

TO: Council of Europe, The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

For the attention of: Mr. Yavuz Mildon, President of the Congress

Re: Proposal regarding access to social rights of people from disadvantaged neighborhoods

Issue and Context

Social rights are one of the foundations on which Europe was built over the course of the last century. And yet, despite the significant progress made in this sphere on our continent, social rights are far from being fully guaranteed in practice for all Europeans. Access to the right to social protection, to health, to employment, to housing and to education comes up against many and varied obstacles. The main types of factors impeding access to social rights include the specification of right and adequacy of legal and other provision, inadequate monitoring and enforcement, resource shortages, management and procedural, information and communication, psychological and socio-cultural obstacles, and inadequate attention to vulnerable groups and regions.

Criteria

A feasible solution to improve the access to social rights of people from disadvantaged neighborhoods should comply with the Council of Europe's basic values: human rights, democracy and rule of law. These values lay the foundations for a tolerant and civilized society that is indispensable for European stability, economic growth and social cohesion.

Recommendation

We are asking the Council of Europe to act as a link between the members of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the participants at its seminars on new ways of participation using information and communication technologies. **Specifically, it could pair up members of the Congress who represent disadvantaged areas with the participants from the seminars, to organize citizen engagement projects in those areas to identify and put in practice the best solutions, together with the constituents.** The best projects could be awarded a prize and be promoted as success stories. This way, people will be shown that "it can be done" and will become more confident that they can influence public policies in their neighborhoods. The members of the Committee of the Regions, who support participation initiatives, should also be promoted as officials who care about their constituents.

This policy paper is published on the citizen engagement platform "Public Policies Made by Citizens" at <http://www.public-policies.eu/index.php/problem/Access-to-social-rights-of-people-from-disadvantaged-neighborhoods> 83. Your feedback will be published on the same page, as the fourth step of SMART Method of Public Policy. Thank you and looking forward to hearing from you soon.

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