

VLADIMÍR ŠPIDLA
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 26. 02. 2009

Dear Mr Zelderloo,

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to take part in the work of the Ad Hoc Expert Group for Institutional Care Reform.

The Ad Hoc Expert Group will be composed of independent experts, distinguished representatives of major pan-European or trans-national civil society organisations which deal with the issues of deinstitutionalisation and reform of institutional care.

The aim is to bring together the four "deinstitutionalisation narratives" concerning persons with disabilities, children, elderly people, and persons suffering from mental health problems. These categories increasingly overlap. Moreover, it is apparent that there are common underlying processes (e.g., the "paradigm shift" from a paternalistic ethic of care to an interactive one, increased attention to the issues of human rights, dignity and autonomy of members of vulnerable groups). On the levels of policy-making in Member States, however, the issues are often dealt with separately, in a rather fragmented way.

Even more importantly, the EU Structural Funds can contribute to the acceleration of desirable processes of change in Member States, but they also risk to be used for "improvements" of institutions that should rather be abolished and in that way they may contribute to make existing systems more resistant to such change. While the responsibility for the selection of projects financed from the Structural Funds lies with the Member States themselves, the European Commission can play a more active role in providing guidance and laying out clear policy options. In this context, the authority of independent experts in the field could prove particularly useful.

The mandate of the Ad Hoc Expert Group is attached in the Annex to this letter.

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this collective effort, and to wish you success therein.

Yours sincerely



Mr Luk Zelderloo
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Annex - Mandate of Ad Hoc Expert Group for Institutional Care Reform

1. The Ad Hoc Expert Group for Institutional Care Reform (further only "the Group") is composed of the following members:

- Ms **Carlota Besozzi**, Director, European Disability Forum;
- Ms **Ines Bulic**, Coordinator, European Coalition for Community Living;
- Mr **Geert Freyhoff**, Director, Inclusion Europe;
- Ms **Anne-Sophie Parent**, Director, AGE;
- Mr **Jan Pfeiffer**, Deputy Director, Children's High Level Group (Chair)
- Ms **Mary Van Dievel**, Director, Mental Health Europe;
- Mr **Luk Zelderloo**, Director, European Association of Service Providers for People with Disabilities.

2. The Group reports to **Vladimír Špidla**, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

3. The Members of the Group are independent of the European Commission. They are asked to carry out their tasks according to their own expert knowledge and best conscience.

4. The Group is assisted in carrying out its tasks by a secretariat composed of Trude Eliassen Unit E/2, DG EMPL, Silvio Grieco, Unit G/3, DG EMPL, and Jan Jařab, Cabinet of Commissioner Špidla. The European Commission also provides the venue for the meetings of the Group. The Commission does not reimburse travel or accommodation expenses.

5. To ensure coordination with other services of the European Commission, representatives of DG SANCO, DG JLS and DG REGIO may also be present at meetings of the Group as observers.

6. The main product of the Group shall be a Report to be handed over to Commissioner Špidla by 19 October 2009 at the latest. The Report shall include:

- Recommendations of a general nature concerning the processes of institutional care reform in Member States, with specific attention to the potential of the EU Structural Funds.
- Specific recommendations addressed to the European Commission with the view to promoting, assisting and accelerating the aforementioned processes.

7. If a Member of the Group is unable to attend a meeting of the Group, he/she may be replaced at a meeting by another expert representing the same organisation.

8. The working language of the Group is English.

9. The working methods of the Group are to be decided by the Group itself.

List of contacts

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