Call for competitive tenders
Provision of external expert services to support ESN’s European Semester Reference Group

Budget: 8,000 € (including VAT)
Deadline for submissions: 27 April 2018
1. **Background to the European Social Network**

The European Social Network (ESN) is the independent network for public social services in Europe. ESN brings together people who plan, manage, deliver and regulate social services, including health, social welfare, employment, education and housing, in public authorities across Europe.

Our network of over 120 members in 34 countries are mainly associations of local and regional directors of social services, social services in regions, counties and municipalities, funding and regulatory agencies, universities, research and development and improvement bodies. ESN supports the development of effective social policy and social care practice through the exchange of knowledge and expertise. We represent local public authorities at European level and bring local practice experience into European policymaking.

We believe that social services should protect and support vulnerable people, respect the dignity and independence of people using services, pursue excellence in social work and care practice, listen to service users and respond to their needs, promote solidarity with disadvantaged people and communities and promote equality and non-discrimination.

2. **Background to the project**

As part of its four-year strategy 2014-2017, the European Social Network (ESN) launched a Reference Group to give greater prominence to social issues and the challenges faced by social services in the framework of the European Semester, the cycle of economic and social policy coordination that takes place between the EU and its Member States.

The reference group consists of one representative per country. They each take part in analysing both the country reports and country-specific recommendations issued by the European Commission for their country. The aim was to compare the documents with their own expertise from their position as social services managers and planners at the local level in order to identify potential gaps in the European institutions’ analyses. To do so, a questionnaire is prepared by ESN and distributed to members to fill in. ESN then performs a comparative analysis between countries. The outcomes are discussed at an annual meeting in Brussels. There, members could meet and discuss with representatives of the European Commission, and discuss between themselves policy recommendations issued through the Semester and social policy priorities within their countries. The annual meeting is followed by a report which includes cross-country analysis, individual country profiles, and alternative country-specific recommendations from the Reference Group members.

3. Subject and tasks

The European Social Network (ESN) is seeking an expert to support our work in the framework of the European Semester Reference Group.

The tasks will take place over a period of 10 days, to be completed between April and October 2018, in collaboration with ESN’s policy team. The main tasks, their distribution as well as their indicative duration, are listed below.

- **9 May:** once the Reference Group members have sent their completed questionnaires and ESN’s policy team have ensured they are of the best possible quality, they will be shared with the expert who may request further clarifications if necessary (2 days).

- **9 May – 22 June:** Based on the final versions of the questionnaires and in preparation for the meeting, the expert should produce a draft cross-country analysis, identifying key issues relevant across Europe (2 days). Meanwhile the ESN policy team will draft individual country profiles. The first draft of the cross-country analysis will be included in the delegate pack produced by ESN a week before the meeting.

- The expert should also prepare a presentation of the outcomes of this work, in preparation for the meeting (0.5 day).

- **28-29 June:** meeting in Brussels, on the afternoon of 28 June and morning of 29 June. Participants include members of the reference group (around 25), ESN staff, the expert, and Commission officials (1 day). The expert may be requested to help moderate part of the sessions.

- **July - August:** In view of the feedback/clarifications/additional information provided by ESN and members of the group, the expert will complete and submit the final version of the cross-country analysis, a brief introduction to the European Semester 2018 cycle and a short briefing of key issues for social services in the framework of the European Semester (4-5 days). ESN will take responsibility for putting the report together and agreeing the final version with members and expert.
4. Required expertise

Expert’s skills should include:

- Strong knowledge of the European Semester process and recent developments, and insights into the stakeholders of the process; both within the European Commission and European Council and developments on other platforms and networks.
- Ability to provide advice to ESN’s policy team on how best to engage with and contribute to the European institutions and tools, publications and reports, and initiatives.
- Experience within or working for an EU institution, ideally in DG Employment, and/or in a social policy network.
- Ability to interact with institutions and stakeholders on a regular basis in order to provide relevant insights into the topic.
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver high quality outputs in an agreed timeframe
- Strong knowledge of social policies in individual EU member states.

5. Expected remuneration

The expected remuneration is EUR 8,000 (incl. VAT). The payment will be authorised after the approval and delivery of the relevant deliverables.

6. Duration

All tasks and deliverables should be completed within the period of 10 days, specification of which will be agreed between the parties. Depending on bilateral agreement, this collaboration could be pursued in the next years.

7. Application process

The European Social Network (ESN) invites all interested individuals/organisations with the required expertise to send the following information by 27 April 2018.

1. Brief biography highlighting how you meet the required expertise
2. Relevant samples of work
3. Quote inclusive of VAT

Applications and questions about the project should be sent to ESN Policy and Communications Officer William Hayward at William.Hayward@esn-eu.org