDATIONS

To MS

- FEANTSA calls on all MS to report on their policies to address homelessness in the NRPs. In the context of the crisis and its aftermath; in order to deliver on the SIP; and so as to ensure that efforts to reach the Europe 2020 poverty target do not leave the most excluded behind, it is essential that MS commit to tackling homelessness through social investment, and report on their efforts to do so within the Semester.
- FEANTSA urges MS to create synergies between NRPs and NSRs in order to enhance the quality of social reporting in the Semester framework. If they concentrate social reporting, including on homelessness in the NSR, then they should explicitly state this.
- FEANTSA urges MS to involve stakeholders in the fight against poverty, including NGOs working with homeless people, in the preparation of NRPs
- FEANTSA invites MS to explore the development of national social targets and indicators on homelessness in the framework of the Semester. Both Austria and Denmark provide useful examples in this regard.

To the European Commission

- In implementing the European Semester, FEANTSA calls on the European Commission to develop mechanisms to compensate for the fact that some important dimensions of poverty such as homelessness are not captured by the poverty target indicators or the employment and social scoreboard.
- FEANTSA encourages the Commission to take measures to integrate the different social reporting mechanisms within the Semester; and to take full account of all issues that the MS highlight as priorities, including homelessness.
- FEANTSA calls on the European Commission to fully operationalize the SIP, with work plans on key priorities such as confronting homelessness. Simply mainstreaming the call for MS to develop effective homelessness strategies in the Semester is not enough to deliver results.
- FEANTSA suggests that in conducting the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Commission develops methodologies to ensure that the reality of extreme poverty and homelessness does not pass under the radar within the Semester process. This necessitates making full use of the information provided in the NRPS and NSRs and pursuing the development of additional indicators within EUSILC.
- FEANTSA invites the European Commission to work in partnership with stakeholders in the European Platform against Poverty, including FEANTSA, in continuing to implement the Semester and carrying out the mid term review.



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This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields. The seven-year Programme targets all stakeholders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries. To that effect, PROGRESS purports at:

- providing analysis and policy advice on employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in employment, social solidarity and gender equality policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities;
and
 - relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large.

For more information see:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

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