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Rencontre Européenne de l'Économie Sociale
12-13 Février 2024
Liège



State aid facing the social economy



- Insights, proposals and key messages from not-for-profit social service providers for a more effective use of state aid in the social services sector


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1) For local and regional governments and for other public authorities deciding on the attribution of state aid

- Elaborate information and training material showing the range of state aid instruments which they can use with social economy organisations / social enterprises and how to best do this (e.g., in the field of social services) by taking into account their (specific) conditions of operation, (access to) funding, etc. and their administrative and staff capacities (often being SME)
- Work in partnership with social economy organisations / social enterprises and support them – by also using state aid – in their re-design towards rights-based, person-centered, user-oriented and community-based services as well as for their investments to well manage the transition to digital and green social services



2) For national, regional and local governments defining the regulations and/or deciding on the attribution of state aid

- Check (and if need be) revise legislative and policy frameworks, including on the social economy (including on work integration social enterprises/WISEs) or as to regulation on any sectoral policies (e.g., employment promotion; social services; circular economy), which hinder social economy organisations / social enterprises to best use the different state aid instruments
- Go beyond the (in many EU MS nearly) exclusive use of the general de minimis Regulation



3) For national and regional governments defining the regulations and/or deciding on the attribution of state aid

- Adapt public policies and measures in a way that they fully support the delivery of integrated services – e.g., between health/hospitals and long-term care, between housing services for homeless peoples and services to support their employment and to improve their health situation) – co-funded by state aid where this is not yet the case already
- Support the setting up of dedicated helpdesks to address the persistent obstacles and difficulties social economy organisations / social enterprises have to access state aid and engage in a cross-EU exchange and network on effective solutions and good guidance to fully exploit the potential of the different instruments of state aid



4) *To the European Commission (I)*

- Consider the adaptation of the GBER when revised in 2024ff to
 - a) better use state aid to increase the employment rates of persons with disabilities (and to realise their transition into the mainstream labour market/non-segregated settings) and of other vulnerable groups as set out in the GBER (art. 31 to 35)
 - b) provide more support for investments into assisted technologies and the funding of start-ups in the social economy led by persons with disabilities, former long-term unemployed persons, etc.
 - c) use more strategically the obligation for all EU MS stemming from Article 28 “Work and Employment” of the UN CRPD to invest in inclusive jobs / workplaces / enterprises / organisations
 - d) increase the co-funded rates (= state aid densities) for measures supporting the labour market and social inclusion of different categories of vulnerable persons (and keep 100% for services targeted to persons with [intellectual] disabilities)



4) *To the European Commission (II)*

- Clarifications are needed, e.g., for “transition period” until availability of central registers for de minimis aid on 01.01.26, etc.
- Better recognise in EU state aid rules the specificities of the social economy and of selected sectors of SGEI, such as social services, as well as their pursuit of social policy objectives
 - Shared principles of the social economy and non-distribution constraint
 - Non-adapted definitions in the recently (13 December 2023) revised general and/or SGEI State Aid Regulations for “reasonable profit margin” & “market failure”
 - Local dimension
 - Territorial cohesion

Thank you very much for your attention!

Merci bien pour votre attention!

Bedankt voor uw aandacht!

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!