



# FEAD Network

Fund for  
European Aid  
to the Most Deprived

Meeting report

**FIFTH FEAD NETWORK MEETING:  
IDENTIFYING AND REACHING  
OUT TO BENEFICIARIES**

6-7 April 2017

Novotel, Berlin

# Acknowledgements

On behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, the organisers would like to thank all speakers, presenters, rapporteurs, panellists and delegates whose active participation, input and support made this event possible.

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## The fifth FEAD Network Meeting

On 6 and 7 April 2017, the European Commission hosted the fifth network meeting of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), co-organised with the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Germany. The meeting brought together the EU-wide network of actors involved in FEAD to discuss issues related to the identification of and outreach to end recipients. The meeting was organised by Ecorys on behalf of the European Commission, in cooperation with the German Managing Authority. 96 delegates from 24 European Union countries attended the event, held at Novotel in Berlin, representing a range of stakeholders, including: Managing Authorities (MAs); partner organisations; other local, regional and national actors; European Commission representatives; EU-level partner organisations and the wider EU community. For the first time, the meeting also included on-site project visits which were attended by over 85 delegates.

### Day 1 – Welcome and overview of the two days

The meeting was introduced by **Nigel Meager, Director of the Institute for Employment Studies (IES)**, who moderated the plenary sessions throughout Day 1. Nigel welcomed the participants and briefly introduced the main items on the agenda. He also thanked the German FEAD Managing Authority for collaborating with the European Commission to organise the meeting, which was the first FEAD meeting to be held outside Brussels. Before giving the floor to the two



speakers of the opening session, Nigel reminded participants about the field visits to four ongoing FEAD projects – a newly introduced feature of this fifth network meeting.

### Day 1 – Opening Session

The floor was then given to **Egbert Holthuis, Head of the "Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia" Unit at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL)**. Egbert made some opening remarks on the topic of the meeting, stressing the importance of the identification of and outreach to FEAD beneficiaries and hard-to-reach target groups, in light of the challenges faced by Member States in developing effective and comprehensive



inclusion policies. In particular, he underlined the significance of sharing experiences gained from the ground and learning from the fundamental work that partner organisations do in reaching beneficiaries. Egbert concluded his remarks by reminding participants of the importance of taking stock of achievements so far with FEAD implementation and the impact thereof.



The European Commission would like to have more detailed information available to be reflected in the 2016 national reports, also in view of the upcoming mid-term evaluation.

Egbert's intervention was followed by a speech by **Susanne Hoffmann, Director- General for 'European and International Employment and Social Policies, ESF' at the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**. Susanne gave a presentation of the FEAD work carried out in Germany regarding the identification of target groups, as well as activities undertaken and results achieved in terms of social inclusion of beneficiaries. In line with what was mentioned by Egbert from the European Commission's perspective, Susanne stressed the importance for policy-makers to build upon the experiences of organisations engaging daily with the implementation of FEAD projects. Susanne also praised the work of social workers and FEAD partner organisations, both in Germany, where positive results have been observed, and across Europe. Susanne then introduced the three key FEAD target groups in Germany, i.e. newly arrived EU citizens, homeless people and people at risk of homelessness, and newly arrived EU citizens and their children. According to the figures presented by Susanne, the 83 FEAD projects active in Germany have provided 14,662 counselling sessions in 2016. Of these, 11,536 sessions (approximately 80%) have been considered as 'successful', i.e. having a positive impact on the social integration of beneficiaries.<sup>1</sup> The use of workers who can provide counselling in the native language of beneficiaries was a significant factor for the success of FEAD projects in Germany. Susanne closed her presentation by thanking the four projects which agreed to host FEAD Network delegates in Berlin as part of this meeting and by stressing the importance of FEAD in the creation of a European Union which is oriented towards social inclusion and integration.



## Day 1 – Session A: Plenary session on non-discrimination

Session A was aimed at setting the scene with regard to poverty and non-discrimination and to present some of the most recent research in this field.

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<sup>1</sup> A session was considered having a positive impact if the person counselled was successfully integrated as a consequence of the counselling activities (for example if children were enrolled in nurseries). Impact is often measured through beneficiary feedback.

