



# Covid-19 Online meeting

April 20, 2020

Federation of European  
Social Employers

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# Agenda

- Feedback on the Social Employers' survey (10')
- UNIPSO (Belgium) survey + proposals (10')
- FONSS (Romania) on a social emergency management centre Covid 19 (10')
- Short presentation of a joint letter sent to the Commission on the issue of protective equipment (5')
- Virtual roundtable on how participants see the transition back to regular activity





# Social services employer's responses to Covid-19 April 2020 survey



# Who answered the survey ?

- 14 organisations
- 10 members + 4 partners
- From 10 EU countries, namely :PL-GR-AUT-FR-CZ-L-D-B-PT-LT
- This on the week from April 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>





# Methodology

- Being based on 14 responses from umbrella organisations and social services providers = not any statistical value
- When several responses in the same country : responses put together to make only one - When the responses to the same question differ = considered as no answer
- Category other social services not taken into account.



# Still opened services

- **Childcare :**
  - 0 to 1/3 opened services in 9 countries but +2/3 in LT
- **PwD :**
  - 1/3 to 2/3 in 5 countries (FR/CZ/B/PT/LT)
  - 0 to 1/3 in 3 countries (PL/GR/L)
- **Elderly :**
  - over 2/3 opened in 6 countries (AUT/FR/CZ/L/B/PT)
  - 0 to 1/3 in PL and LT



# Personal Protective Equipments

- **Childcare :**
  - few PPE available (in 3 countries PL/CZ/D), mostly available in LT and others don't know,
- **PwD :**
  - Few PPE available (in 7 countries PL/GR/FR/CZ/D/B)
  - Mostly available in LT, L and PT
- **Elderly :**
  - Mostly available in 5 countries (CZ/L/B/PT/LT)
  - Few PPE available (in 3 countries PL/FR/D/)



# Are Covid 19 tests available for social workers ?

- PL : No because Poland does not do a lot of tests and they are even not available for first line workers (health workers)
- GR : No
- B : No. Thus far, Covid 19 tests are in priority available for front line workers in health and care sectors.
- LT : Yes for staff in direct contact in nursing homes
- AUT : Yes, if an infection is suspected in a patient or employee
- FR : French minister of Health decided on April 6 it will be available (for residents and staff) in each residential care home as soon as a case is identified (still needs to be implemented)
- D : Hospitals and doctors decide, whether and who will be tested. Usually, they apply the guidelines of the Robert-Koch-Institut. According to these guidelines a test should be done, when a person shows typical symptoms and had contact to an evidently infected person.
- PT : Tests began to be carried out in nursing homes this week. In the previous weeks, only in nursing homes only in case of COVID contamination
- CZ : All care givers, social workers and nurses in residential care should be tested in the next days.
- L : yes





# "Do you (or your members) face staff issues?"

CZ : missing staff by 20-30 % mainly due closed schools and kindergartens (mothers stay at home with kids with 60 % income, the state is reimbursing to all the employers this cost. Some staff is on preventive quarantine, some sick.

AUT / LT : Yes

PT : Yes, some staff members are at home to take care of their children, others belong to a risk group. It is difficult to recruit new elements because people are afraid of contamination. Some professionals keep working with a lot of dedication.


GR Most of the service providers who provide special education and care services, face significant survival problems because of the nature and the mix of funding they receive, for their services from the State. - Increased concern of financial stability and health issue - Most of our staff, got in a suspension (payed by the state) until the 30th of April. For the rest, there is no payment problem yet.

FR : staff may be reluctant to work without PPE when a case is known but in general, managed - As we represent activities welcoming children, most of them are closed and only a few workers still work. The other are temporarily unemployed with an allowance from the State. For those still working, we face lack of personal protection equipment and difficulty to maintain safe working conditions in relation to childcare. Our associations face the risk of cuts in subvention, and, a significant part of them may not be able to pay wages and face risk of bankruptcy - Very few refusing to work. For financial issues, we have to wait a little bit more, things are not really clear

D : "Problems arise due to bans on work due to the crisis, but also due to the great strain placed on employees in homes, for example. Due to failures in the care of children, adolescents and families also financial problems."

B : heterogenous staff issues, considering either their specific financing modes or beneficiaries. Enterprises or activities fully subsidised should not face staff issues. As for non or partially subsidised enterprises or activities, would benefit from temporary unemployment benefits.

L : no



"Can you provide information on the proportion of people with COVID 19 staying in residential care (as nursing homes) compared to those in hospitals."

