



Covid-19 and social services: Challenges and future planning

WEBINAR | 24 April | 10:00 CET

Welcome

○ Alfonso Lara Montero, Chief Executive Officer, European Social Network



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Welcome

- Understand the challenges faced by social services due to the crisis
- Responses developed
- How the lessons learnt can help us think of future planning
- National & European tools that can help for this future planning



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Speakers

- Christian Fillet, City of Bruges and ESN's Chair, Belgium
- Elisabet Gonzalez, Barcelona County Council, Spain
- Graham Owen, Association of Directors of Social Services, Sweden
- Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Social Policy Director, European Commission



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Social changes

- Family changes: weaker family networks, potential increase of violence at home, loneliness of older people living alone at home or at residential centres
- Changes in social networks: focus on the individual due to social isolation and focus on individual new technologies
- Information society: citizens constantly receive information –many times contradictory- and request a rapid response
- Health ...and economic, work and social problems



Social changes affecting social services' work

Social changes are affecting the way social services work:

- Working from home
- Using IT/phone (for previous face to face interventions)
- How to ensure social interventions whether in social services centres or at home
- Securing protecting equipment to implement social interventions whether in centres or at homes
- Difficulty to intervene where social services not considered 'essential'
- Emergence of new problems, unclear what type of responses/how to respond
- Rapidly changing situation; difficulty to keep up & respond accordingly
- Lack of professionals' support



Emerging needs

- Need of alternative housing
- Covering basic needs like food, medication, energy
- Ensuring basic income and benefits
- Continuity of care: telecare, domiciliary care, meals on wheels
- Support for people without homes



- Christian Fillet, City of Bruges and ESN's Chair, Belgium



Current Challenges in Bruges

The corona crisis has and will have an impact on people's psychosocial and financial capacity

- Social isolation: new initiatives are being taken to reach people: calling older people, chat buddies, social media contacts
- School is a new challenge for both children and parents
- An additional problem of the 'lockdown' is the danger that many problems and requests for help will remain undetected
- Many people are postponing visits to the doctor, dentist, psychologist....This can lead to a deterioration of health problems, with higher costs in the future!
- Since we have to stay at home as much as possible, energy costs are rising and not everyone can afford them!
- Loss of income for many families: 30% of workers are now economically unemployed. This means that their income has also dropped by 30%. Others fall back on sickness benefits because they have to stay at home due to infection (or suspicion of)

Current responses in Bruges

- Possible financial management measures during COVID-19 crisis
- Debt management
- Custom credit management (Finance of the city wants to focus on accelerated invoice payment)
- Possible tax measures
- Possible measures concerning benefits
- Possible measures regarding events policy and management
- Possible measures regarding rent and concessions
- Flexible jobs
- Adjusted opening hours of services
- Free laptops for (vulnerable) school-children
- Increased n. of night shelters

Future steps in Bruges

THREE TRACKS TO REDUCE IMPACT IN THE SHORT TERM

1. Outreach work and accessibility
2. Increased guidance
3. Meeting highest financial needs

7 PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

P 1: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

P 2: CUSTOMISED WORK

P 3: A ROOF ABOVE ONE'S HEAD

P 4: GOOD HEALTH

P 5: CARE (FOR EACH OTHER)

P 6: EVERYONE COUNTS

P 7: ACCESS TO HELP AND SERVICES



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- Elisabet Gonzalez, Barcelona County Council, Spain



Barcelona Provincial Council:

*Social Cohesion,
Citizens and Welfare
Department*

COVID-19

#QuedatAcasa



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Current challenges of social services before COVID-19



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- Deterioration of poverty and risk of social exclusion contexts (housing, work, health, education)
 - Increasing inequalities and vulnerabilities (children, migrants, older people, women, disabled people, homeless people)
 - Gendered-based violence (living 24h with aggressor)
 - Increased difficulties for disabled people and people with mental health problems
 - Overload for family careers (single-parent families, balance work-children caring)
 - Health risk for the professionals of local essential services, including social services (lack of information on proceedings or PPE –facial masks, safely gloves, gowns)
 - Increase of communal living conflicts (between neighbours: noise, dirt, humidity)
-

Current responses of social services before COVID-19



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1. Identification of local government needs and Actions

- Provision of Individual Protection Equipment + fast detection tests for public workers of essential local services
 - Gender-based violence awareness-raising campaign
 - Free phone number for new users of telecare
 - Temporary services for homeless people and hotel for positive cases
 - Economical support for emergency needs of local governments incurred by COVID-19
 - Online' adaptation for the provision of social services: psychological support, addiction among young people, mediation services for dispute resolution,
 - Information for local governments (health recommendations, legal support and analysis of new regulations, awareness- raising)
-

Future steps that should be implemented



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- Identification of new social and health needs
 - Consider redefinition of masterplans (mandate plans after local elections)
 - Redistribution of financing and technical support provided to local governments
 - Revising local public policies: how to address this new context?
 - Agenda 2030 and Urban Agenda for the EU: an opportunity?
-

Thank you!