**Amana Ferro, Senior Policy Officer at the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)** provided a presentation on the state of play with regard to poverty and discrimination in Europe. Amana identified some of the main trends in European poverty levels and the primary groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

These include children (26.9%), older people (17.4%), young people (23.7%; 40% in Romania), women and single parents (48.3%) and large families (27.1%). Socially excluded groups face a higher risk of poverty, e.g. Roma (80%), migrants (40%) and people with disabilities (30%). Amana presented the human rights-based approach which is supported by EAPN and some of the work done by the organisation to advocate for and monitor the use of human



rights law to assist the fight against poverty. EAPN also monitors the link between socio-economic background and discrimination. In this context, Amana presented some of the key challenges faced by people experiencing deprivation in terms of access to income, access to services (e.g. housing and health) and access to the labour market, focusing on the key groups facing these obstacles in Europe.

Amana concluded her presentation by providing insight into possible solutions and ways forward. She stressed the importance of promoting ownership and participation of beneficiaries and people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies which affect them. She also emphasised the need for tailored approaches which correspond to individual needs.

**Sheena Keller, Research Officer in the Equality and Citizens' Rights Department at the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**, gave a presentation on the recent work of the Agency with regard to Roma people in Europe, focusing on the findings of the second [European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey \(EU MIDIS II\)](#) and on the multi-annual research project on [Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion \(LERI\)](#). The project wants to identify what works and what does not work for Roma inclusion at local level, as well as the main reasons behind this, with the objective of helping communities participate in decision making, building their capacity to better use funding and fostering a shared



understanding of inclusion strategies. For this reason, FRA's work focused on engaging local-level stakeholders in 21 regions across 11 Member States. Sheena also presented some of the challenges experienced by stakeholders at local level with regard to funding.

These include, for instance, problems relating to a lack of flexibility in project design and implementation and poor operational coordination mechanisms. Sheena concluded by providing some insights into how to ensure that funds reach the most deprived in an effective manner (e.g. by supporting participatory processes, complementing material aid with other social inclusion measures, and increasing the flexibility of funding requirements). Following the presentations, the two experts answered questions from the audience.





## Day 1 – Session B: ‘Marketplace’ on identifying and reaching out to target groups

Session B of Day 1 aimed to provide delegates with the opportunity to learn about six case studies, presenting outreach and identification practices for different target groups in five different EU countries. Each case study is briefly presented below, together with the main learning points captured from the discussions during the sessions.

### Table 1 – Mobile counselling service – Living Europe – EULE.Mobil

**Jochen Schmidt, Diakonisches Werk an der Saar**, and **Markus Elser, Arbeiterwohlfahrt Landesverband Saarland**, presented the German [EULE.Mobil](#) project. This is a mobile counselling service through which multilingual social counsellors act as a bridge between support services and the most deprived EU mobile citizens and their children, as well as homeless people. The project operates in Saarbrücken, Germany. Social workers employ two methods for identifying and reaching out to beneficiaries. Firstly, they run two offices in the particularly deprived areas in the city. These centres have regular consultation hours. Social workers additionally take to the streets to known dwellings of homeless people across the city in order to speak with potential aid recipients directly. The social workers of EULE.Mobil liaise directly with end beneficiaries and support them by referring them to other service providers. Notably, the social workers accompany beneficiaries throughout the support process.

Key **success factors** of the project include language coverage, the fact that the project is easily accessible (both in terms of location and consultation hours) and the availability of a strong supporting network. The fact that the project team covers a broad range of languages (e.g. Bulgarian, Croatian, English, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian, Romany and Spanish) allows project workers to reach a higher number of beneficiaries. In addition, having a very strong network of actors around the organisation is important for supporting beneficiaries entering the labour market. The network also covers a range of needs, including psychological help, free medical assistance, entrance into homeless shelters and temporary housing, etc. Finally, another successful element consists in the ability of social workers to follow the entire support process. This allows them to develop a relationship based on trust with beneficiaries, leading to a more sustainable integration of clients into the German social system, as they are more accepting towards the support received.



