



Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

Meeting Report

10th FEAD Network Meeting: 'FEAD's contribution to the delivery of the European Pillar of Social Rights'

24-25 April, Hotel Imperial, Copenhagen and Malmö

Social Europe

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10th FEAD Network Meeting on FEAD's contribution to the delivery of the European Pillar of Social Rights

Hotel Imperial, Copenhagen and Malmö, 24th and 25th of April, 2018

On the 24th and 25th of April 2018, the European Commission co-hosted the 10th FEAD Network Meeting in Copenhagen and Malmö along with the Danish and Swedish Managing Authorities. The meeting brought together the EU-wide network of FEAD stakeholders, to discuss the role of the fund in the delivery of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The meeting was organised by Ecorys on behalf of the European Commission and welcomed 96 delegates from 23 Member States, representing a range of stakeholders, including Managing Authorities; partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU-level partner organisations; and the wider EU community.

Vicki Donlevy, Director, Policy and Research, Ecorys opened the meeting by welcoming participants and presenting the programme for the day. Vicki underlined that the purpose of the meeting was to better understand the European Pillar of Social Rights and, in particular, the role of FEAD stakeholders in its delivery. During the meeting, the Pillar was presented from the European perspective (session A), the national and city-level perspective (session B) as well as the on-the-ground perspective (session C). On the second day of the event, participants had the opportunity to witness first-hand the way in which the Pillar principles are implemented by visiting projects across Copenhagen and Malmö.

Day 1: Welcome from the European Commission

Following the introductory words, **Marie-Anne Paraskevas, Senior Policy Officer, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), European Commission** welcomed the participants and thanked the Swedish and Danish Managing Authorities for their support throughout the organisation of the Network Meeting. As already announced, post-2020, FEAD will be included into the new European Social Fund+ (ESF+). Marie-Anne reiterated the commitment of the European Commission to preserve the identity of FEAD and its Network, and in particular its flexibility. She introduced **Jan Behrens, Policy Officer, DG EMPL, European Commission**, who recently joined **Unit F1 - ESF and FEAD: Policy and Legislation** at DG EMPL and will be working alongside Marie-Anne on FEAD-related issues.

Day 1: Session A – Understanding the European Pillar of Social Rights

Marie-Anne Paraskevas, opened the session with a quote from Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission: *"The European Pillar of Social Rights is not a poem. It is first of all a programme of principles but also an action plan. If we want to be credible, we have to deliver¹."* Marie-Anne explained that the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) consists of 20 principles, organised around three strands:

- **Equal opportunities and access to the labour market**
- **Fair-working conditions**
- **Adequate and sustainable social protection**

The Pillar is not a legally binding act and putting it into action will be a joint effort from European institutions, national governments, social partners and the civil society. It will require updating the EU

¹ Jean-Claude Juncker, Speech delivered at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017

legislation and stepping up its enforcement. Funding will be pivotal and ESF+ will be able to provide the support required to implement the Pillar. In addition, the principles of the Pillar will be translated into the European Semester process and in particular into the Country-specific recommendations. Social dialogue will play an important role, and discussion around social rights should take a bigger place as part of social dialogue and at the workplace more generally. Finally, civil society will be a key actor to implement the EPSR on the ground through the programming of FEAD, and the future ESF+. In addition to the Pillar itself, the European Commission has taken a number of related initiatives including:

- **The proposal for a work-life balance package:** aimed at modernising the existing EU legal framework for family-related leave and flexible working arrangements. It introduces a paternity and a carer's leave, strengthens the parental leave and extends the right to request flexible working arrangements.
- **The proposal for a Directive on working conditions:** aimed at introducing new rights for workers and, in particular, addressing insufficient protection for workers in more precarious jobs.
- **The proposal for a Recommendation on access to social protection:** aimed at supporting people working in non-standard forms of employment and self-employment who are not sufficiently covered by social security schemes.
- **The proposal to establish a European Labour Authority:** aimed at ensuring the enforcement of EU rules on labour mobility, facilitating access to information for individuals and employers, and facilitating cooperation between Member States in cross-border enforcement.