- PL : around 30% of people who are staying in residential care with COVID compare to the group of people who are in hospitals
- FR : around 1/3 in residential care (mostly nursing homes) - 2/3 in hospitals
- CZ : 30 % in hospitals, 70 % stay in residential care facilities
  
- B : some statistics on people with COVID 19 in residential but there are not complete. No comparison with the people in hospitals.
- PT : no information till now. But in some nursing homes the proportion of people with COVID 19 is too high.
  
- No info : GR/AUT/L/D



# "Are there Social Services Providers' initiatives (your own or others') you would like to highlight ?"

PL : [Position services providers for disabled](#), for homeless people try to keep [homeless people](#) in a safe situation and places

GR : own initiatives planned to continue offering support using a variety of digital tools as Google classrooms - distance learning, distance therapy sessions -a lot of internet interventions applied to families with children or adults Multihandicapped or visually Impaired

FR : members share for free their online digital materials as cultural or sports activities as physical gathering are banned.

CZ : 10 nursing homes went to a free quarantine - totally closed, employees are staying and sleeping there with clients.

D : "All social service providers develop alternative offers in order to be able to maintain contact and support. Furthermore, Social Service Providers run all kind of special webpages, ranging from general information on Covid 19 and the corresponding legislation to jobportals and volunteerportals."

- B : [survey to assess the impact of the crisis and measures taken by public authorities](#), as well as to identify complementary proposals from the sectors.
- PT : "Public guidelines on the preparation of contingency plans in social structures; ban on visits to nursing homes since the beginning of March. Guidelines for social work in hospitals, primary health care and mental health. [Guidelines 1 – guidelines 2](#)

# "If you represent an umbrella organisation, what initiatives did you take to support your members ?

LT cooperation to get PPE + joint statement EPSU/SE shared with the government

PL : Tried to lobby for the facilitation for our member organisations, for mask and for information for them.

FR : teams are widely mobilized at the local level, holding regular relations with the Regional Health Agencies (ARS) and public authorities... Their primary concern is that the associations working for vulnerable groups should not be the ones forgotten in this health crisis. They also stress the need to coordinate all the actors.

Dedicated data base of official texts + guidelines

Testing of all residents and workers in residential care as soon as a covid case is identified has been obtained.

Legal experts platform opened to members and non members + a few webinars and memos.

CZ : several guidelines (for nursing homes, for home care, for asylum homes, how to use PPE, etc.), - COVID-19 hotline, - newsletter with information on daily basis and started to distribute free of charge masks, respirators, disinfection, shields, gloves.

L : Contact with authorities in order to manage material, training, statistics and organizational issues

D : "We support the members with information and advice and the development of concepts."

# "If you represent an umbrella organisation, what initiatives did you take to support your members ?

- B : Adapted the support activities towards members since the beginning of the crisis as follows:
  - 1. Information: a webpage dedicated to the Covid-19 supported by a specific Newsletter for every significant information update send to our members. The information provided is structured according to public authorities' measures, operational employers' measures (e.g. unemployment procedures, teleworking, labour law, etc.) and sectoral information linked to members' website.
  - 2. Analysis: analysis on main issues arising from members; such as, a legal analysis of public measures and a legal analysis on specific subsidies pertaining to our sectors and other aspects (ex: association law) - Small survey on the impact of COVID on European structural funds currently prepared.
  - 3. Political coordination: intersectoral positioning towards public authorities.
- PT : "alerted public authorities about the lack of means of protection in social services, especially in nursing homes; organization of a support group for social workers and of a group of volunteers to provide support in social services; organization of guidelines for social workers working in health services.

Thanks for your answers



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# **Social services employers' responses to the Covid-19 crisis**

Focus on social services' proposals in Belgium

**Social Employers online meeting, April 20<sup>th</sup> 2020**

# UNIPSO survey: methodology & objectives

- Governmental impetus to collect, centralize and relay Covid-19 issues
- UNIPSO survey (19-31 March) to member federations & enterprises
- Objectives: inventory of measures, impact assessment (re. crisis funds) and complementary measure proposals
- Results: 63 completed questionnaires, broad scope, intersectoral trends
  - Positioning elaboration & bilateral dialogue



# UNIPSO survey: intersectoral proposals

## Occupational & beneficiary safety and health

- Anticipation: protective equipment supply and priority coverage of screening tests
- Psychological support to beneficiaries, staffs and families
- Accommodation requisitioning
- Intersectoral support for protective equipment supply

# UNIPSO survey: intersectoral proposals

## **Staff & administrative management**

- Intersectoral staff transfer
- Administrative facilitation of legal compliance
- Perspective and precise instructions from legal authorities

## **Financial support**

- Diversity of resources hence financial support needs
- Mix of subsidized resources for financial mitigation
- On time-payout
- Public & private credit guarantees and flexibility