Key **challenges** of the project include the fact that the target group consists of particularly disadvantaged persons who do not yet have access to the regular social system, thus making support efforts more challenging, especially in terms of integration into the labour market. Language barriers are another factor, as well as low education levels. Finally, in Germany there is a specific challenge with regard to the integration of children of EU mobile citizens, due to the shortage of spaces in German nurseries and primary schools.



**Table 2 – Greece: Reaching out to diverse target groups**

**Ioanna Papagianni, Head of Unit A (Programming and Evaluation) of the Greek FEAD Managing Authority**, presented the system developed in Greece for the identification of beneficiaries who receive food and material assistance through FEAD. The system was developed taking into consideration the particularities of Greece (which is characterised by a high number of remote areas and islands) and with the aim of reaching the most deprived segments of the population whilst avoiding any type of discrimination. In order to do so, a ministerial decision established that beneficiaries would be selected on the basis of economic criteria, based on income and assets data available to the Ministry of Finance, and through the use of an online application form. An information campaign was run by the Ministry together with municipalities and regional authorities, which are partner organisations of FEAD in Greece. In order to support potential beneficiaries who have no access to the internet, local hotspots were created in each municipality, with trained personnel available throughout the application period (which lasted about one month). The applications received were then cross-checked by the Ministry of Finance against fiscal data, resulting in a list of beneficiaries including detailed data on age, sex, origin and the composition of the applicant's household. The detailed information in the list allows each partner organisation to tailor food distribution and accompanying measures to address the needs of each single beneficiary.



As of today, the food distribution scheme reaches about 400,000 people in Greece. The main shortcoming is the high proportion of eligible people who do not collect their food (about 40%). According to the Managing Authority, this may depend on the level of stigma linked to food distribution or the high number of seasonal workers among the applicants (many of whom may have left the country).

The main **success factors** of the system are linked to the ability of partner organisations to tailor the content of food parcels and accompanying measures to the needs of individuals, given the detailed information available to them. In addition, in order to reduce the level of stigmatisation which could be linked to the process, partner organisations were advised to multiply distribution points and make food distribution available more often and in closed spaces.

One of the **challenges** which was mentioned related to the high levels of uncollected food. In order to avoid wasting food, partner organisations are asked to redistribute food to other beneficiaries and, when this is not possible, to donate the remaining produce to soup kitchens. Other challenges relate to access to the scheme: the impact of the scheme is limited by a lack of awareness among potential beneficiaries (even though this was mitigated through information activities) and by the time constraints linked to the application process, as the current list of beneficiaries was prepared in 2015 and has not been updated since then. However, from 2017 new applications will be collected every six months.

### Table 3 – Czech Republic: School dinners for disadvantaged children

**Robert Hřebíček** from the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**, FEAD Managing Authority in the Czech Republic, presented the FEAD funded project '[School dinners for disadvantaged children](#)', which targets children whose parents cannot afford the cost of school meals, particularly those in large families. In the Czech Republic, school meals are regulated by the law and offered to all children aged 3-15. They are provided by schools and nurseries through on-site facilities (canteens) and served as a midday meal. The cost is shared between the state, regional authorities and parents. However, some children miss out on the meals because their parents cannot afford to pay their part, particularly those with larger families.

The FEAD project covers the cost of school dinners for children whose parents cannot afford to pay. In order to avoid stigmatisation in schools, it was decided to channel the funds through regional authorities to avoid identification of the children. Authorities identify the target group through labour offices (job centres), who administer benefits for material need assistance.



Parents who receive this benefit are given the option to opt into the school dinner scheme. If they agree, the regional authority provides the funding for their child's school dinners, directly to the child's school. At present, the project is in the second year of its implementation. Out of 14 Czech regions, the 4 regions which currently participate provide school dinners to 3,000 children. The expectation is that this number will be doubled in the next academic year and the Managing Authority is hoping that, eventually, the project could become a scheme provided by the state from national funds.

