

Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)

Launched in 2014, the FEAD helps support Europe's most vulnerable citizens. Worth a total of €3.5 billion for the 2014-20 period, this assistance includes food, clothing and essential goods along with activities promoting social inclusion.

Background

With one in ten Europeans suffering from [severe material deprivation](#) in 2012, the FEAD was set up as the successor to the EU's Food Distribution Programme for the Most Deprived People (MDP). Its aim is to help alleviate the worst forms of poverty and thus contribute to the [Europe 2020 objective](#) of reducing the number of people in, or at risk of, poverty and social exclusion by 20 million by 2020. The FEAD expanded the MDP's scope beyond food aid to include basic material assistance such as shoes, soap and shampoo, as well as social inclusion activities to help people in need take their first steps out of poverty. It complements the European Social Fund (ESF) by providing a lifeline for deprived groups, including the homeless and children in poverty, who are beyond the reach of other ESF measures.

How does the FEAD work?

Based on a shared management approach, the European Commission approves the seven-year operational programmes put forward by the Member States, who choose how FEAD funding will focus nationally on food, basic material assistance or social inclusion, and which partner organisations will be used. Member States must guarantee national co-financing of at least 15%, with the [FEAD Regulation](#) providing for a minimum allocation of €3.5 million per Member State, deducted from their Structural Funds allocations.

European Parliament

In February 2014, Parliament [voted](#) to set the Fund's budget at €3.5 billion, rejecting the Commission's original proposal of €2.5 billion, and making participation in the FEAD obligatory for all Member States. The EP secured Council's agreement that the FEAD be fully functional from day one, and for an increase in the FEAD's co-financing share up to 95% for Member States affected by the crisis.

Stakeholders' views on the Fund

Following the adoption of the FEAD Regulation in 2014, five civil society organisations, including Caritas and the Red Cross, published a joint [statement](#) highlighting the need to involve such organisations at all stages of the implementation process to ensure that help reaches those most in need and that the FEAD complements rather than replaces Member State action. A separate [report](#) by the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) called on the EU institutions to monitor the impact of FEAD programmes on creating pathways out of homelessness. It also noted that the approved operational programmes revealed a lack of clarity regarding the level of cooperation between FEAD and ESF managing authorities, and the involvement of stakeholders in FEAD monitoring committees.

State of play and forward planning

Nearly a year after the creation of the FEAD, the Commission has approved a total of 24 operational programmes put together by the Member States in line with their individual allocations set out in the FEAD Regulation. Half of these programmes combine food and basic material assistance, as in the case of Italy's [€670 million programme](#), the largest in the EU, while others, such as those of Malta, Finland and Poland, focus on food aid. Several countries, including Croatia and [Romania](#), have included measures for funding school materials and equipment for children in need. The Commission will present a mid-term evaluation of FEAD to the Parliament and Council by 31 December 2018.