# COVID 19 in Romania

## The situation of social service providers

*Diana Chiriacescu, 20.04.2020*

# Number of cases

- 9.000 persons infected
- 451 deaths
  
- Capacity of testing – 4000 per day
- 98.000 persons tested since the beginning of the crisis
  
- 43.000 persons isolated at home
- 14.500 persons in institutionalized quarantine
  
- Emergency state since March 18<sup>th</sup>
- Prolonged for one additional month
- Military ordinances every week, very strict circulation restrictions.
- All institutions and services closed, except food stores and pharmacies

# Social services status (1)

- **All day centres and day services are closed since March 18<sup>th</sup>.**
- All residential services are mandatorily open (Military Ordinance from April 10<sup>th</sup>)
- Since April 10<sup>th</sup>, **all staff members of the residential units (public and private) are confined with the users, for 14-days shifts.**
  - Elderly services
  - Sheltered homes
  - Family-like settings for children and persons with disabilities
  - Homeless shelters etc.
- Non-profit services deal with **10.000 users in residential settings.** The public residential services: **54700 users.**
- When at home, the staff has to be fully isolated

# Social services status (2)

- **Technical unemployment is now supported by the State** for all economic operators (including NGOs)
- **The subsidies** for day services (day centres, rehabilitation centres) continue to be granted, with the condition that the staff performs services needed in communities.
- Some **light adjustments for the use of EU funds** have been issued, with a possible redesign of activities in communities, during the emergency state.
- **No financial support for social services** yet, the ones that are still active. Some new measures are designed in rural communities, with EU funds.
- No support for protective equipment in the social sector.
- The medical system was the key priority for the equipment and investments.

# Risks

- The NGO providers are likely to be excluded from the imminent financial support in the social sector (not yet confirmed, but rumored). Public staff will receive a small addition to the salary.
- No strict monitoring of the isolation of staff at home...which endangers the entire setting of the 14-days shifts, which is a strong burden on the system, anyway.

# What did FONSS do? (1)

- **It created a Centre for Social Emergency Response in NE Romania**
  - A partnership initiative, together with the Volunteer Ambulance in Iasi County, and the College Sf. Nicholas (future priests). Several NGOs from Iasi came later in the consortium. Coordinated by the Prefect.
  - It offers support services for elderly, disabled and persons isolated at home (food supply, donations of food or hygienic kits, administrative tasks etc.)
  - Call centre (3 phone numbers, connected with the Ambulance service, Police, Prefect, City Halls)
  - One volunteer partner manages the 11 quarantine centres in Iasi County (NE Romania) – testing, logistics etc.
  - Psychological support, spiritual guidance, social assistance, administrative and juridical support (online)
  - The partners provide over 50 volunteers for direct services. The FONSS members provide over 60 volunteers for online services
  - Over 40 situations and support services daily
  - Severe cases starting from April 1<sup>st</sup> (suicide attempts, severe burnouts of medical staff etc.)



# What did FONSS do? (2)

- **We have supported our members to obtain protection equipment and disinfectants:**
  - Negotiated prices with producers
  - Facilitated donations
  - Obtained masks, gloves and chlorine, at reasonable prices or for free
- **We have also advocated for:**
  - Unemployment support for NGOs – Got it.
  - Adjustments of the EU funds in the current projects – Got it.
  - Maintenance of the subsidies – Got it.
  - Financial support for the active NGO social services – Not yet.  
We estimate a loss of 2.5 million euros for FONSS members.

# The biggest need now:

## We try to create a National Social Fund, with a two fold function:

- Emergency response
- Post crisis development :
  - For users (subsistence activities after the crisis)
  - For service providers that will support vulnerable users.
- **Why?**
  - Because the State does not invest at all in social services.
  - Because the social risks are huge: extreme poverty and deprivation becomes endemic in rural areas and small towns (non-declared workers, families with many children)
- **Who can fuel the Social Fund?**
  - Donors, the State, EU funds
- **Initiators :**
  - The Social Platform in Romania, a consortium of all 5 federation of service providers
  - The College of Social Workers (Professional Association of Social Workers)
  - Private donors
  - Other NGOs (representatives for ethnic minorities, human rights etc)

For any ideas or questions:

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*Thank you for your support and stay safe!*



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# Discussion



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## To go further

Joint European Roadmap available [here](#) + Factsheet available [here](#)

[Joint letter EPSU/Social employers urging the European Commission](#) to develop the awareness in all Member States that social care and support is also key to face the outbreak and has to be prioritized in PPE providing and protection,





Thanks a lot for your participation

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