The main **success factor** of the project is its ability to avoid stigmatisation by administering funds through regional authorities. At a procedural level, the scheme is easy to implement as it avoids public procurement, given that the amounts spent by schools for meals are provided by law.

**Challenges** include the difficulty in reaching specific groups which fall outside of the definition of the target group for the project. Only people who are registered within the job centres as recipients of the benefits for material need assistance can access the scheme. To reach any potential beneficiaries who are on the borderline of poverty but have not yet been registered to receive the benefit, the Managing Authority in the Czech Republic has been collaborating with the NGO 'Women for Women' which helps to include also children of families who are not yet registered with the job centres. The Managing Authority works closely also with the government Agency for Social Inclusion in order to better reach and inform specific groups such as Roma about the school meals scheme.

#### Table 4 – Finland: Distributing food aid in remote rural areas

**Kirsi Virtanen** is a founder of **Kainuun Kansalaiskeskus ry - Kainuu Citizen Centre**, a volunteer-based organisation providing food aid in the Kainuu region. Kirsi talked about how food aid is distributed to people living in remote rural areas of Kuhmo. The identification of the target group is based on a very informal approach through which both Kirsi and the social workers working in the region decide on who is in need of food aid. Kuhmo has a high unemployment rate and a retired population who rely on state pensions (a significant number of pensioners receive 800 euros a month or less). As a result, the majority of residents rely on the FEAD food aid which is distributed twice a year by a network of 30 volunteers.



One of the major **success factors** of the project is how well connected and well known Kirsi is in the community, due to her vast experience of working with the community and providing social support in different contexts. For example, prior to the FEAD project she was involved in an initiative supporting the creation of jobs in the region. The strong network of contacts enables the project to reach out to people in need, even in the most hard-to reach areas.



The **main challenges** identified were:

- Accessing people in remote areas. The target group is situated in areas that are difficult to access (e.g. due to dense forests, large lakes and an absence of proper roads).
- Members of the target group do not identify themselves as in need. The region has been deprived throughout history and people are used to living in deprivation as they have not experienced anything different.
- Food distribution is done by a network of volunteers and it can sometimes be challenging to mobilise the network.
- The recipients of food aid are mostly not happy with the choices available and frequently complain about the quality of the items on offer. The concern is that, if they stop accepting the food parcels, the government might assume there is no need for food aid.
- There is a lack of / inadequate communication between the institutions that provide social welfare.

#### Table 5 – Latvia: Supporting deprived families with children

**Aurika Stratane, Senior Expert at the Latvian Ministry of Welfare, Managing Authority for the FEAD Programme**, presented the activities of FEAD in supporting deprived families with children in Latvia. In Latvia, under FEAD Operational Programme 1, a scheme to support deprived people is currently being implemented. Beneficiaries of the scheme can be individuals or families with or without children, with a per capita income of less than € 128.06/month or individuals or families with or without children in a crisis situation (e.g. hit by a natural disaster).

To qualify for the scheme, it is necessary to obtain a statement from social service providers recognising the household's status as being in need or in a crisis situation (needs assessment has to be carried out by social services). Households are then allowed to receive food packages containing 13 products (2 packages every 3 months for a single person). Families with children are entitled to receive up to 8 packages every 3 months. In addition, they can receive personal hygiene products, infant food products (for children under 2 years of age), and school items (for children aged 5 to 16). The amount of food provided corresponds to a share of up to 30% of the total estimated need, in order to encourage participation of beneficiaries in the labour market. To qualify for the scheme it is necessary to be registered as a resident with the local authority. As a result, irregular migrants and those not registered with the local authority do not qualify and are not entitled to receive food packages. However, they can still have access to soup kitchens (provided they receive food packages through the same scheme funded by FEAD) to receive hot meals.

One of the major **success factors** of the project is its focus on addressing child poverty, which aims to break the circle of poverty; alleviating poverty among children leads to higher school attendance and lower drop-out rates, helping children from poor families to have better living prospects than their parents. This approach aims to invest in children in order to eradicate poverty in the longer term. Surveys carried out by the Latvian authorities seem to confirm that, due to the scheme, parents were able to save money to be spent on their children.

