



Ombudsman asks Commission to improve monitoring of EU Structural and Investment Funds

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The Ombudsman has asked the Commission to take a series of measures to improve how it monitors whether EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) are being used to promote the right of persons with disabilities and elderly people to independent living.

The rules governing the ESI funds state that the funds should be implemented in a way that promotes the transition from institutional to family- and community-based care.

The proposed measures include providing clearer guidance both to Member States and Commission staff on the need to promote deinstitutionalisation in relation to the use of ESI funds, and setting out indicators on how to define the process of deinstitutionalisation.

The Commission should encourage Member States to make it easier for organisations representing persons with disabilities to participate in monitoring committees, and it should pursue enforcement of the rules more proactively.

The Ombudsman urged the Commission to also carefully monitor how funds from the Recovery and Resilience Facility – set up to help the EU recover from the pandemic – are spent in relation to persons with disabilities and elderly people.

During the own-initiative inquiry, 18 ombudsmen from around Europe as well as civil society organisations provided input and expertise.

The Ombudsman has conducted several inquiries related to whether EU funds are spent in



line with the EU's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A recent inquiry concerned how the Commission dealt with concerns raised about alleged human rights abuses in a social care institution that had received EU funding.