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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis
on behalf of the European Commission
(4.6.2020)

The Commission's priority in the current coronavirus outbreak is to safeguard the health and safety of all EU citizens, including the most vulnerable. It is using to this end all the tools at its disposal to coordinate the response to COVID-19. Homelessness falls within the competence of the Member States, but the EU may support with policy and funding measures.

The Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative¹ of EUR 37 billion entered into force on 31 March 2020 and allows to mobilise available cash reserves from the European Structural and Investment Funds to fight the crisis immediately. The more recent proposed package of measures (CRII Plus)², entered into force recently, provides sufficient flexibility for Member States to introduce new methods of delivery of the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), such as electronic vouchers. FEAD support can help protect all those who, through the partner organisations, are engaged in the distribution of food or basic goods to the most vulnerable, by supplying them with protective material including disinfectants and hygiene kits.

The Commission recognises the key role played by civil society and the private sector in organising the support and service provision for persons in vulnerable situations, including the homeless. It maintains an ongoing dialogue with civil society organisations, inviting them to open discussions about the challenges and national developments in social inclusion areas, including the fight against homelessness. The Commission also funds non-governmental organisations' activities such as FEANTSA³ or EUROCITIES⁴. For the latter, activities include a working group on homelessness which promotes an integrated approach on prevention and active inclusion of homeless population.⁵

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/13032020_-_coronavirus_response_investment_initiative_final_v2_0.pdf

² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=9638&furtherNews=yes>

³ <https://www.feantsa.org/en>

⁴ <http://www.eurocities.eu/>

⁵ http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/working_groups/Homelessness&tpl=home