The **main challenges** identified were:

- Participation of beneficiaries in the labour market, which is not linked to the support received and is not mandatory; therefore, in absence of evidence, it is unclear if the scheme is actually encouraging or rather discouraging labour market participation;
- The scheme is not thought to reach the most deprived people, such as irregular immigrants or the homeless, who are entitled only to free hot meals in the soup kitchens.



**Table 6 – Germany: Duisburg Project on Integration and Counselling - just arrived ... what next?**

**Robert Tonks, Deputy Director of the Office for European Affairs of the City of Duisburg**, presented the project ['Integration and Counselling - just arrived ... what next?'](#). The project is being implemented by the City of Duisburg in Germany and consists of counselling services provided to newly arrived EU citizens who are Romanian, Romanian Roma, Bulgarian and Turkish-Bulgarian. The FEAD project provides welcome and integration measures to these newly arrived EU citizens in order to complement other existing integration measures. The project funds six full-time integration counsellors who provide assistance and counselling in the native language of the newly arrived EU citizens, helping to smooth out the integration process. The counselling services are essential to integration, as these newly arrived people may otherwise fall prey to negative networks. Up to now, the project can report 900 cases of successful counselling.

The main **success factor** identified relates to the use of the target group's native languages for the provision of the services. This facilitates communication and helps understand the cultural backgrounds these people come from, overcoming both linguistic and cultural barriers.

The **main challenges** and mitigation strategies identified in reaching out to the target group include:

- The counselling services do not reach out to the whole family, but rather mostly to women. 80% of the beneficiaries of the counselling services are women, as they are most often responsible for the education of their children and ensuring access to different services, while men tend to be out working in order to provide the necessary means for the subsistence of the family. More time and human resources would be needed to put in place specific methods for working with women.
- It is difficult to ensure continuity and complement FEAD services with other measures, such as language training courses or vocational training for ensuring better access to the labour market.
- Enough time needs to be allowed to build up contact and gain the trust of newly arrived citizens.
- For the smooth integration of newly arrived citizens, who are often perceived as competition by the long-established Turkish community in Duisburg, the integration services provided by the city must also work with the leaders of this community.<sup>2</sup>
- Working with the leaders of minority communities has proven to be an efficient way to work towards their integration, but this is more difficult in the case of newly arrived EU citizens, as they have not yet formed communities.
- Monitoring the impact of the counselling services is challenging and is mostly carried out in an informal manner, through discussions with former beneficiaries.



<sup>2</sup> The city has a population of about 500,000 inhabitants, of which 90,000 belong to the Turkish community.



## Day 1 – Session C: Closing session

The closing session reunited the speakers of Day 1 to provide some key reflections on the discussions held during the day. This was followed by a discussion with the audience and an introduction to the programme for Day 2.

**Egbert Holthuis** expressed great appreciation to those presenting the case studies and to all participants for their active involvement in discussing these cases. The open discussions highlighted the complexity of implementing projects to deliver services to beneficiaries while addressing challenges and adjusting the programme to the specific local context. He highlighted the diversity of experiences from project to project and from country to country and the importance of overcoming language barriers in particular when dealing with people not (yet) mastering the language of the host country. Egbert concluded by the need to look at, and learn from, MS having dealt with a number of challenges in the implementation of programmes as reported in the 2015 reports (like delays in procurement procedures, unequal coverage of the territory, reporting requirements for partner organisations etc).

After thanking the delegates for sharing their experiences from the ground, **Amana Ferro** reflected on what she considered to be two key concepts for the day: stigma and rights. She stressed the importance of understanding that discrimination and poverty constitute a violation of individual human rights.

**Sheena Keller** reflected on a number of issues which emerged from the marketplace session, including: the importance of language, in terms of barriers and outreach; the importance of maintaining continuous contact with the community and beneficiaries to establish relationships of trust between workers and beneficiaries; the broad range of existing outreach activities, ranging from word of mouth to more formal activities; and the existence of overall frustration at the lack of integration between funding mechanisms and the limited flexibility of regulations and funding procedures. Sheena further touched upon the choice of criteria for the identification of beneficiaries. According to Sheena, the chosen criteria are often solely economic, but she reminded participants that alternative methods may exist and be used in order to avoid discrimination of beneficiaries. Finally, she stressed the importance of data collection and monitoring activities, while acknowledging the sensitive nature of these activities when it comes to groups at risk of social exclusion. Sheena concluded with a remark on the use of language, stressing the importance of being cautious in utilising terms which can objectify individuals (e.g. "target group").



