



Eurodiaconia's update on the implementation of the Fund for European Aid to the most deprived (FEAD) at national level

November 2015

Who is Eurodiaconia?

Eurodiaconia is a dynamic, Europe-wide community of organisations founded in the Christian faith and working in the tradition of diaconal service, which are committed to a Europe of solidarity, equality and justice. We represent 45 members in 32 countries. Our members include churches, non-statutory welfare organisations and NGO's, providing social services to hundreds of thousands of individuals across Europe on a not-for-profit basis. Many of our members are leaders in their countries on the provision of social services and many are partners with local and regional authorities and national governments in the fight against poverty and exclusion.

As providers of social and healthcare services and social justice actors, Eurodiaconia members offer practical support to people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and are in a unique position to evaluate the social impact of EU and national policies on vulnerable individuals.

Why this report?

Eurodiaconia had been monitoring the evolution of the former EU food aid program (the "Food Distribution program for the Most Deprived Persons of the Community") and later calling for the establishment of a new funding program that would support Member States and NGOs to respond to emergency social needs and create a bridge for the most vulnerable and excluded toward social inclusion.

In 2014, the EU's new food aid program began to be developed. This program, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived or FEAD, seek not only to provide immediate material assistance to those in need throughout Europe through food aid, but also to foster social inclusion. As the FEAD has begun to be implemented throughout the Union, Eurodiaconia has highlighted in December 2014 good practice examples of members' work who are carrying out programs that "bridge the gap" between extreme poverty and social inclusion ("[Pathways to Social Inclusion: 10 best practices from diaconal organisations in Europe](#)").

Eurodiaconia's 2015 report featured here aims to provide to the European Commission with a picture of Eurodiaconia's members' experience in implementing the 2014 Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. It highlighted the new aspects of the FEAD compared to its predecessor and the reality of NGOs' experience in trying to access it.

Executive summary

11 Eurodiaconia members responded to phone interviews on their past involvement with the former program and their experience in the establishment of the new program.

- Swedish and German members were involved for the first time as both Germany and Sweden did not use the former EU program. Sweden and Germany opted for the operational program II (Social Inclusion) and Eurodiaconia members in these countries have applied for funding in order to support their work for the inclusion of EU migrants.

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- Eurodiaconia French, Belgian, Polish and Czech members were involved in the former food distribution program as “last mile distributors”, i.e. receiving the food from another organisation (e.g. food bank) and distributing it to beneficiaries.
 - French and Belgium members intend to pursue their work according to a similar format.
 - On the contrary, the Polish Salvation Army has decided to stop implementing the EU food aid distribution program in order to be able to focus its work on the most excluded and vulnerable. Indeed, it was felt by the Salvation Army Poland that the EU program did not enable them to reach out to the most excluded. The Salvation Army Poland therefore decided not to apply to the new EU program in order to be able to help “the poorest of the poor”.
 - The Czech Republic members are still facing administrative difficulties linked to a conflict with the law on social services. As of 16th September 2015 there was no update on the situation. There is a “light version” of the FEAD available now but it will only make 10% of the total FEAD available. Information is that there should be a call for applications in November/December.
- Hungarian members were involved in the former EU food distribution program as partners to the Hungarian government. One of them has underlined the problematic administrative burden of implementing the former program and requested the European Commission to look into lightening the administrative processes. From the information Eurodiaconia Hungarian members have, the call for proposal has not been launched yet. The feeling is that at least one Eurodiaconia Hungarian member will not apply to FEAD in order to re-focus its work on the Ukrainian conflict.



Eurodiaconia members project in Paris, providing food baskets together with language courses to foster social inclusion, Eurodiaconia 2014.



Eurodiaconia members' experience of the FEAD – Input by country and organisation

1- CZECH REPUBLIC

The Salvation Army Czech Republic



The social services law in Czech Republic is hindering NGOs from fully participating in FEAD as they would be burdened with an enormous amount of administrative work and hassle if they were given funds.

There is a "light" version of FEAD, using about 10% of the funds that will bypass this law. The Salvation Army Czech Republic would like to be involved in this "light" version of the FEAD but the process remains unclear. The key issue is the social services law in the Czech Republic which prevents NGOs from fully participating in the program. As of 15th September 2015, there still were no changes in the situation and the Salvation Army was therefore unable to participate. Information are that there should be a call for applications in November/December 2015. All interested NGOs are partnering together with the National Food Bank Bureau (NFPB) to address their concerns with the Czech government to try and get this issue solved so that FEAD could actually be effective and not too costly for NGOs.

Slezska Diakonie

Slezska Diakonie (SD) is stressing the same problems as the Salvation Army with regard to the social services law. It is not involved in the FEAD due to above-mentioned conditions set by the government that are not suitable for social services providers. The social services law in the Czech Republic currently makes it almost impossible for NGOs to participate in the FEAD as they would have to take on all the administrative costs by themselves. Furthermore, they stressed that information on the program have not been timely and that the rules set out by the government were not always precisely clear.

Slezska Diakonie is also among the organisations partnering with the National Food Bank Bureau in the Czech Republic to try to find a solution with the government to reform the program or the social services law and enable NGOs to participate in the program. In general, they considered the FEAD to be too slow and the communication between the government and the foodbank and organisation to be ineffective and insufficient.

Most of the food and material aid delivered by SD comes from major chain stores and goes through the NFPB. Besides that, SD also occasionally gets supplies from regional companies or individuals.



