

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 13.8.2013
C(2013) 5260 final

Dear Sir,

The Commission wishes to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Opinion on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) {COM(2012) 617 final} and apologises for the delay in replying.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Houses of the Oireachtas for its proposal on establishing the FEAD.

The new instrument puts deprived people at the heart of its interventions by contributing to alleviating extreme forms of material deprivation, in particular food deprivation, and by fostering social inclusion. The FEAD will complement the European Social Fund (ESF) by addressing people who are too far excluded from the labour market to benefit from activation measures of the ESF.

The proposed budgetary allocation takes account of the current economic situation as well as of the legal base of the instrument. The recent discussions in Council confirmed an increase of the overall amount to be spent on this new instrument at the level of up to 3,5 bln Euro. This is in line with the position of the EP, voted by the Plenary in June. The Member States' contribution of 15% will entail a further increase of the budget of the Fund, while at the same time an increase by 10% for payments to Member States with temporary budgetary difficulties is provided for.

The Commission shares the view that the instrument must be simple and therefore the Regulation introduces a lot of flexibility. The rules on financial management have been inspired by the ESF rules – which are well known to Member States – and they have been significantly simplified. In addition, the FEAD rules allow Member States to use ESF structures and procedures as a basis, if they so wish.

The FEAD would be based on national support schemes and would be implemented under shared management, leaving to the Member States the primary responsibility to identify the most appropriate target groups and types of interventions. This would avoid duplication with existing national initiatives and allow tailoring the assistance to the national needs and conditions. Article 2(2) of the proposed Regulation stipulates that the partner organisations

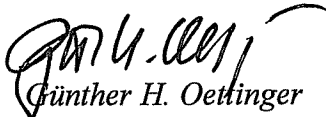
*Mr Seán BARRETT
President
Dáil Éireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL – DUBLIN 2*

*Senator Paddy BURKE
President
Seanad Éireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL – DUBLIN 2*

may be public bodies or not-for-profit organisations that distribute the assistance to the end recipients directly or indirectly, and that have been selected to implement the FEAD co-financed operations. The Food Banks could therefore be partner organisations.

The Commission hopes that these answers address the concerns and questions raised by the Houses of the Oireachtas and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,


Günther H. Oettinger
Member of the Commission