The contributions from the speakers were followed by a discussion with the audience.



The first day of the meeting was then closed by Nigel Meager, who reminded participants of the arrangements for the evening and Day 2. The closing session was followed by informal networking drinks and a dinner.



The image is a composite of two parts. On the left is a promotional poster for the FEAD Network, featuring the European Commission logo and text about sharing expertise across Europe. On the right is a photograph of a crowded indoor event, likely a conference or exhibition, with many people walking and talking.

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## Day 2 – Session D: Academic lecture on ‘Support systems for the most deprived - an alternative view’

Day 2 was opened by **Maurizio Curtarelli, Associate Director at Ecorys**, who introduced the first session of the day: an academic lecture on support systems for the most deprived. The lecture was delivered by **Professor Emeritus Jan Vranken, Professor and founder of the Research Centre on Inequality, Poverty, Social Exclusion and the City (OASeS) at the University of Antwerp**.

Prof. Vranken presented some recurrent features in the definition of food poverty and then provided insights into the identification of the ‘most deprived’. Identification in this context can depend on statistical definitions, institutional definitions and definitions provided by social workers and practitioners. It can be linked to the identification of high-risk categories (such as children, older people and single parents), spatial differences at national and local level (e.g. differentiating between rural and urban areas) and changes over time. Prof. Vranken also identified barriers to reaching out to hard-to-reach groups. Such barriers can be legal, situational, informative, dispositional, institutional and financial.



The main features of effective support were also presented. Prof. Vranken noted that food and material aid are only the first step to more structural policies and approaches. Effective support needs to take into consideration the context and the fact that individuals experience multiple disadvantages. Key questions to be addressed when devising strategies and policies relate to the identification of under-represented groups, the diversity of the target group population, questions of participation and ownership of beneficiaries, and empowerment.

The speaker then presented different perspectives connected with the conceptualisation of poverty. According to Prof. Vranken, poverty can be conceptualised at the individual, meso- and macro-levels and be linked to internal or external causes (see figure below from his presentation).

	Internal cause	External cause
Individual (micro)	Deficiency perspective ('blaming the victim')	Social accident perspective ('accidents happen' – different exposure to risk?)
Meso (Institutional)	Institutional deficiency (physical, social, cultural and personal thresholds)	Social status of institution (Stigmatisation of social service)
Macro (society)	Structural model (how society is organised)	Cyclical model (rapid social change, economic cycles)

Prof. Vranken concluded his presentation by presenting key issues for policy makers, social workers and beneficiaries, providing an overview of two different interpretations of how the relationship between the latter two groups can be built up.<sup>3</sup> Alienating behaviour such as distant and paternalistic attitudes should be replaced by relationships of trust and more emancipatory behaviour.

## Day 2 – Project visits

After the lecture by Prof. Vranken, delegates took part in four parallel site visits which were prepared by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Participants were able to visit one of four FEAD-funded projects in Berlin, based on their preference, to gain an insight into how the Fund is helping three of the key target groups in Germany: newly arrived EU citizens, homeless people and people at risk of homelessness, and newly arrived EU citizens and their children.

### Project One – Amaro Foro

**Project description:** The [project Amaro Foro](#) provides a contact point for newly arrived EU citizens, particularly from Bulgaria and Romania, who are in a vulnerable position and in need of assistance. The project seeks to assist the target group, which includes both Roma and non-Roma EU citizens, by improving their access to regular social services, connecting them to local networks and sources of information and empowering them. In this sense, the aim is to close the gap between the social services and public administrations, on one side, and newly arrived immigrants on the other, reaching out to people who have not (yet) established networks in the city. Activities include outreach work, consultation and accompanying administrative trips, and other advisory services. Outreach assistance is offered in the languages most commonly spoken by these target groups, including Romani, Bulgarian and Romanian.