2- SWEDEN

Ecumenical EU Office/ Ekumeniska EU-kontoret

Sweden is one of the countries that has adopted Operational Program II, which means that the program will not be used for food support, but only for social assistance. The applications in Sweden are therefore focusing on social inclusion programs to empower EU migrants in Sweden.



The Ecumenical EU office was involved in an application process together with a parish in the South of Sweden called Väjö pastorat who was the main applicant. The application proposes to inform EU migrants on their rights, give them language courses, teach them how to work on a computer and help them with health matters. The application constructs 4 modules (information sharing, language courses, e-learning and health education) that could be used locally by parishes and organisations all over Sweden in contact with EU migrants. Actors from the Church of Sweden and some dioceses and parishes who wish to work with EU migrants (mainly Roma people) agreed to be partner in this project.

The call came out in May 2015, leaving sufficient time to prepare for the due date on June 17th. The public authority in charge of FEAD said that they will accept 4 to 5 large proposals until 2017. The government has overall been satisfactory with communicating and information sharing, although some stressed that the timing between the application being released and the due date was quite short. The hardest part of the application process has been trying to win a municipality to join as a partner. The project was among the five projects which were approved in September.

Church of Sweden

The Church of Sweden agreed to be a partner on the national level in the project mentioned above, but was not directly involved in the application process.

The Church of Sweden believes that to invest in supporting the target group of EU migrants is very positive as it will bring focus on them, mainly Roma people, and help them not to become ostracized, hopefully contributing to stop growing racism in Sweden. The information received from the government has overall been sufficient but the information has been articulated rather late which caused the application time to be quite limited.

Swedish City Missions- Gothenburg

The Swedish City Missions is partnering with other NGOs such as the Red Cross in applying to the FEAD. The aim of the application is to get additional funds to further their Crossroads project and set up a digital e-platform that would track data about Crossroads users. This platform will show the amount of people the Swedish City Mission helps and their needs which would also be useful in transforming the idea of Crossroads transnationally. If data from the e-platform was gathered they could really map out what the needs are for this group and how to best help this target group in Sweden, but also throughout Europe. Unfortunately, the application was not accepted by the Swedish government.

The Swedish City Mission of Gothenburg believes that civil society should have been given the funds directly because the application process is complicated and unnecessary. If they had been given the funds directly (them and other prominent NGOs), then the money, time and effort could have been used more effectively.



3- HUNGARY

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid

The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid organisation would like to be involved in the FEAD program as they think it is a good opportunity to help people in need. However, the organisation regrets the heavy administrative burden linked to the program and requests a guide summarizing the process to apply for the FEAD funding.

At the moment, it seems the process is too heavy, and the organisation's resources are focused on the Ukrainian crisis, preventing them to be involved in the FEAD.

This is not new as the organisation was involved in a previous food aid program where they received the food from the Hungarian government and then distributed it. This carried out a significant cost as the organisation had to pay for transporting, storing and distributing the food. In general however, the program was considered to be good as the costs were still much lower than if they would have had to buy the food elsewhere.



Hungarian Inter Church Aid

Hungarian Inter Church Aid (HIA) was directly involved in the previous food aid program, receiving the food from the Hungarian government and then distributing it to local villages and municipalities who gave it to people in need.

HIA is very positive about its participation in this program and is looking forward to include more social inclusion activities through the framework of the new program. However, they also stress that the food aid still needs to be a central part of the programme as it is what most of their clients need, at least from a Hungarian perspective.

There had been productive meetings between HIA and the government last summer regarding the implementation of the FEAD but there had been no real updates since then and it is not very clear when the call for applications will be released and what the new program and application process will look like (information from June 2015).



4- FRANCE

La Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP)

The Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante is only indirectly involved in the FEAD program insofar that it receives the food from the French Food Bank Association (FFBA) which is in charge of the FEAD fund, receiving and distributing it among local organizations. This is problematic as it does not plan to re-distribute the 5% of funds on further social inclusion activities to organizations actually running the distribution and social inclusion activities. FEP has also been involved in the former program which was quite similar to the existing one as it was only run by the FFBA as well.

Efforts to establish a dialogue about the participation in the program failed so far: French civil society actors have tried to be involved in the setting up of the FEAD, but the French government only wants to deal with the FFBA which does not effectively represent civil society's concerns. The government did not provide clear information about FEAD to FEP but only to the FFBA and is furthermore cutting staff working on FEAD. This makes it hard for the local organisations to make their concerns heard on this issue.

It is furthermore problematic because having the French ministry solely using the FFBA is not creating a connection between the government, local organisations and the FFBA. It also hinders the organisations from understanding the connecting between the EU, the food aid and the role of FFBA. It would be better if the money went directly to local organisations who run the projects. This would have the further advantage that money is used with local producers and kept local and on the ground.

5- GERMANY

Diakonie Deutschland

Germany is using the Operational Program II focusing on helping intra-EU migrants. Diakonie Deutschland stressed that the program focusing on this target group will be very impactful as there are almost no systems in place to help intra-EU migrants so far. Furthermore, the requirement to work together with municipalities enables to bring all relevant parties in this field together, thereby helping to begin advocacy and true education about this group.

