<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Research on the use of EU financial instruments in the social care sector</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Organisation(s):</u></td><td colspan="2">Social Administration Research Laboratory - University of West Attica (SARL UNIWA)</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Country:</u></td><td colspan="2">Greece</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Contact:</u></td><td colspan="2">policy@esn-eu.org (we will function as an intermediary between you and interested organisations who want to learn more about the practice)</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Theme:</u> Choose at least one option</td><td>☐ Ageing & Care
☐ Asylum & Migration
☐ Young People
☐ Support for Children & Families
☐ Community Care
☐ Integrated Care & Support
☐ Co-Production
☐ Disability
☐ Housing & Homelessness
☐ Artificial Intelligence
☐ Digitalisation
☐ Quality Care</td><td>☐ Labour Market Inclusion
☐ Social Inclusion
☐ Technology
☐ Workforce and Leadership
☐ Social Benefits
☒ EU Funding
☒ Social Services’ Resilience
☐ Mental Health
☐ Person-Centred Care
☒ Research & Use of Evidence
☐ Management & Planning
☐ Other, please specify:</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u>
Which principles does your practice cover? Check the 20 principles here.</td><td>☐ 1. Education, training, life-long learning
☐ 2. Gender equality
☐ 3. Equal opportunities
☐ 4. Active support to employment
☐ 5. Secure and adaptable employment
☐ 6. Fair Wages
☐ 7. Transparent employment conditions
☐ 8. Social dialogue
☐ 9. Work-life balance
☐ 10. Healthy, safe work environment</td><td>☒ 11. Childcare and child support
☐ 12. Social protection
☐ 13. Unemployment benefits
☐ 14. Minimum income
☐ 15. Old age income and pensions
☐ 16. Health care
☒ 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities
☒ 18. Long-term care
☐ 19. Housing and assistance to homeless
☐ 20. Access to essential services</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Current status of the practice:</u></td><td colspan="2">☐ Concept and Design Phase
☐ Testing or pilot phase
☐ Temporary practice that has terminated
☐ Temporary practice that is ongoing and has a termination date
☒ Established and ongoing practice
☐ Scaling Up and Transformation Phase
☒ Other (please specify):</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Summary:</u>
Please summarise the practice in maximum 3 sentences. This will be the disclaimer of your project on our</td><td colspan="2">This Project is the first ever research initiative in Greece focusing on the financial sustainability of public (open and residential) care services through EU instruments. It was performed as a cross-sector collaboration between the biggest public provider of care services (Regional Social Welfare Centre of Attica, RSWCA) and the leading centre of academic excellence in the social policy sector (Social Administration Research Laboratory at the University of West Attica, SARL</td></tr>
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website. Example here.	UNIWA). SARL UNIWA provided capacity building and research services to strengthen RSWCA's ability to use EU funding instruments for social care investments.
Context/ Social issues addressed *Please explain the problem you attempt to solve with your practice.*	Seven years after the conclusion of the Third Economic Adjustment Programme in 2018, Greece remains one of the few EU Member States without a sustainable national social care regime. There is not any regulated national funding instrument to guarantee a balanced approach between supply and increasing demand for social services, while the social security system has not introduced any guarantee against the dependency risk. In this context, Greece faces serious difficulties in offering stable and well-funded social care services, especially for children, older people and people with disabilities. To address this gap, Greece depends disproportionally to other EU Member States on EU financial instruments that may support the development of social care services in line with strict eligibility conditions of the European Investment and Structural Funds. However, access to these EU instruments is very problematic for the majority of public care providers due to lack of expertise, bureaucratic constraints, weaknesses to design evidence-based funding proposals according to users' needs and policy issues to put forward supportive action plans. To help overcome these barriers, SARL UNIWA developed a project to strengthen the RSWCA's capacity to use EU financial instruments. The research team worked closely with professionals and managers, using legal analysis and group discussions to create three practical guides. These guides explain clearly how to apply for funding from complex trajectories (the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 and the Recovery and Resilience Facility 2021-2026), taking into account the eligibility conditions of EU Programmes under direct and shared management.
Objectives: *Please provide **a maximum of three** objectives in bullet points.*	1. To raise understanding and awareness about the use of EU financial instruments in the social care sector 2. To provide scientific support to the RSWCA for identifying, monitoring and exploiting EU funding opportunities that will advance its role and improve the quality of its services 3. To upgrade the skills of the RSWCA executives and advance their capabilities to use EU funding opportunities
Activities: *Please describe the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 400 words).*	1. Regulatory analysis of relevant EU legislation, case law and legal doctrine about EU financial instruments in the social care sector (including the Cohesion Policy and the Recovery and Resilience Facility) 2. Desk research about the use of EU financial instruments in the social care sector by Greece 3. Surveys with RSWCA staff to identify users' needs and expectations in the light of eligible EU funding 4. Surveys with RSWCA leadership to identify barriers for the proper use of EU financial instruments in the social care sector

	5. Focus groups with RSWCA staff to identify a level of understanding for the context of EU financial instruments in the social care sector 6. Compilation of three user friendly Guides (in Greek) about the exploitation of EU financial instruments in the social care sector during the 2021-2027 period 7. Training seminars with RSWCA staff about the use of EU financial instruments in the social care sector 8. Presentation of Projects' outcomes during various events in Greece and abroad
Outcomes: *Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this (i.e. statistics, a study, or feedback)*	(a) RSWCA has adopted a plan to make use of EU financial instruments in the social care sector based on the Projects' practical suggestions, such as: ❑ The establishment of an EU Programmes Unit; ❑ Direct financial assistance from the Hellenic National Recovery and Resilience Plan 2021-2026 (NRRP); ❑ Medium-term financial assistance from the EU Technical Support Instrument (TSI); ❑ Long-term financial assistance from the Hellenic National Support Framework 2021-2027 (Cohesion Policy Programme under shared management). (b) These suggestions were evaluated by RSWCAs' leadership as fully aligned to the regulatory framework and the needs of the Centre. The project has set a new standard for how public services in Greece can plan more effectively and secure EU funding to improve care for those who need it most.
Funding Source	EU Funds: ESF+ ☐ INTERREG ☐ ERDF ☐ ERASMUS☐ RRF ☐ other ☐ ☒ National Government Funds ☐ Regional Government Funds ☐ Local Government Funds ☐ Private Sponsorship / Public-Private Partnership ☐ Financial contribution of People using Services ☐ Other, please define:
Links to supporting documents: *e.g. project website or report of the practice, articles*	SARL UNIWA website: https://sarl.uniwa.gr/en/homepage/ RSWCA website: https://www.kkppa.gr/ Project website: https://sarl.uniwa.gr/en/sarl-uniwa-flagship-project/
Comments and tips *i.e. for people willing to implement your Practice in their service*	Current research about funding of social care services in Europe is mostly focused on national public instruments (taxation) or users' fees, while many scholars are skeptical to suggest the use of EU funding instruments due to hidden eligibility issues or management constraints. In addition, access to available EU instruments is very problematic for most public care providers due to lack of expertise, bureaucratic problems and capacity building weaknesses to design evidence-based funding proposals according to users' needs.

	The SARL UNIWA Project created a European benchmarking framework for checking the legal and operational eligibility of social care investments by public entities which are interested in taking advantage of available EU funding; in this regard, the Project contributes to evidence-based funding agendas of public care providers, ensuring that their decisions are rooted in robust regulatory data.