**Visit description:** Project manager **Georgi Ivanov** ([georgi@amaroforo.de](mailto:georgi@amaroforo.de)) and his colleagues welcomed the delegates to the Amaro Foro premises, providing a presentation of the range of services that FEAD counsellors offer and key challenges they face in Berlin. In order to identify beneficiaries, FEAD counsellors periodically visit places which are known as meeting points for newly arrived EU migrants from Romania and Bulgaria and individuals with a Roma background. The purpose is to get in touch with them to welcome them and to

<sup>3</sup> Based on Driessens, K. (2003).

provide them with the support needed to settle down in Berlin. The presentation illustrated the type of support provided to allow these citizens to access services in Berlin and to prevent any form of discrimination based on their citizenship or ethnic background. A video was shown to demonstrate the difficulties that migrant families can experience in renting accommodation from a private landlord. The video was produced (in German and English) for awareness-raising campaigns in schools and other contexts and is available on the project's [website](#). The presentation was followed by several questions from delegates to Amaro Foro members of staff, who were happy to reply extensively and provide additional examples.



### Project Two – ‘Frostschutzengel’ plus

**Project description:** The [‘Frostschutzengel’ plus project](#) provides healthcare and social counselling for homeless people and newly arrived EU citizens. Counsellors provide social assistance and access to healthcare in multiple languages and in various low-threshold homeless facilities, working together with different specialised counselling offices and national institutions in Berlin. The project offers social assistance and healthcare advice to its target groups in their mother tongue (Bulgarian, Polish, Romanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Russian). In addition to visiting the low-threshold facilities, project counsellors provide in-house counselling once a week for two hours on the project’s premises. The main goal of the project is to bridge the gap between the regular social care system and EU citizens who come to Germany looking for a job and/or better life prospects, but end up on the streets or living in precarious conditions.

For the on-site visits, the delegates were divided into three smaller groups:

**Group A – Caritas walk-in health clinic:** The first group of delegates visited a walk-in health clinic targeting newly arrived EU citizens and homeless people, guided by project staff **Marlene Köster** and **Frank Petratschek**. Since 1992, the walk-in health clinic provides medical services for people without health insurance. Within the scope of the FEAD-funded



project, health counselling, as well as social counselling, is offered for the most deprived people in the health clinic. Project staff gave a short overview of the daily work of the clinic. Participants were shown the counselling room, the doctor's room and the showers, while the clinic was in use and clients were having a coffee in the waiting room.



**Group B** – The second group of delegates stayed on the premises of the "Frostschutzengel" plus project and learnt more details about the project's services. The delegates were welcomed to the project's premises by social counsellors Petra Schwaiger and Ana Sandu, and Robert Vettman, Director of GEBEWO - Soziale Dienste Berlin. The visit provided an informal setting where delegates had the opportunity to ask questions, discuss their views, and share their country-specific experiences and challenges in reaching out to the same target group as the project.



**The main points discussed during the visit were the following:**

- The aim of the project is to help homeless people to access existing social services and to understand and exercise their social rights. The project works towards building a bridge between the regular social care system and newly arrived EU citizens who come to Germany for a better life but ended up living on the streets or in precarious conditions.
- The approach taken by the project in reaching out to the target group is very informal; counsellors visit the low-threshold institutions on a regular basis and try to build trustable relationships with the target group, in which they feel at ease to share their problems and seek assistance from the counsellors.
- The target group is faced with language barriers, and sometimes discrimination, even from social service providers. The task of the project is to help them overcome this through individual counselling sessions to explain their rights and eligibility.
- The project also works with social services and public authorities to provide a better understanding of the target group and their needs. In addition, it promotes the need for more international social workers at low-threshold homeless institutions.

A short video of Petra Schwaiger talking about the project will be shortly posted on Yammer.