Jan Behrens, explained how the implementation of the EPSR principles will be monitored through the **European Semester**. He started by recalling that the European Semester originated in the Treaty of Amsterdam. Following the economic crisis of 2008, the semester was put in place to provide a more holistic governance framework for the European economic policy as well as employment, social and education and training policies. The European Semester provides a platform for recommending and discussing reforms with the Member States and the European Parliament, it is flexible in that recommendations are specific to each individual country. It is a reference framework for upwards convergence.

The analysis and recommendations made in the Semester reflect and promote the EPSR principles by assessing, monitoring and comparing the progress made towards their implementation. Over time, the share of social recommendations made as part of the Semester have increased. Currently, more than 40% of the recommendations relate to labour market, skills, education and/or social policies. There is a particularly strong focus on education, skills and social safety which directly reflects the principles of the Pillar.

In addition to the European Semester, the **Social Scoreboard** will also help monitor the implementation of the Pillar. The scoreboard is a collection of 14 headlines and 21 secondary indicators in 12 areas, structured around three dimensions of 'societal progress': equal opportunities and labour market access; dynamic labour markets and fair working conditions; and public support, social protection and inclusion. Such indicators include poverty indicators and an early school leaving rate. It will serve as a reference framework to monitor employment and social performances of Member States, including as part of the European Semester.

Jan ended his presentation by providing an overview of the timeline for delivery of the EPSR and the upcoming steps. The European Commission will propose the Multiannual Financial Framework Proposal in May and hold a Presidency Conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights in June. The panel ended with an opportunity for exchange between the audience and the panellists.

Day 1: Session B – Panel discussion on the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Denmark and Sweden

Mette Holm Sørensen, Head of Division, Danish Managing Authority explained that homelessness is a major social issue in Denmark, with over 6000 people currently deprived of a roof. Despite the adoption of a homelessness action plan at the national level, the overall number of houseless people has increased in recent years. For this reason, Denmark has chosen to focus its FEAD funding on homelessness.

Mette shared that the public sector in Denmark is divided between the national, regional and municipal levels. The government may initiate country wide initiatives such as the homeless action plan. The regions are responsible for matters including health and treatment. Finally, cities are responsible for providing services such as shelters etc. The civil society also plays a crucial role in supplementing the public services. NGOs establish unique trust-based relationships with target groups that public services struggle to achieve. They also contribute new and innovative ideas which lead to better services. Due to the strong tradition for volunteering in Denmark, NGOs can rely on volunteers, with 41% of the population participating in volunteer work.

Mette explained that the FEAD programme in Denmark plays an important role in supporting the European Pillar of Social Rights and, in particular, in putting principle 19 on housing and assistance to the homeless into action. Through the projects UDEFOR and COMPASS, Denmark combats poverty and homelessness and strives to strengthen the social inclusion of the most socially deprived.



Next, **Thomas Land Christiansen, Social Services Administration, City of Copenhagen** presented the perspective of the City of Copenhagen and its work to tackle poverty and social exclusion. Thomas revealed that 22% of the Danish homeless population lives in Copenhagen (1482 people). Many rough sleepers in Copenhagen come from other countries, primarily Romania, Bulgaria and Sweden. If they fail to find work, their social breakdown can be very quick. Against this background, the city of Copenhagen reinforced municipal and voluntary efforts through the *Transit* programme, which includes the FEAD-funded initiative UDEFOR. The programme aims to give vulnerable homeless migrants a more dignified life, including providing basic necessities and the repatriation of foreign homeless persons residing in Denmark. Activities include outreach efforts, counselling, primary health services as well as temporary accommodation for vulnerable houseless people. As a result of the programme, **are roughly 300-500 cases of support** helped each month either through counselling, shelter, food, training or bridge building. Around 200 people receive help to return to their home countries every year.