The government has been clear on providing information about the FEAD program, with the exception of a recent statement that service providers will have to "prove" that users have the right of freedom of movement: This causes confusion with regard to the target group of the program and could furthermore bring a heavy administrative burden upon the service providers. However, this evidence might only be on an occasional basis (possibly every 10th client). The administrative burden will depend on how stringent this requirement is.

Germany is creating a consultative forum of civil society actors that will monitor the implementation of FEAD in Germany, including the projects chosen throughout the next three years. This is quite good as it will help the projects become more effective and will provide some accountability for things that are and are not working within the program or projects. Diakonie Deutschland finally highlights the strong positive work of the government department responsible of the FEAD (Begleitausschuss zum Programm des Europäischen Hilfsfonds für die am stärksten benachteiligten Personen - EHAP) which is working well to make this program and its implementation successful.





6- POLAND

Salvation Army Poland

The Salvation Army Poland was involved in the previous program distributing food from the Polish food banks. However, the Salvation Army felt restricted in carrying out this program as the target group was too limited: Receivers had to prove that they were in need and to prove the legality of their situation through a document from their municipality attesting that they were eligible for support. For this reason, the Salvation Army Poland has decided not to participate in the new European food aid program. This restriction (to have to provide evidence on the status of the receivers) would directly exclude the poorest of the poor from accessing food. For instance, Roma who are not legally registered cannot receive food under this rule.

Moreover, the Salvation Army observed evidence of grave misconducts in the implementation of the former program such as people going to multiple charities to collect food (with their attestation proving they were eligible), and then selling the food on the black market or trading it for alcohol or drugs. With this new program, the Salvation Army is hoping for a change.

The Salvation Army suggested that FEAD funding could instead be given directly to just a few recognised large NGOs in Poland like the Salvation Army and Caritas. This would enable the program to be more effective and prevent money going to small NGOs who may not use the program appropriately.

7- BELGIUM

The Salvation Army Belgium

The Salvation Army Belgium is involved in the FEAD program and was actively involved in the former EU food aid program as well, receiving food from the Food Bank federations and redistributing it to people in need. It is positive about the experience and will keep being involved according to the same format.

However, the Salvation Army was facing difficulties with some local authorities who have decided to provide food aid by themselves and make it hard for NGOs to receive accreditation. This seems to be a political decision motivated by the desire not to see (a need for) food banks. By contrast to this, the Salvation Army testifies the increasing dramatic needs and is impaired by an administrative lockdown, preventing them from bringing relief to people in need. Furthermore, the Salvation Army complained about heavy administrative checks imposed by the EU program, such as controls on the amount of litres of milk distributed (to the litre).

The Salvation Army Belgium therefore suggests that the European Commission could instead give its approval directly to distributing organisations or at least reform the system in order to identify and help organisations like theirs to overcome administrative difficulties.



Conclusions and recommendations

11 of Eurodiaconia's members who have been involved in the previous or current FEAD program shared their experiences and challenges with the program. Despite a generally positive perception of the program and its objectives, several observations and recommendations can be drawn from their experiences which are summarized below:

- In general, the participation in the program is perceived to be positive and helpful in supporting the most deprived. However, regarding the previous program it was mentioned that the target group was too limited and the criteria for giving out aid were contra-productive.
Thus, the requirements for giving out food aid should be inclusive of all deprived persons and independent from whether or not a person is legally registered in a Member State.
- A majority of the members stressed that the administrative burden of the program is still too onerous and can restrict the accessibility of the funding as some organisations felt they have to hire extra personnel to be able to submit the application in time, thus incurring financial costs that are not covered by the program.
A reduction of administrative work is thus needed to enable all NGOs to apply for the program.
- The information received by the national governments have not always been sufficient and timely which caused complications with preparing the application.
The European Commission should encourage national governments to give out timely and clear information.
- Several members emphasized that it would be more effective to give the grant directly to civil society organisations as there are frequent problems with the authorities distributing the aid.
Possibilities of providing the grant directly to the implementing organisations on the local level should be explored for future programming periods.
- There are furthermore member-specific challenges in receiving support for the fund, for example in the Czech Republic where the social services law prevents NGOs from fully participating in the program.
The European Commission should make sure that NGOs in all member states have the possibility to participate in the program.



Annex

The annex lists the specific interview responses of the organisations. The questions are organized into 5 categories, asking about participation in the previous program, the receipt of information about the new food aid program, the involvement in the program, the operational program and about a general overview.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Slezska Diakonie

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?**
 - i. **If so, how were you involved?** Yes. Not directly. We were part of it through the national food bank operation – we received some food and material aid from the food banks.
 - ii. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** I think it was ok but it was a little bit difficult to do all the administration.
 - iii. **If you have also participated in the new FEAD, what is different about FEAD versus the former program?** We haven't been involved- our government has set conditions that are not good. All NGOs and national food bank administration have decided to not work with FEAD yet and have talks with government to make it more workable.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- b. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been:**
 - iv. **Clear and precise?** Information has not been that clear.
 - v. **Timely?** No not timely.
 - vi. **Helpful for you to be involved?** Government has not been trying to involve NGOs, they are making it difficult for us to be involved.
- c. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?**
 - vii. **If yes, how?** The Marginalisation and Exclusion Network meeting last year in Paris- the toolkit on the website is also very useful.

Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** Yes all the NGOs have tried to be involved as well as the National Food bank- but the government has set conditions that don't allow for involvement: each NGO that should be involved in it has to do its own procurement – which is not feasible (we would have to hire another person to do all the administration for the program- government won't give us enough money to do this). The rules from the government are not precisely clear – the rules are not easy to understand.
- e. **If you have not been involved with FEAD so far, do you know an NGO or association that was chosen to be a part of this program in your country?** NGOs have banded together and asked the food banks to be in charge of the administration costs- Food banks and government are still negotiating this.



Operational Program

- f. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** No because the rules to manage the food aid are too cumbersome.
- g. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes it is- but it's not being able to be carried out because of the strict rules.

General Overview

- h. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** I think it could give us more freedom to carry out material and food aid.
- i. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Not at the moment as it isn't being carried out correctly.
- j. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** The FEAD is too slow and the biggest problem is that government in the Czech Republic doesn't communicate with the NGOs and food bank authorities effectively.
- k. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** It would be great if we had information on the practices in other Member States – how other members are involved with FEAD and how this program is implemented in other Member States

Salvation Army Czech Republic

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?** We were not involved directly- because the last program was organized by the food banks, so we benefited from the program indirectly. We were given food from the food banks that they got from the EU fund, and we would distribute this to local people
- i. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** There were some concerns- mainly, the program was quite limited in the food products which could be purchased within the program (i.e. only five or six different items could be purchased with the money from the fund, e.g. Pasta, oil, rice, etc., very basic). In the end, it wasn't so easy to manage this – we had to relearn how to use these particular products and help these products fit the needs of our clients.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- b. **How has the information you have received about this new program from your government been:** Everything was ok (clear, on time), there were even some meetings asking us how we would design the program, etc. The government didn't do what we wanted them to do- but in terms of communication and information flow, it was ok. Generally the info coming from above is ok
- c. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?**
 - ii. If yes, how? Yes, the meeting in Paris at the M&E network [October 2014] was really good- this really helped make the picture clear for me on what this project was and how it was going to be implemented, at least on the EU level



Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** The call for applications is out right now, but there is a huge administrative problem in Czech Republic due to a conflict with the law on social services... We as a social provider services – cannot use our employees who are paid from some other funds to run the FEAD program, which means we have to hire another person to implement the program for us... which doesn't make sense and is an extra cost. If we do this we would have to undertake all of the costs of this new person on our own. The ministry that is running this program- is trying to change the social services law but this will take a long time- the ministry is also trying to start some light version of the FEAD – wit this version, the state would provide procurement and take responsibility for that area with the light version of FEAD, and we could use our own employees, there should an update at the end of July on when the light version of FEAD would be available, but this light version will only use 10% of the total FEAD funds, leaving the majority of the funds inaccessible to most NGOs due to the admin costs described above. There are a group of NGOs talking to the government on this topic together and pushing for this law to be changed. The food bank federation is the body where we all (NGOs and food bank federation alike) talk about this issue and where we have tried to push the ministry to act on this issue...

Operational Program

- e. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes – what is not relevant is how they try to run it here.
- f. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes it is- food aid is important but also the social inclusion activities as well.
- g. **Any other comment on your Operational Program?** No.

General Overview

- h. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** I think this program could help to develop a good system which really covers the needs of the people in the Czech Republic and will make the food bank federation stronger (the food bank isn't in all regions of the Czech republic- so it is a great opportunity to develop it further and develop good connections with the local government). Also- it is important that this program is not just about food aid but also about further social activities- this is a new focus and we are really glad to see this because in some respects, this kind of thinking is new in Czech Republic – people used to think if we give those in need food, that solves everything- but now we are showing people that they need more than food aid ...
- i. **Does this program enable your organisation to do any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Yes because we would directly be able to help people in need and help them with other social activities to climb out of poverty (if the program is carried out successfully that is).
- j. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** The main issue in Czech republic is the administrative problem where the NGOs are given all the responsibility to carry out the admin and they would have to hire a new person to handle this fund—if the government doesn't change this issue – the NGOs won't be able to participate in the FEAD program because of the high costs.
- k. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No.



- i. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** Eurodiaconia could help us push this information through the government system at the EU level—we have helped push this information up on the grass roots level- but it would be good if Eurodiaconia could continue to push this issue forward at the EU level ... this issue should be known at the EU level and at the national Czech level so something can be done about it. It would also be good to know best practices or good implementation examples from other Eurodiaconia members in other EU Member States because as we struggle with the rules of FEAD it would be good to see how other states are using this program successfully. It would give us best ways to lobby our government to change and implement effective practices.

SWEDEN

Ecumenical EU Office

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?**
 - i. **If so, how were you involved?** We were not involved with the previous program.
 - b. **If you did not participate in the former EU food aid program, why not? Were you aware of the program? Were the criterion for involvement too strict?** Yes, we were aware of the former program through Eurodiaconia. But the program was not applicable with the organisations we work with, so we never pursued it.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- c. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been:**
 - ii. **Clear and precise?** Sweden has been very clear and precise – so much more than for the ESF.
 - iii. **Timely?** The information has been slow- but this is probably true for many different countries since each MS had to adopt all their own Ops. But the government has been very clear in telling us when due dates are, when apps are due, etc.
 - iv. **Helpful for you to be involved?** There have been 2 seminars (1st was educational on the program, 2nd was more practical when the application was out) - they have done a good job so far. The public authority (dealing with FEAD and ESF) have been very clear in passing on information.
- d. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?**
 - v. **If yes, how?** Eurodiaconia was the first to bring information on FEAD, enabling us to start research of finding out which agency back in Sweden was supposed to handle this new fund – we then were able to get on the Swedish government agency's "newsletter" list and got relevant information whenever it came available.