**Group C – Project Mobi.Berlin:** The third group of delegates visited the project [Mobi.Berlin](#), which is based on the premises of the Caritas association. This project provides multilingual assistance to newly arrived EU citizens who find themselves in dire circumstances, often living on the streets of Berlin. The project is run by Caritas, a German association, in collaboration with a number of partners. It is 95% funded by FEAD and co-funded by the Federal State of Berlin. It is a 3-year project, running from 2016-2018, and serves 5 districts in the city. Delegates were guided by Project Manager **Hannelore Berdich** and her colleagues **Janka Vogel**, **Donatella Forcini** and **Michael Danner**. Janka and Donatella presented the project's services, its target group and daily challenges. The services provided to the hardest-to-reach groups include interventions in public places, counselling advice on

legislation, shelter, healthcare, educational support and social benefits. It serves as a first point of call, often referring the clients to other services or related projects. The project also raises awareness on social inclusion among the target group, as well as with local authorities. As many of the project's target group are Roma and non-Roma from Bulgaria and Romania, the project focuses on providing services in Romanian and Bulgarian. However, it is open to anyone, and the other languages covered include Hungarian and Turkish. Counselling is provided through sessions either in the project's offices or, more often, through meetings with clients in public places close to where they live, such as in parks. Following a discussion, the delegates were shown around the premises, including around the MOBI reception area and offices, where the counselling sessions are performed.



### Project Three – EU Fit-in

**Project description:** The [“EU Fit-in”](#) (European Family Integration in Neukölln) project targets families of EU migrants who live in the area of Neukölln in Berlin and experience deprivation, living in very poor conditions and having few means to navigate German society. The project works with families and children of newly arrived EU citizens to increase their participation in early education and social care, offering access to day care and other pre-school or leisure-time facilities, so that they can learn German more quickly, receive help in solving specific problems and improve their prospects in the country. The project is implemented by the Youth Office in Neukölln, in cooperation with three local organisations (AspE e.V., Kleiner Fratz GmbH and Nachbarschaftsheim Neukölln e.V.). Workers within these organisations have linguistic proficiency, access to and experience with the target group. For this reason they serve as a bridge between the families and existing social care services.

**Visit description:** Delegates were welcomed by **Anne Eilers-Hellmich**, EU Fit-in project manager, in the District Town Hall of Neukölln. Anne, with the support of some colleagues



from the Youth Office and representatives of the three implementing organisations, provided a short presentation on the local context, the needs behind the initiative and its activities. Following the presentations, small groups of delegates visited the venues where the partner organisations work or are active, including childcare centres and a family forum. Delegates had the opportunity to see the sites first-hand, gather more detail on specific aspects of project activities, share experiences and ask questions to the social workers.



#### **Project Four – Wegweiser aus der Ausgrenzung – Guiding the way out of exclusion**

**Project description:** The “[Wegweiser aus der Ausgrenzung](#)” project provides advice to the homeless and those in danger of losing their homes in Berlin, using mobile counselling and low-threshold social assistance. It operates from four permanent locations, collaborating with a wide network of partners, as well as conducting mobile outreach work in locations known to be frequented by homeless people or people at risk of homelessness. Social workers, for instance, often visit a centre where individuals are able to take drugs in a safe environment and activities are organised by established NGOs in the area. The project’s seven counsellors reach out to beneficiaries and offer help in navigating through the regular social services and support systems. They support their clients intensively, continuing the support process for extended periods of time.

**Visit description:** Delegates were welcomed by **Frank Fuhrer** in one of the permanent locations where counselling services are held. Presentations were given by representatives from several partner organisations, including two employees from the Department of Social Services, who explained how they collaborate with Diakonie in order to help homeless people or people at risk of homelessness to find temporary housing. An inspiring

presentation was given by a former client of the project, describing his own experiences of homelessness and explaining how the counselling services of the project helped him find permanent accommodation and stable employment. Following the presentations, delegates were invited to join the social workers at the front of the room, where the project had prepared several boards with pictures and descriptions of various activities undertaken by the project. Delegates had the opportunity to gather more detail on specific aspects of project activities and ask questions to the social workers. The delegates were kindly offered a warm meal to conclude the visit.



## **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 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.

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**We look forward to hearing from you!**

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