Annika Rosing, Head of Unit, Swedish ESF Council presented the Swedish perspective and efforts to fight poverty and social exclusion. She highlighted the fact that Sweden and its citizens have always put great pride in their welfare system and its focus on solidarity rather than charity. Sweden

has received the highest number of refugees and has welcomed a large number of disadvantaged EU citizens. However, the country faces an increase in relative poverty among the population, as well as in the number of irregular migrants. Around 15% of the population currently earns less than 60% of the median income which is considered to be the poverty level. Due to the country's high living costs, more and more people are struggling to afford rent or their mortgage and are pushed into homelessness and poverty as a result. This has had a large impact in cities as a number of people have to beg in the streets to survive.

Against this background, Sweden has decided to dedicate its €10 million of FEAD funding to social inclusion and preventive health for EU mobile citizens who are not able to sustain themselves. Social inclusion efforts primarily consist of providing guidance on where to find basic material assistance but also in informing about rights and responsibilities in Sweden. Efforts related to preventive health care focus on providing information about personal hygiene, critical dental care, etc. A total of 5 projects are supported by FEAD funding across the country. Annika praised the European Pillar of Social Rights as a welcome initiative, and hopes it will help to bring European countries together to tackle this new trend.

Finally, **Ann Sollgard, City of Malmö** presented the perspective of and the work done in the city of Malmö. Ann explained that Malmö is the third largest and the fastest growing city in Sweden. A third of the population is foreign-born and comes from 182 different countries. The city consists of a large number of households with a low income and experiences a high unemployment rate. In recent years, the city has received a large number of asylum-seekers and unaccompanied minors. Every year, around 1750 individuals live in acute forms of homelessness, or in hotels. About 200 of those are EU mobile citizens, primarily from Romania, who are left with no other choice than begging in the streets. Against this background, the FEAD-funded project Better Health is providing information and counselling about preventive health measures to help EU mobile citizens better manage their health. The city complemented FEAD-funded efforts with a number of other initiatives including winter shelters and day centres where recipients can eat breakfast and receive counselling.

Day 1: Session C – Interactive session: putting the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights into practice

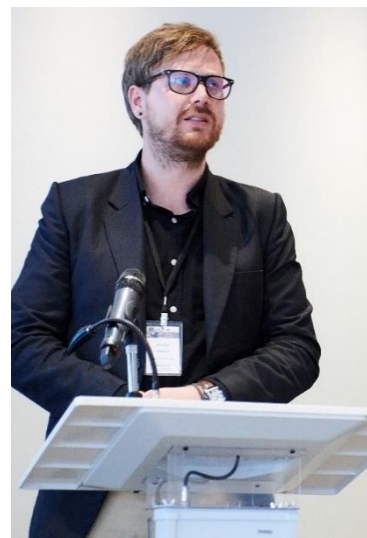
Following the sessions presenting the European, national and urban perspectives on FEAD's role in implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, the interactive session offered the opportunity to present an 'on-the-ground' perspective through which practicalities surrounding such delivery could be explored. The objective was to provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about five selected projects in Copenhagen and Malmö and subsequently to actively explore individual Pillar principles at their respective tables.

The session started with a brief introduction from the moderator, **Charlotte Ruitinga, Senior Consultant, Ecorys** on the methodology for the session. She welcomed the speakers to the stage and invited them to briefly present the five Danish and Swedish projects that participants would visit the following day. The project leaders presented the objectives of their FEAD projects as well as how these contribute to the delivery of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Presentations were given by:

- Ninna Hoegh, Project UDENFOR (Copenhagen)
- Christian Meldgaard Cramon, Project Compass (Copenhagen)
- Maud Williardsson Engström and Cristina Bornea, Project Bättre Hälsa (Malmö)
- Lena Thurang, the FRISK project (Malmö)
- Ulrika Falk, Po Drom (Malmö)²

² For more information on the projects presented, please see the summaries of the project visits on day 2 of the event.