Operational Program

- e. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes it is- especially with the courses we could give. But I know that civil society in general



- was against it- how do you assist someone socially if they are hungry (and you aren't allowed to give them any food?)
- f. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes because it focuses on empowerment which provides longer term success.
 - g. **Any other comment on your Operational Program?** It took too long to actually have the Swedish OP accepted. I think the commission was overwhelmed by work again and it really slowed every member state down in adopting operational programs.

General Overview

- h. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** I hope that showing society in general that this transit group of people can actually be lifted from extreme poverty with knowledge and training- this could change some of the negative perspectives that many people in our society have against this group. We just hope that people look at this group differently: as intelligent, capable people.
- i. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** It enables a huge conglomerate of organisations in different sectors and fields that would not cooperate otherwise – it really brings together a huge widespread group of organisations that can really bring some harmony to helping these people- this would not be achieved otherwise—it would be a ton of smaller projects without this and the results would be so disparate.
- j. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** I would give the national agency some praise – they are being very clear in the way they are implementing this program.
- k. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** It is difficult to get municipalities on the application as they have dealt so much with this group of people and are not interested anymore - having that as a criteria for the application is quite difficult.
- l. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** Not much right now. What would be interesting in a few months, would be to have a workshop with members who have applied to work on FEAD (or accepted) to see what their process was like and to improve in the future.

Church of Sweden

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program? No. If you did not participate in the former EU food aid program, why not? Were you aware of the program? Were the criterion for involvement too strict?** Not that I know of- we do this kind of work but not with EU food aid money.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- a. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful and timely?** Information from government has been quite helpful (especially the webpage) - but it has been too late- we were waiting a long time for the application for the funds to become public, we've only had six week. But there has been quite good information



on the webpage. We had projects in mind before this call but if we didn't we would not be in a position to get the application done in time.

- b. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?** Not her- but her colleague Miriam Hollmer was in contact with Eurodiaconia that was how she learned about it.

Involvement

- c. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** Church of Sweden is partnering with other organizations to put an application in to answer the call for proposals (working with Ecumenical EU office). Different dioceses have joined the application (but not the whole national Church of Sweden). National level of church of Sweden didn't have the resources to organize this... especially because we don't implement projects usually on a local level- this is what the dioceses and the parishes on the local level do- so they are the ones that are partners on the application
- i. **If so, what was your experience?** Experience has been good but the timing is quite short.
- d. **Have you or anyone from your organisation been selected to carry out/ implement the program?** NA

Operational Program

- e. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes it is very relevant- I would be happy if we could increase our work on this.
- f. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes it is because focusing on EU migrants and this group really doesn't have a structure for support set up in Sweden.
- g. **Any other comment on your Operational Program?** We provide material aid anyway but we cannot use the funding from the FEAD for this- a lot of parishes provide food aid anyway and that will continue, those projects will continue with or without this kind of funding.

General Overview

- h. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** It will help with the structure of social inclusion activities- it will bring attention to this issue (mainly the Roma minority) - and really pushes the topic on the agenda of politicians and policy makers; it's also good that it is coming from the EU, to see that this issue matters at EU level.
- i. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Yes in some ways- with more funding, we can have more structure to carry out social inclusion activities. It will expand already existing ones as well.
- j. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** The timeframe for answering the proposal was too limited. Maybe if we (Sweden/ The Commission) could have had a shorter time deciding on the Operational program that could have helped the timing with the application process.
- k. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No
- l. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** If we were chosen for this project, it would be good to keep in constant communication so you can update us on what is going on with the fund at EU level and any changes we need to be aware.



Swedish City Mission Gothenburg

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?** No – Sweden in general was not involved in the former food aid program- our social security law covers this in this matter, so Sweden was not interested in being involved in this.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- b. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful?** There have been some good dialogues with the government and civil society about this program and how to carry it out.
- c. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?**
- i. **If not, why and how could we have been assisting you better?** Not really – I (Kjell) am quite connected with FEANTSA, so they have helped us from a European level. Kjell is a board member of FEANTSA.

Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** Swedish City Missions are a part of an application for FEAD. We applied with the Red Cross in Sweden and another Swedish NGO (education focused). For them (Swedish city missions, they don't need a municipality as a partner for it— which is contradictory to what other Swedish members have said in their applications. If we were funded, we would be able to develop the Crossroads (**information/ advice centres for EU migrants**) units more and put more Crossroads centres in other locations throughout Sweden. With these funds, we are also wanting to start a digital meeting platform for the users and for us service providers to be able to gather more statistics on the amount of people we help and how we help them specifically. This platform could help us launch more Crossroad centres throughout Europe.
- e. **Have you or anyone from your organisation been selected to carry out/ implement the program?** No, we have applied. But we are hoping to start the planning of the project on the 1st of September, so we hope to hear by then or before then if we get chosen for funding.

Operational Program

- f. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Social inclusion activities will really help possibly more than just the food aid.

