



**European Union**

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Social Fund

## The first European Helpdesk on EU funds for Social Services is live!

*The European Ageing Network (EAN) and the 15 partner organizations<sup>1</sup> involved in the Helpdesk project are thrilled to announce the launch of the new Helpdesk website. With this new website, social service providers and managing authorities in all EU Member States can find tailored support and advice on how to access and use EU funds.*

The Helpdesk is a two-year project (2022-2024) funded by the European Commission which aims to facilitate social services in accessing and using EU funds, particularly the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The project also strives to ensure that managing authorities use these funds to finance quality interventions and innovative service designs in the field of social services.

On February 23rd, the Helpdesk website went live. Developed in an accessible format and available in all 24 official EU languages, the website will be the central point for all the information collected and tools produced to help social services access EU Funds.

The main feature of the website is its online Helpdesk service, where social services will be able to submit questions or ask for any type of information concerning the access and the use of EU funding. The Helpdesk team will then provide tailored answers to those seeking support, helping them to disentangle the complex landscape of European funding. Beneficiaries will receive support to better understand the functioning and the process of applying for EU funding, and to find relevant organizations to create project partnerships or examples of good practices for developing a project.

The Helpdesk website also contains a Resource Center that will include all materials produced by the project, such as a Toolkit on Facilitating ESF+ and ERDF for Social Services and a Guidance on Effective Interventions in Social Services. Moreover, users will be able to find information about the latest open calls launched by the European Commission, opportunities for trainings and networking, and – through the use of an interactive geographical map – specific information about the structure and management of EU funds in different EU Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> UNIPSO, Fundacion ONCE, Federation of European Social Employers, Idee in Rete, Eurodiaconia, Hubbie, Ensie, Feantsa, APSS, European Platform for Rehabilitation, European Social Network, European Ageing Network, Caritas Europa, CEDAG, Social Services Europe.





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On top of the existing resources and support, a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), which is currently in development, will also be freely available on the website in all EU languages. It will provide training modules on the access to, use of, and reporting on the ESF+, ERDF, and other funding opportunities. The main aim is to thereby give a clear structure to, and simplify, information on European funding for social service providers.

Ultimately, the Helpdesk project has the potential to create a positive impact on the social services sector, both on service providers and service users. In a time when the demand for quality care and support is continuously increasing, it is crucial to make sure that funds available at the EU level are used in a meaningful way to finance innovative and impactful social projects.

Considering the complexity and the excessive bureaucracy that often impede the use of EU funds, receiving adequate support and advice in this regard is crucial. Many of the project partners have significant experience in relation to promoting EU funds to their membership, as well as providing input to managing authorities and the European Commission on the main barriers that usually obstruct the use of these funds. The project will therefore rely on this experience to promote the first-ever European Helpdesk for Social Services.

The ultimate goal is to contribute to the implementation of EU social policy frameworks, especially the European Pillar of Social Rights, its action plan, and other relevant social policy topics.

Do you want to know more? Do not hesitate to check out the Helpdesk website: [eufunds4social.eu](https://eufunds4social.eu)

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