Following the presentations, participants took part in an interactive activity through which they were able to collaboratively explore certain Pillar principles in more detail. Each table was given an envelope with two Pillar principles and four guiding questions. In groups, they needed to select one of the two principles, after which they were given 50 minutes to discuss their chosen Pillar principle by exploring the following questions:



1. **How prevalent is this issue in your respective countries and what is currently being done to address it?**
2. **What are the barriers encountered in the delivery of this principle in your respective countries?**
3. **In what way can the FEAD programme contribute to the implementation of this principle of the EPSR? Could you name any concrete examples of initiatives?**
4. **In what way could your respective FEAD programmes be amended or improved to better address this issue and apply the EPSR principle?**

The outcomes of the discussions by selected Pillar were presented by selected rapporteurs at each table and are presented below:

Table A - Principle 1 on education, training and lifelong training

The group highlighted the lack of access to education as a prevalent issue in their respective countries. In Sweden, municipalities decide on a case by case basis who may or may not enrol at school, which means accessing education is not automatic. In other countries, early school leaving was indicated as a prevalent and growing issue. The group identified a number of barriers including cultural differences and, in particular, family values; the difficulty for poor children to complete their homework and go to school in the first place as they have to beg for their survival. The group



mentioned a variety of ways in which FEAD can help put principle 1 into action. Relevant FEAD projects mentioned included: projects to help Roma children attend school and keep them motivated to stay in education; basic literacy projects with the possibility of obtaining certification; and projects providing basic IT knowledge. To further put this principle into action through FEAD, the group suggested a higher level of complementary measures and adopting a more holistic approach to

better follow beneficiaries throughout their life.

Table B – Principle 3 on equal opportunities

The group stressed the issues faced by newcomers in their respective countries. Participants identified barriers such as cultural differences, the language gap, and the lack of adapted infrastructures (for disabled people for instance). They stressed that FEAD-funded initiatives can help foster equal opportunities through material distribution to the most-deprived. Finally, to ensure the implementation of this principle, the group suggested that equal opportunities should be a bigger and systematic concern throughout the FEAD programme.

Table C and D – Principle 4 on childcare and support to children

Participants in those two groups identified a number of barriers in the access to childcare in their respective countries including financial barriers; registration requirements which are hard to meet for the homeless; and the lack of funding and political will to invest into good childcare services. They highlighted FEAD projects can help through the distribution of food and material assistance to families including school supplies. Delegates suggested it might be beneficial for FEAD procurement and recipients identification rules to be made more flexible as to be able to personalise the food assistance.

Table E – Principle 16 on health care

Delegates pointed out that health issues vary significantly from one group to another (e.g. elderly people, people with disabilities, etc.) in their respective countries. They shared concerns that some national systems prevent users from accessing health services because of how they are designed. Barriers to accessing health services include cumbersome registration requirements, financial costs, and the lack of a welcoming and safe atmosphere. Delegates therefore highlighted the importance of making FEAD programmes as inclusive as possible.

Table F and G – Principle 19 on housing and assistance for the homeless

Delegates in this group highlighted the shortage of affordable housing in their respective countries, and in particular in Denmark. Participants underlined the challenge for cities to remain attractive to taxpayers while providing affordable housing. The division of the competence to address homelessness between different government levels in Denmark presents an additional difficulty according to the group. FEAD-funded projects can help by creating awareness around homelessness and making the issue more visible. Participants suggested that FEAD and ESF projects could be further linked, and international networks could be built at the level of social workers.

Table H – Principle 20 on access to essential services

This group pointed out the difficulty of finding people who are not in the system because they are not registered or do not pay taxes in the first place. FEAD can help through the distribution of food or basic material assistance to the most deprived. Delegates suggested that it would be good for FEAD programmes to have more time to settle and include more accompanying measures. They also expressed their wish for greater flexibility in the choice of partner organisations and for the programme to take a more bottom-up in general.



Day 1: Session D – Closing Session

In the closing session, **Vicki Donlevy** touched on some of the main messages that emerged throughout the day and explained the logistical arrangements surrounding the project visits the following day.