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- Graham Owen, Association of Directors of Social Services, Sweden



Covid-19 Challenges and future planning

April 24th, 2020

Graham Owen

Association of Directors of Social Services, Sweden

Director of social services Trosa municipality, Sörmland



Current challenges

Providing good quality residential and home care

Staff – shortage, absences, worries

PPE

Information – communication - media

Social Services need to keep a focus on other target groups and future needs



Current Responses

Recruiting staff, redeploying staff, training staff

Specialised COVID teams in residential units and home care

PPE – own production, sourcing supplies when other channels fail

Intensify collaboration health services + social services

Go Digital!

Proactive on other issues



Future Steps

The road is long

Strong collaboration between health services and social services is essential

Be prepared for the next pandemic on all fronts

Financing public services





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- Katarina Ivankovic-Knezevic, Social Policy Director, European Commission





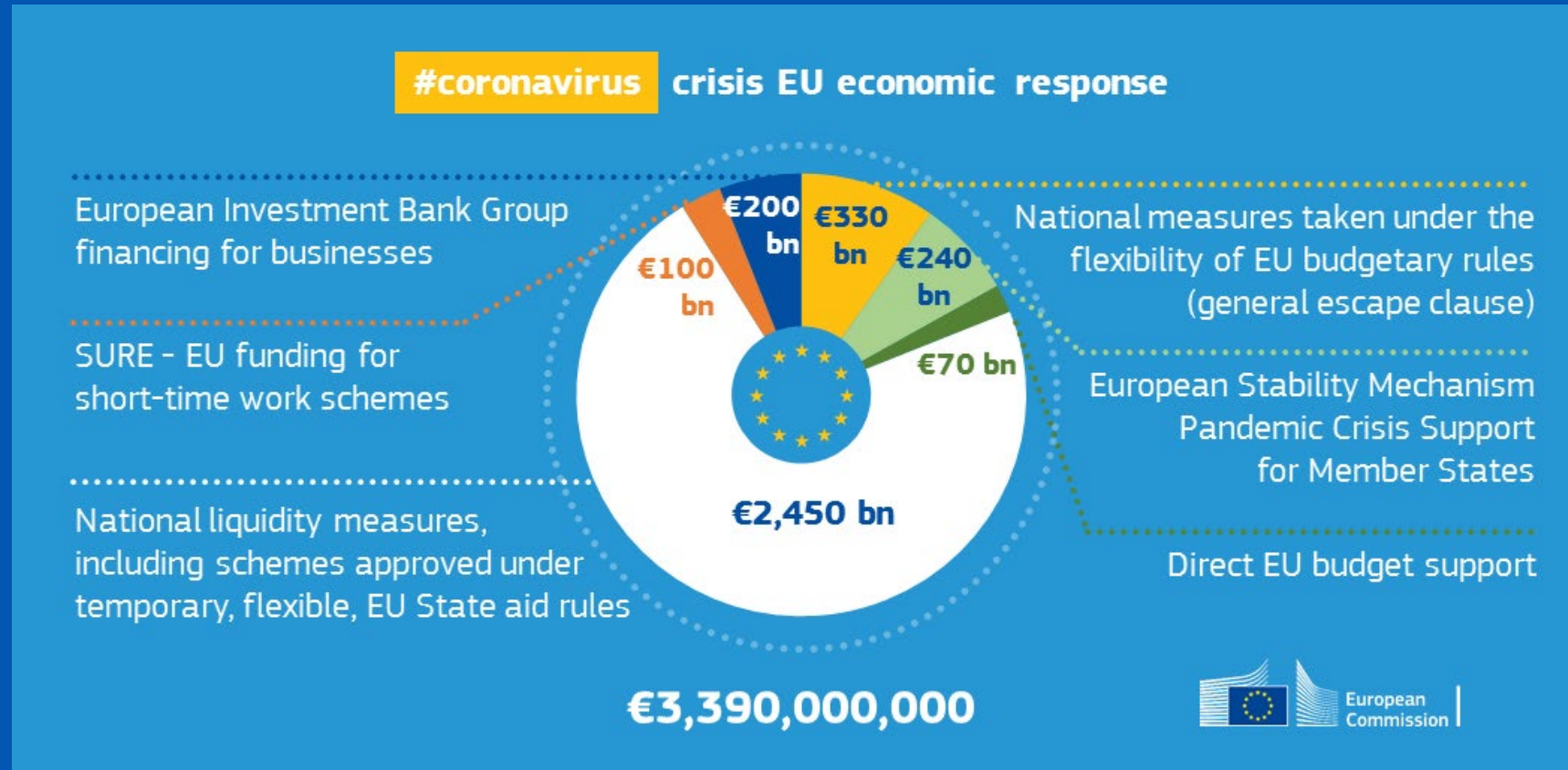
Covid-19 and social services: Challenges and future planning ESN Webinar of 24 April 2020

Katarina Ivanković-Knežević

European Commission
Director, Social Affairs Directorate
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

EU response to COVID19

- Public health
- Borders and mobility
- Crisis management
- Research
- Fighting disinformation
- Economic measures
- COVID19 website
- Guidance



