

Commission proposes new Fund for European Aid to the most deprived

The European Commission has proposed to set up a Fund to help the most deprived persons in the EU.

The Fund would support Member State schemes providing food to the most deprived people and clothing and other essential goods to homeless people and materially-deprived children. The proposal now goes to the European Parliament and the European Union's Council of Ministers for approval.

The Commission foresaw a budget of €2.5 billion for the Fund during the period 2014-2020 as part of its June 2011 proposal for a Multiannual Financial Framework. Member States would be responsible for paying 15% of the costs of their national programmes, with the remaining 85% coming from the Fund.

Under the proposed Fund Member States would apply for funding to support operational programmes covering the period 2014 to 2020 for schemes providing, through partner organisations, food to the most deprived persons and clothing and other essential goods (such as shoes, soap and shampoo) to the homeless and to materially-deprived children.

The proposal would give considerable flexibility to national authorities to plan and deliver the assistance in line with their national schemes. Detailed criteria to allocate assistance would be the responsibility of Member States, or even partner organisations, as they are best placed to target assistance to local needs.

Partner organisations, often non-governmental, would be responsible for delivering the food or goods to the most deprived persons. To meet the Fund's social cohesion objectives, partner organisations would not only have to provide material assistance to the most deprived persons but also undertake basic activities aimed at their social integration. The Fund would also be able to support such accompanying measures.

National authorities would be able to use the Fund to either purchase food or goods and make them available to the partner organisations or provide the partner organisations themselves with funding to do so. The proposal also foresees the possibility to use food stored in intervention stocks, if there are any.

(Source: European Commission)

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