

## THE ADRIGOV PROJECT: SOCIAL ISSUES SESSION

### **Foreword**

The EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) includes the horizontal pillar on "Research and Innovation" as one of the two main horizontal pillars that serve as cross-sectoral basis supporting the other thematic priorities of the EUSAIR Action Plan.

This paper intends to provide some food for thought for the thematic session on social innovation scheduled in Bologna on May 27 and 28, 2014 as part of the AdriGov project, within the framework of this pillar.

It starts from the considerations that have already been developed in the EUSAIR context and in European policy documents on the subject of welfare and social innovation. The Emilia-Romagna Region has identified a number of innovative tools for the planning and delivery of welfare and social services through its own regional strategies.

Five themes will be put forward for analysis and discussion, in the belief that dialogue and cooperation between European regions can truly become effective tools to strengthen their respective social protection systems, based on the awareness that many of the new challenges and issues are common across the entire Adriatic-Ionian area.

The global economic crisis, and its effects on real economy and on the living conditions of millions of men and women, have clearly highlighted the need for public interventions aimed at tackling the regressive factors of economic development and protecting the lives and well-being of citizens in the event of economic failures. This new policy does not only involve market regulatory measures, checks and balances on the economic and manufacturing structure, but also other types of actions in the realm of social and welfare policies. In this perspective multiple purposes are pursued by social policy: enhancing European competitiveness and, in parallel, protecting individuals, starting with the most vulnerable ones, reducing inequalities, promoting the development of a community welfare, people's empowerment and promotion, social action in furtherance of social cohesion development. Through networking, the European regions are able to establish institutional, economic and cultural links enabling the exchange of experiences and solutions, which may be useful to deal with problems that cannot be checked, but indeed affecting much larger areas than one single country. From this perspective, the Adriatic region is a micro-area characterized by several social dynamics (people movement, cultural exchanges) and economic relations. This might

be the starting point to think about joint solutions to common, although different, problems, based on shared values and deeply rooted historical ties.

Member States are urged to put social investments and modernization of their social protection systems at the top of their agenda by the recently published communication by the European Commission on social investments aimed at growth and social cohesion (COM (2013) 83 final). This implies more active and performing integration strategies and a more efficient and effective use of resources. Social Investments are developed along three action lines:

- **Ensuring that social protection systems meet people's needs at critical times in their lives.** Much more should be done to reduce the risk of social disintegration and thereby avoiding a higher social spending in the future.
- **Streamlining social policies and focusing on the actual beneficiaries in order to provide suitable and sustainable social protection systems.** Some countries report better results for society as a whole compared to other States, in spite of lower or equal resources, which proves that there is a leeway for manoeuvre for a more cost-effective social spending.
- **Improving active inclusion strategies within the various countries.** Sustainable and qualitatively adequate childcare and education services, preventing early school leaving, providing training and support with job search, accommodation facilities and accessibility to healthcare: all these sectors require substantial social investment.

In the light of the above-mentioned considerations, it is now necessary to focus on the main emergency situations stemming from a changing local environment that need to be taken into account by the healthcare and welfare system, by making the necessary resources available in terms of cooperation to promote adequate policies to cope up with present hardships. Healthcare and social well-being policies are expected to deal with the multifaceted and complex problems that are putting our communities at test, so that they can continue to be the engine of local development, employment opportunities and guarantee security. These phenomena have to be taken into account and analyzed since they set the scene where actions should be implemented, by showing the way forward. The most interesting phenomena and themes emerging from this analysis are listed here below in view of future programming and work.

### **1) New integrated planning routes**

Action and service planning activities should fully take into account the rapidly and deeply

changing context that highlights new needs and new forms of social unrest related to the major socio-economic crisis of these past few years, which cannot be solved in the short term. Hence, it will be necessary to take stock of the situation and to carry out a needs analysis by actively involving the community in identifying action priorities. The task to be played by regional and local authorities is to ensure an **integrated participatory planning process**, acting on the various health determinants, building trust platforms between the stakeholders involved in the process, reconciling conflicting interests, providing community with discussion and programming opportunities. The development of a new form of governance, actively engaging the **social partners and the community in the recognition of needs and setting of priorities**, will have to pave the way towards new learning conditions, shifting away from the previous ones that proved to be insufficient in the course of past experiences, stemming from programs and projects aimed at promoting local development and mainly focused on expanding the range of health services.

From this point of view, the role played by managers in charge of healthcare and welfare offices should also be redefined in view of acquiring new specific skills to open new discussion and engagement opportunities with the local communities, with a view to detecting new needs based on which a new integrated programming should be developed. Effective health promotion actions must concern all modifiable health determinants and not just service organization. Development tools can be used on different levels: regulation aimed at better defining their legal identity; structural standardization processes, which may be useful not only from an organizational and administrative point of view but also in terms of care and service management, role enhancement and update of Local Plans. A good example concerns the reorganization of regional, provincial, wide-area and inter-municipal association administrative functions and responsibilities and the identification of the suitable local domains for the exercise of municipal functions, requiring a performance assessment of the governance system enabling the exercise of social and healthcare policies.

The partial transfer of resources from the central to the local level is not less important in this process, as well as the adoption of mechanisms allowing local authorities (including regional, municipal and inter-municipal authorities, according to the rules and regulations implemented by each State) to raise and allocate part of their budget to these functions.

## **2) Intersectoral actions, the "health home" model**

In primary care, special efforts should be made to actively promote a shift from an organizational model characterized by the presence of workers who are used to act independently to a **community medicine model** characterized by **integrated care arrangements**, also with the involvement of all the health and social work professionals, marked by the following principles:

- Interdisciplinary approach to health problems
- Development of monitoring and care tools designed for vulnerable target groups
- Home care centered approach (de-institutionalization of services)
- Special focus on the optimal use of resources

- Engagement of the local community and enhancement of the role played by caregivers.