General Overview

- g. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** It will be really important for us – especially if we can use these funds to create the digital platform- this platform will show us the amount of people we help and their needs—this could also help us transform the idea of Crossroads transnationally. If we have data from the e-platform we can really map out what the needs are for this group and how to best help this target group in Sweden but also throughout Europe.
- h. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** This program will help us implement a digital



platform that we cannot create right now on our own. This funding could also help us open up more Crossroads centres for EU migrants.

- i. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** I would tell them that civil Society matters- the government should have given these funds to civil society right away- there shouldn't have had to be an application and all the administrative issues that go along with a complicated application—civil society is the one that deals with this group (EU Migrants) – why does it have to be this complicated, with an extensive application required, when we deal with them directly?
- j. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** I don't think right now you can be very helpful- but later on if we are able to build this platform – you could help us exchange this data with other members so that maybe Crossroad type centres could be implemented in other EU countries.

HUNGARY

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?** They were a subcontractor of the ministry of development of the Hungarian Government- deliver food to people in need.
- i. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** The program was really good – a lot of people received direct material aid. The government just gave us the food- we had to pay for the transport, the storing, etc.—this was always an issue- altogether it was a good project, because the cost were much lower than if we would have to buy the food elsewhere.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- a. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful?** Honestly, I heard about it through Eurodiaconia (M&E network meeting) but we don't have the resources to follow up on it.
- b. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?** The Paris network meeting helped us a lot.

Involvement

- c. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** We would like to be involved, this is a good opportunity to help people. If we could have the resources (the food), we can do the rest. We aren't involved right now because it is too much administration on our staff- takes a lot of work to read through the details and requirements.
- d. **Have you or anyone from your organisation been selected to carry out/ implement the program?** NA



Operational Program-

- e. Don't have any comments on this as we haven't worked on this.

General Overview

- f. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** I think we can offer further social inclusion activities through the food aid.
- g. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Yes, because of the help with the providing the food- gives us a tool to get in contact with the families.
- h. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** If the Commission could make the process for getting material aid from this fund less administratively taxing, more organisations, like ours, could better participate.
- i. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No.
- j. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** Continue to tell us what is going on with this fund and how it is being adopted in other MS.

Hungarian Inter Church Aid

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?** Yes we have been involved for seven years. We were partners with the Hungarian government in distributing the food from the EU and we would distribute the food directly to local communes and governments; then, they would distribute the food directly to the people in need.
- i. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** It was a simple project, there was not any other element of the project – yes it was effective. This was a really good project with us and it helped us make good contacts in both the Hungarian national government as well as local municipalities and village governments. This was a good program for us and we would like to be involved in the new program in the same way as the old program.
- ii. **If you have also participated in the new FEAD, what is different about FEAD versus the former program?** We don't have a lot of information about this program yet- but last year the government contacted all of the organisations who were a part of the former program. The government wanted the new program to be more than food aid- social inclusion services.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- b. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful?** Yes we got information from the government – stating clearly that they wanted us to be involved in this newly reformed project – but no information on how to participate in the project – we don't know what the final program looks like. So yes, the government has informed us about the reforming of this project but hasn't updated us on what the final program looks like or how to be involved.
- c. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?** No – we mainly get information from the Hungarian government.



Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** This new program/ project was supposed to start last winter (End of 2014) but hasn't yet. The government has involved HIA in conversations about the new project – we had 2 or 3 meetings- they ask their experiences and proposals, these meetings took place last summer. But we don't know when this new program will be ready and we haven't heard anything since last summer from the government about the progress of this new program or the possibility of HIA to be directly involved like they were with the previous program.
- iii. **If so, what was your experience?** NA
- iv. **If not, why have you not been involved thus far?** NA
- e. **Have you or anyone from your organisation been selected to carry out/ implement the program?** NA

Operational Program

- f. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes- the purpose of the reform of this program is to include more social inclusion activities with the food aid – and they would agree that this is important.
- g. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes they do, but we need to still focus this program mainly on food aid- our clients really need food aid- and the social inclusion activities are important to help people in our organisation, but the food aid acts as a starting point for us.
- h. **Any other comment on your Operational Program?** No.

General Overview

- i. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** The overall project target is good- it's a direct project with assistance – which is very important in our country.
- j. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Yes- if we were given the money directly we could carry out more food aid than we are doing right now- because the former food aid program has stopped, we have had to stop some of our food aid. But if we receive funding from the new program we could carry out more food aid like with the former program.
- k. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** For us, what is important is not just completely changing this program to be focused on social inclusion activities but to make sure that food aid is still a central part of this program, this is what most of our clients need and we would want this new program to still focus on food aid above all. The social inclusion activities that are now a goal of the program are good, but the main goal should still focus on food aid, at least for us in Hungary.
- l. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No.
- m. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** Continue to let us know what is going on with this program at a European level. If there are any relevant updates from Brussels, communicate that with our organisation so we know what in general is going on.



FRANCE

La Fédération de l'Entraide Protestante (FEP)

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?**
 - i. **If so, how were you involved?** Yes we were involved in preparation of the former program with the government. The national food banks were in charge of the program but they were able to distribute food to the FEP organizations. We were not directly involved with the money- FFBA (French Federation for Food banks)- were in charge of the money coming from the EU- this federation of food banks gathers 90 different of their local branches to distribute their food to local organisations.
 - ii. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** It was effective- there was a tendency for the administration (French government) to control everything though- which was a big problem for us. They want us to control the people who receive the food aid- they want to know the money the people make, what their housing conditions are- they want to know information about the people.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- b. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful?** The information coming from the French government HAS NOT been clear. They have been going through the FFBA- and FEP should work with the FFBA – but this is skipping a step. The government doesn't want to work with the local organisations. In the previous one, the French government decided they worked too much with local organisations, so for this one the French government has only worked with the FFBA.
- c. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?**
- iii. **If yes, how? If not, why and how could we have been assisting you better?** Not very much- because there is no information coming from the French government it is hard for our organisations to cope- and Eurodiaconia isn't involved in the French operational program so Eurodiaconia can't really help at this stage.

Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** We have asked the FFBA to have a meeting with civil society organisations to discuss going forward- but the FFBA won't do it and won't fully represent the civil society to the French government. If our local organisations call us about FEAD we have to tell them to contact the FFBA. French government is also reducing the number of people within the ministry working on FEAD- so there are no old contacts, no point of references for FEP to really try to get FEPs voice heard on this issue.
- iv. **If so, what was your experience?** NA
- v. **If not, why have you not been involved thus far?** NA
- e. **Have you or anyone from your organisation been selected to carry out/ implement the program?** No
- f. **If you have not been involved with FEAD thus far, do you know an NGO or association that was chosen to be a part of this program in your country?** No - all work is going through FFBA. The money is being distributed already but just straight to FFBA, they buy the food. And even though they are supposed to use 5% of the money they get for "further social inclusion activities" they don't. They just use the money for their own technical improvements for transport and electronics.



Operational Program

- g. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes, it is because they are able to distribute food to our organisations- but FFBA is more of a technical partner- they just give the food and follow the rules from the government exactly, they don't help us with further social inclusion activities. With the question of poverty and how to be more socially included- FFBA doesn't do this- the 5% required in the law for further social inclusion activities – goes to FFBA but they don't use it for this, they use it for technical improvements, like a new computer program.
- h. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes but it is very similar to the last program. We don't get the money directly and the whole point of FEAD was to further social inclusion activities with the food aid but we don't get access to these funds since it all goes through FFBA.
- i. **Any other comment on your Operational Program?** We wanted to be involved in helping to set up the Operational Program – but the system handling the government is much decentralised, not very organised so FEP never got a chance to be involved with setting the OP.

General Overview

- j. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** Very similar to the previous program- our organisations don't really see what has been changed.
- k. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Not really as it just provides what the other one did. But there are more and more people coming to our organisations looking for food, so the food this fund provides is good.
- l. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** Having the French ministry solely using the FFBA is really not creating a connection between the government, organisations and the FFBA. It also hinders the organisations from understanding the connecting between the EU, the food aid and the role of FFBA. It would be better if the money went directly to local organisations, using the FFBA is too big of a machine. FEP would want to have the money used with local producers and keep the money local and on the ground. When the machine is too big we lose the point and the message to organisations on the ground.
- m. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No
- n. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** If Eurodiaconia could educate us on different practices on this program within other member states — it would show us the differences and how this fund could be done better. You could help us think how to do this differently and to challenge our government on one of these other ways to work with local organisations.



GERMANY

Diakonie Deutschland

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?** There was no involvement in the former program.
- b. **If you did not participate in the former EU food aid program, why not? Were you aware of the program? Were the criterion for involvement too strict?** Because it doesn't fit into the social security system of Germany.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- c. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful?** The information was clear and precise before but the department in charge of FEAD changed everything a few weeks before the application deadline to add restrictions to the application, and changed the outcome indicators (before the target group were just people in destitution whereas now they will be people who have proved they are intra-EU citizens). This restriction will require service providers (funded by the FEAD money) to prove that the people they are serving have the right of free movement. However the information received about the FEAD has been more clear and transparent than the Asylum and Migration Fund. The German government originally planned for the application for FEAD to open in April, then it was pushed back to May, then June and now July. We fear that organisations will think that this is all too complicated.

Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?**
 - i. **If so, what was your experience?** They, the government, have sought our advice and consulted us quite often on how to run the application, what to put in the application, etc. We were part of a conference where all institutions were represented, where the ministry educated us about the directive and ideas on where to go from there. The government has tried to be quite open with this process, they will have a big opening session (a big public event) highlighting the opening of FEAD with all organisations involved- 26 projects will be chosen and they may highlight these at the opening conference. They are also running a consultative forum that will continue to meet and evaluate how the projects are running and give feedback on the effectiveness. The board of the consultative forum consists of Roma organisations that are self-run, diaconal organisations and homelessness organisations. These are the really important actors in this program and will do a good job monitoring the progress of the projects picked. In comparison to refugees – there are almost no systems in place to help intra-EU migrants. So this program will be very impactful for this group of people (EU migrants are the target group of people for the funds to be used for).



Operational Program

- e. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes – 30% of diaconal welfare organisations are interested in applying for FEAD. The program has the requirement that they have to apply as a group- a welfare organisation and a municipality must apply together. They have to have a cooperation and then they will apply together. The municipality originally wanted the money on their own but they were able to get NGOs to work with them together.
- f. **Do the targets of the operational program as defined by your MS match what you have identified as priority needs in your country? Why or why not?** Yes- not many programs are in place right now in Germany designed to help intra-EU migrants.