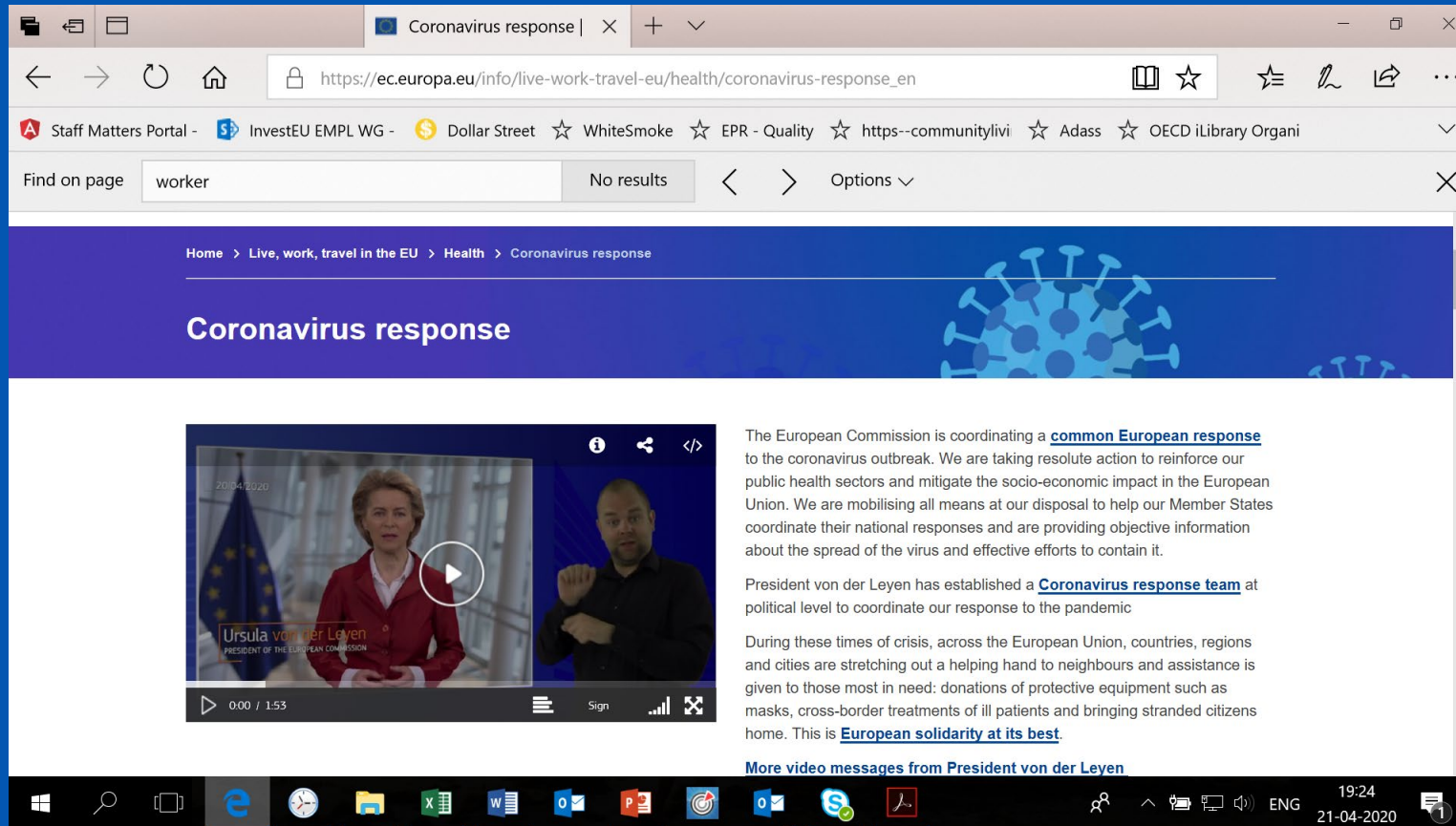
EU COVID19 roadmap to exit

- Action should be based on science and have public health at its centre
- Action should be coordinated between the Member States
- Respect and solidarity between Member States remains essential

“Access to care in particular for vulnerable groups, the availability of primary care structures as well as sufficient staff with appropriate skills to care for patients discharged from hospitals or maintained at home and to engage in measures to lift confinement.”

“Most vulnerable groups should be protected for longer: (...) elderly and people suffering from chronic diseases are at higher risk. People with mental illness are another possible group at risk. Measures should be envisaged to continue protecting them, while lifting restrictions for other groups.”

Additional resources:



https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en



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Lessons learnt

- Coordinated response: care & support network to create protocols & services facilitating interventions in an organised way; learning from/coordinating with other sectors health, but also why not the police, the army
- This crisis has helped us understand the need to think not only about life but also death: the impossibility for relatives to accompany their loved ones when they die, or families to meet and share, say goodbye, support each other, hold a funeral
- New risk factors: prolonged confinement may lead to mental health problems; loneliness, emotional pain
- Institutional reinforcement: coordinated responses; future interventions based on lived experience/expertise & new community care models; ensuring ongoing training, supporting professionals with new technologies



Coordinated Response



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One day in the future...

How Covid-19 impacted social services in

18 2019 2020 2021 2022

Thank you for listening!

Get in touch!

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