The "health home" model should be encouraged and implemented, i.e. a place of interdisciplinary and interprofessional practice, where citizens' health needs can be met, through access to primary health care services, including medical and nursing care, the availability of specialist outpatient services with low technological sophistication and access to specialist services at secondary level. It is also necessary to rethink spatial planning in the light of the hospital network reorganization in an integrated manner involving the social and healthcare services network, in order to ensure equal access to healthcare services. The reorganization of primary care, within "health homes", requires a redefinition of professional roles and responsibilities. As for hospital care, it is necessary to diversify production, by outlining care sectors and pathways. In addition to the promotion of interdisciplinary integration, it is important to identify responsibilities and tasks that enhance the contributions provided by all social and healthcare practitioners.

### **3) Public and Private (Profit and Non-Profit) sectors Integration: towards a social economy**

The cooperation between the public and private sectors is closely related to the first two points. One of the main recommendations launched by the European Union to Member States is urging them to promote social economy, arguing that the resources allocated for social policies should not be limited to those typically provided by the public sector, but they should also include contributions by the non-profit-making sector (Social Business Initiative (COM (2011) 682 and by the for-profit Corporate Social Responsibility.) The future of the welfare system lies in the adoption of an integrated approach between the public and private sectors. All European welfare policies tend towards a generalized lower involvement of the public sector in the social welfare system, which can be expressed in different forms: reduction of public programs and increased private service provision; privatization of public service agencies; public funding of private services. In Italy the guidelines of this change are identified in the *Welfare mix*, which is a dynamic solidarity system in which the State, the market and the third sector (voluntary associations, non-profit-making associations) operate with equal dignity, in a climate of virtuous competition. This virtuous collaboration is effective on several levels: it leaves citizens the right to a free choice, towards active citizenship and it allows the flourishing of new forms of entrepreneurship. Obviously, the scope of cooperation between public and private sectors is not only limited to the not-for-profit sector, but also to the "profit-making" sector, hence the importance of the "corporate social responsibility" and "corporate welfare" themes. These concepts should be understood as a set of non-monetary benefits and services provided by employers to their employees with a view to improving not only their working but also personal lives. Corporate welfare should not be perceived as an act of philanthropy by employers towards their employees but as a win-win situation, that both employers and employees can benefit from.

The "Corporate Social Responsibility" project attaches a great importance to the dissemination of ethical behavior in the business world and aims at the active support of businesses to the welfare system. The adoption of best practice by profit-making companies is promoted through a variety of

ways: tax allowances to profit-making companies that fund non-profit associations; tax allowances to profit-making companies that adopt ethical behaviors; positive repercussions in commercial terms deriving from ethical corporate behaviors (as shown by marketing and communication campaigns that are increasingly more focused on social commitment and by the importance attached to corporate tools such as the social budget).

#### **4) The importance of youth education and lifelong learning as a prevention and resolution tool in vulnerable situations**

The link between education systems and labor markets is essential to provide life opportunities chances and, at present, it is an important factor of inequality and social exclusion, especially in terms of transition from school to work. Investments in education of vulnerable groups, a closer link between education and labor market needs and the creation of new jobs are fundamental measures that might have a significant impact in the field of social inclusion. The labor market reorganization is still incomplete in large areas of the Adriatic-Ionian macro region. At the same time, more flexible market-oriented training experiences, especially in the field of vocational training, are going on in a few areas. A special attention must be paid to the real opportunities offered by the world of education and training in connection with the labor market, to counter growing phenomena, such as the so-called NEET “Not in Education, Employment or Training”, which means that individuals are not included either in education, vocational training or employment). At the same time, the promotion of lifelong learning, and especially for all those people who work in the welfare and healthcare sector, social and health care services, should become a mandatory and necessary requirement to be able to implement the new approaches described in the preceding paragraphs.

#### **5) Migration and multiculturalism**

Migration phenomena have a strong social impact in all countries of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region, both in the countries of destination and in those of origin. In addition to that, many regions are characterized by a significant internal migration, with the consequent depopulation of some areas leading to the overcrowding of urban areas, with poor urban planning, access to services, integration, crime, etc..

In the Emilia-Romagna region, foreign immigration is a structural component that characterizes the population dynamics, which affects the socio-economic framework. On the one hand, immigrants require a high level of attention and care, on the other hand, they express a strong need for social cohesion and integration support policies. In addition, as indicated by the results of the project “MMWD: *Making migration work for development policy tool for strategic planning in South East Europe*”, immigrants are the only factor that is able to reverse the population aging trend, with far-reaching implications for the welfare/pension system.

By contrast, other countries in the area are characterized by a younger population than the EU average, though only Albania is not characterized by an aging population. The high unemployment

rate and a widespread underground economy encourage emigration, resulting into brain drain and family and social disintegration phenomena.

In recent years, return migration has increased, partly as a result of the global crisis, and partly as a result of an unsuccessful migration experience. Hence, a certain number migrants have decided to go back to their homes. New integration and inclusion demands therefore arise, so that migrants who decide to return to their home countries are able to capitalize on the skills and resources they have acquired abroad.

The European recommendations encourage Member States to address migration as a circular migration phenomenon and to promote remittance enhancing policies, so that private resources can promote a positive social impact.

Finally, with the growth of a second generation of immigrants, the issue of multiculturalism becomes more important, with the need to redefine a citizenship covenant between immigrants and natives, preventing discrimination and social unrest. By contrast, other countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Region feature different characteristics and problems, related to the presence of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, which in the past have seriously affected and torn the social fabric, while continuing to produce discrimination and segregation effects (eg. Roma population).