Day 2: Key impressions from the project visits

Meeting participants were divided into three groups and were invited to choose to visit one of two projects in Copenhagen or participate in a bus tour of several projects across Malmö.

The Compass Project, Copenhagen

The first group was welcomed by **DanChurch Social (Kirkens Korshær)** and were given the opportunity to learn more about the **Compass** project in Copenhagen. The Compass project is one of two projects funded by FEAD in Denmark and has been working with homeless migrants since 2014. They explained to the group that they chose to support this particular target group as it is estimated that approximately 90% of homeless people in Copenhagen are non-Danish, and that mobile EU citizens particularly face significant challenges when arriving in Copenhagen and looking for employment.



Participants had the opportunity to visit the project's day shelter, which is the biggest day shelter in Denmark for homeless people. They were told about a night shelter which homeless people can also access in a different part of the city. Presentations were given by three of the social workers currently employed by Kirkens Korshær. They explained that they always try to adopt a holistic approach to support services, and counselling services are tailored to the specific needs of the individual.

They not only offer a space where homeless individuals can rest, relax and receive food and drink, but they also offer the opportunity to use showers and participate in activities. Every Monday, for instance, they offer Danish language classes, and they have an urban garden in which their users can work. Notably, they actively seek to help people to find employment, recognising that it is particularly difficult for EU mobile citizens to navigate the Danish labour market and social system.



Alongside their work in meeting the basic needs of homeless individuals - providing a resting place, food and drink and a shower - social workers offer counselling support to those who use their services. They also go one step further and actively try to advocate for changes in the regulatory system, as they noted that municipal workers often are unaware of the rights of EU citizens, thus impeding the integration of mobile EU citizens into the Danish social system.

Project UDEFOR, Copenhagen

The second group had the opportunity to learn more about **Project UDEFOR**, an initiative that additionally seeks to promote the social inclusion of homeless EU citizens in Denmark. The UDEFOR project targets the most vulnerable rough sleepers, including individuals that are unemployed, experiencing mental health problems, suffering from drug and/or alcohol abuse, or challenged by high levels of debt. These circumstances generally leave individuals



excluded from many parts of social life, increasing the likelihood of them living in impoverished and deprived circumstances.

The project supports vulnerable individuals through outreach initiatives, social support and counselling services. It seeks to build bridges between homeless individuals and mainstream society, as well as gather information on homelessness in Denmark to help inform the political debate. The project is currently running in Copenhagen and Aarhus.

The teams carry out outreach activities, with volunteers and staff going out into the streets and speaking to homeless individuals to encourage them to participate in UDEFOR activities. The 'locker room' initiative in Copenhagen consists of a room with a number of secured storage boxes where homeless people can keep their belongings. The volunteer overseeing the room can then engage with



these individuals and offer them support or advice related to finding employment, food, access to healthcare services, administrative support and more. They actively seek to build bridges between the homeless person and relevant authorities responsible for social care services.

Participants had the opportunity to visit the FEAD-funded locker room and were given a full tour of the UDEFOR premises, including the stock room where they keep all donated material goods.

Bus tour of FEAD-funded projects in Malmö

The third group boarded a bus and travelled across the Øresund bridge which connects Denmark and Sweden to go to Malmö. While on board, delegates had the opportunity to hear about a variety of FEAD-funded initiatives taking place in Sweden. Daniel Aman, the leader of the **PO DROM Project**, pointed out that Sweden has opted for Operational Programme II (OP II) and therefore FEAD funding cannot be used to hand out material assistance. Instead, through the Po Drom project, social workers focus on reaching out and building relations with their target group, namely vulnerable EU mobile citizens and, in particular, Roma people. Their team speaks several languages including Romanian and Bulgarian, which has proven to be a key success factor. In addition to field work, Po Drom provides legal information and counselling, puts end recipients in contact with unemployment services and offers language courses. Thanks to FEAD, Po Drom has been able to establish a close connection with their target group, earn their trust and help empower them. They can speak up for the recipients, bring them to emergency services when needed, and identify their unique skills and competencies.