General Overview

- g. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** We don't have a good network of support for intra-EU migrants- this application process will bring welfare organisations and municipalities together – it helps to bring all relevant parties together and begin advocacy and true education about this group. Also gives the municipality direct access to these people and can help them get in touch with relevant departments.
- h. **Does this program enable your organisation do to any activities that you could not carry out otherwise? If so, please explain.** Yes if diaconal organisations are chosen as one of the 26 projects to be run— this will enable us to have new partnerships between diaconal organisations, other NGOs and local governments.
- i. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** I would say that the government is doing quite well with communication but I would ask them to discuss the question of who is the target group of this program. Is it only the people who have the right of free movement or is it really the people who are the most deprived? Could we make that more clear in the legislation so that it is for all people who are most deprived?
- j. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No.
- k. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** Don't know

POLAND

Salvation Army Poland

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?** We were involved in the former program. We were given food from the Polish food banks and we gave it to people from there.
 - i. **If so, how were you involved?** We received the food from the foodbank in Poland who distributed it.
 - ii. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** The overall program was good but it was too restrictive on us- in order for us to give the food to someone they had to prove that they were registered or legally in Poland. So basically, we were helping the people who were not the poorest of the poor (like Roma), but the ones who were a little bit more well-off than that. There was also a big problem with this former program because many organisations in Poland received food from the food aid program. If a person wanted to receive food, they would go to one organisation and present the proper papers;



however, they could do this over and over with different organisations—and then they would sell the leftover food on the black market or trade it for alcohol/drugs. There was not a good system of accountability between organisations, so there was a lot of corruption going on with this previous program.

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- b. **How has the information you have received about this new program from your government been helpful?** The information has been fine but it is quite similar to the old program where it is still quite restrictive in who the food aid can be given to (i.e. people have to be registered or citizens of Poland), and because of this the Salvation Army in Poland isn't involved with the new program.
- c. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?** Not that I know of. We haven't been involved with Eurodiaconia with this topic but that is mainly because we aren't really involved with the new FEAD because of the restrictions.

Involvement

- d. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** We are not involved with FEAD, because we really want to help the poorest of the poor and the program of FEAD really won't let us do that (because you have to prove that you are legal to be helped). So we give out aid using other sources.

Operational Program

- e. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** We don't have any comments on the OP except that the target group is too limited and there is still too much space for corruption and for people to cheat the system.

General Overview

- f. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?** If it was done correctly it could really help people in need. But right now it is too open to corruption.
- g. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?** If the money could be given directly to trustworthy organisations in Poland like the Salvation Army and then they were allowed to do what they thought was needed with it, the money could be much more useful. Right now a lot of organisations use the FEAD money but many of them we don't really know what they are doing with it or if they are not involved in black market schemes.
- h. **Do you have any other comments or questions on FEAD?** No.
- i. **How can Eurodiaconia help you in this area of work?** Help show us other Member States practices.



BELGIUM

Salvation Army Belgium

Background: previous participation in EU food aid program

- a. **Was your organisation involved in the former EU food aid program?**
 - i. **If so, how were you involved?** Yes – indirectly – distributing the food received through the national food banks. The Salvation Army was one of the founding members of the Brussels food banks.
 - ii. **If so, what was your perspective on this program? What was positive or negative?** Generally positive. There were some difficulties in the implementation of the former program, coming from the relationship between the NGO and the Brussels city council regarding accreditation. It seems the Brussels city council has decided to provide food aid directly, without going through NGOs – but this is a political decision as there is no way for the city to respond to the huge needs by itself. It needs the NGOs. Regarding the EU program itself, the main difficulty was the heavy administrative checks it imposed, such as controls on the amount of litres of milk distributed (to the litre).
 - iii. **If you have also participated in the new FEAD, what is different about FEAD versus the former program?** There is no difference so far. We have fought hard to keep the OP to focus on material food aid, and it worked – that will be the focus at least until 2016. The only difference is that we will probably have less money.
- b. **If you did not participate in the former EU food aid program, why not? Were you aware of the program? Were the criterion for involvement too strict?** NA

Information about the new EU food aid program (FEAD)

- c. **Has the information you have received about this new program from your government been:**
- iv. **Clear and precise?** Yes. We were involved in a consultation process on the type of food to provide as well as in a consultation on the profile of beneficiaries.
- v. **Timely?** Yes
- vi. **Helpful for you to be involved?** Yes
- d. **Has Eurodiaconia assisted you in learning about the new food aid program (FEAD)?** Not particularly.

Involvement

- e. **Have you tried to be involved in FEAD?** Yes, and we are involved through the national food banks. The Salvation Army Belgium distributes food in several towns and city in Belgium, the food is received from the Food Banks.



Operational Program

- f. **Is the operational program from your MS relevant to the work your organisation carries out?** Yes, it responds to the needs identified by our organisation. It is shared between material aid and food aid.

General Overview

- g. **What added value do you think this program can bring to your country?**
It is difficult to say. Some believe that the offer creates the demand. But we are also facing many situations where people, in particular refugees, have absolutely nothing but what we can provide for them. So of course some people may use the program and not need it, but this program provides an essential help to many who would otherwise have nothing. As an example, the Salvation Army Brussels helps about 1000 people (400 families) each year.
- h. **If you could tell the Commission one key piece of information about the implementation of FEAD in your Member State, what would you tell them and why?**
Ideally, it would be better if the European Commission could give its approval directly to distributing organisations or at least reform the system to identify and help us overcome the difficulties we are now facing, for instance regarding our certification with the city of Brussels.