

**From:** WHEELER Shirin (COMM)  
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It is now internationally accepted - by the UN, the EU and its Member states - that as regards people with disabilities and vulnerable groups an approach that encourages independent living supported by community-based care is the right way to proceed. In fact, this is a principle the EU has signed up to and, for the 2014-2020 period, this approach and commitment to access and independent living, as well as towards anti-discrimination actions is reflected in the new cohesion policy and its rules for funding . In practice, this means that cohesion policy, as the biggest source of public funding in many Member States, can have a positive effect in improving the lives of our most vulnerable citizens and also helping them to realise their potential. That means helping people to move out from living in institutionalised conditions where possible. Cohesion policy - Regional Development Fund - has been supporting investments in social infrastructures to improve, for example, conditions in them .

In the coming programming period though, support by ERDF is mainly to be directed to projects supporting the commitment to de-institutionalisation. That is the line within UN Convention and our own Disability Agenda. Which sees independent living as an aim, as far as possible This means that for 2014-2020 we won't be funding the BIG traditional residential centres and we will be asking for a clear strategy that foresees the transition from big capacity institutions to the more community-based services.

It's clear in our current discussions around the partnership agreement, which involve Romanian authorities as well as disability rights groups, civil society, that this is accepted. Targeted support for infrastructure, like integrated community care centers, is also proposed by Romania in the frame of the transition from institution- to community-based care services. Our perception is Romania is committed to move to alternative services to the greatest extent possible.

Sent from my iPhone

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