Next, Christina Bornea from the **Better Health Project**, explained the project's aims to inform and empower their target group, namely vulnerable female EU mobile citizens. They have reached around 200 women begging in the streets, which represents almost two thirds of the Roma population in Malmö. Typically, members of the target group do not have European Health Insurance Cards which would allow them to access treatment in Sweden. They can only access emergency care. The project hence seeks to provide women from the target group with information about their rights and obligations in Sweden, where they can get medical help, and information on how to take care of their body (food, exercise, women's health issues) and mind



(stress and concerns). Many target group members first heard about the initiative through word of mouth.

Delegates also had the opportunity to see the day centre where the **CrossRoads Project** welcomes EU mobile citizens. The centre, open from 8.00 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. every day, offers the possibility to shower, have breakfast, and access counselling. Under certain conditions, the centre also opens at night. Furthermore, the team documents cases of hate crime and violence towards the target group. This is where having a diverse team with staff members speaking a plurality of languages proves particularly important.

The group also visited the mobile health clinic of the **FRISK Project** in Malmö. Open for 2 hours a week at a fixed time, the health clinic is a place where vulnerable EU mobile citizens can be examined; tested for sexually transmitted diseases; and receive preventive care advice. Medical staff



refer beneficiaries to relevant mainstream healthcare services where relevant. Patients tend to be referred from other organisations such as CrossRoads. Most potential patients also learn about this initiative through word of mouth. The FRISK project also delivers workshops and individual and group counselling sessions on healthcare and disease prevention.

Back on board the bus, a communication manager at the Malmö Employment agency gave his perspective on European funds such as FEAD to the delegates. According to him, European funding is particularly relevant to

tackle local issues which, in essence, are European. EU mobile citizens hoping for better living conditions in Sweden might choose to go to other EU countries if they can't find adequate employment in Sweden. Eventually, it is a shared responsibility between all EU countries to help those vulnerable citizens and provide them with education and access to employment.

Finally, on the way back to Copenhagen, representatives from the **Faktum street newspaper** explained how they work with the target group of FEAD projects. In fact, Faktum is the largest employer for vulnerable EU mobile citizens. Because they do not receive social benefits, it is in most cases their primary, if not only, source of subsistence. The concept of street newspapers is global; it's about offering some kind of meaningful activity to people who are victims of social exclusion. Street vendors have to pay for the magazine upfront (about €3) and sell it for €6, hence making a profit. The magazine showcases famous people who have been affected by social issues, but also vendors' self-produced content as much as possible. Such an experience has proven to help vendors to progress in English and Swedish substantially.

Day 2: Closing plenary session

Following the series of project visits, participants gathered at Hotel Imperial for the final session of the event. Rapporteurs were invited to the podium to present the main activities of the project they visited, as well as some of the key impressions and messages that they took away from the visits and discussions on Day 1. **Vicki Donlevy** subsequently thanked all the project representatives, speakers and participants for their involvement in the event and closed the meeting.

Keep in touch! – Join the FEAD Network

The FEAD Network is an active community of practice with lively exchange of experiences and shared learning. It allows the sharing of tools, ideas and resources that can help deliver the fund successfully.

The Network discusses all aspects of planning, managing and delivering activities across Europe. Conversations within the FEAD Network can cover any theme related to the role of the FEAD in the fight against poverty, for example food aid, child poverty, issues relating to migration, access to social services or assistance for older people.

By joining the Network, you'll be able to interact with people who do similar work to you in different European countries – wherever you are. You will also have the opportunity to continue the discussions arising in the Network Meetings online.

The FEAD Network has moved to a new online community on Facebook. The new Group is ideal for sharing content and referring colleagues to the group. Keep an eye out for new content including Facebook Live, vlogs and prizes.

[Facebook.com/groups/FEADNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FEADNetwork)

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We look forward to hearing from you!

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