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# **„One step forward, two steps backwards” Part 2**

**Deinstitutionalisation of large institutions and promoting community-based living  
in Hungary through the use of the Structural Funds of the European Union**

**Budapest, 2009-2010.**



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## Introduction

Implemented in cooperation by the Soteria Foundation and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Eötvös Loránd (ELTE), a research programme was carried between July 2009 and June 2010 with the goal to examine programmes co-financed by the European Union that promote the integration of people with disabilities and people with mental health problems. The research was supported by the Mental Health Initiative of the Open Society Institute.

The first results of the research were released in March 2010 in Budapest and Brussels at the same time.<sup>1</sup> This first study published earlier had been carried out on the basis of document analysis and the experience of the preliminary interviews. It discusses in detail the development concepts elaborated for the social reintegration of people with disabilities and people with mental health problems, and their realisation in the period between 2004 and today, as well as with an outlook until the year 2013.

The present study intends to complete the published results of the first stage of the research with the results of the second stage.

Between March and July 2010, using the publicly accessible data, we attempted to analyse the details of programmes and tenders financed from EU funds that affect the social integration of people with disabilities and people with mental health problems, with particular attention to their budgets and the composition of their target groups. The present study is a more detailed and upgraded version of the first conclusions of the data collection published earlier.

Also in this second stage, we are releasing our study based on structured interviews made with the key actors in which we expanded the conclusions of the earlier document analysis primarily with the personal views of the actors themselves and with general thoughts related to the system of distribution of EU funds.

With the publication of the present study, we have arrived at the end of a 12-month research project. The full list of researchers is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The study which summarised the first phase of the research received considerable publicity. Its main conclusions were included in the study of the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) which summarised the experience of a number of countries. The published study has been downloaded from the Internet on more than 500 occasions since March 2010 (<http://www.box.net/shared/m0bj8yoq2l>).

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As the programme manager, I would like to express my acknowledgements to the experts and students who took part in the project, as well as to the staff of the organisation which provided financial support.

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Budapest, June 9, 2010

## **I. Information system of the National Development Agency (NDA) and transparency of distribution of European Union funds**

In May 2010, our research team (experts of the ELTE Faculty of Social Sciences and the Sotéria Foundation) made an effort to map the efficiency with which Community funds were utilised between 2004 and 2009 in promoting the social integration of people with disabilities and people with mental health problems as a target group.

During our research, in the first place we made use of the publicly accessible database of the National Development Agency (NDA). Having recognised the deficiencies of it, we tried to obtain information directly from the officials of the NDA. In the period between 2009 July and 2010 February, nearly all our formal and informal attempts to obtain information failed. The only place where we experienced partnership approach was the programme office of OFA-EQUAL.

In the framework of our research, we reviewed the professional content of the calls for tenders that had been previously announced with respect to the following programmes: the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (HRDOP), the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme (EQUAL), the Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP), the Social Infrastructure Operational programme (SIOP) and the Regional Operational Programmes (ROP). We selected those measures which made also a textual reference to people with disabilities and people with mental health problems<sup>2</sup> as a possible target group, then tried to collect the data of these calls for tenders on the basis of the electronic information database of the NDA. It is important to emphasise that the analysis was based only and exclusively on the data of these measures, therefore, programmes that did not name people with disabilities as a target group were not subject of our examination!

Its significance is in the circumstance that the target group of our research is defined in the EU co-financed developments also as a horizontal equal opportunities target group. It means that this has to be taken into account in the case of each development! In relation to developments, we had no opportunity to examine this aspect of the horizontal policy – mainly due to the lack of accessible data. Beyond that, from the interviews we made and from the various sources (professional as well as those related to applicants and beneficiaries) what emerges is a rather failed picture. The horizontal policy appears in the eyes of applicants much rather as an obstacle, thus no due attention is paid to it. Hence, the realisation of the goals set by it is strongly questionable.

Neither on the website of the NDA, nor in the response to a written request sent to the Agency did we find any data which could clearly demonstrate in what numbers and in what ways were people with disabilities involved in the developments. We believe this is of particular concern since, based on EU regulations, to collect and subsequently submit these to the European Com-

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<sup>2</sup> As referred earlier in our study, we use the conceptual framework of the UN disability Convention which, differently from the Hungarian practice, uses the term 'people with disabilities' for both the various disability groups and the people with mental health problems. Hereinafter, where the text uses 'people with disabilities', in out interpretation it means also people with mental health problems.

mission is mandatory.<sup>3</sup> We believe that two things can be concluded from this: either these data are (still) not available, or these are not made public (not even for research purposes).

From all this it followed that there is a need to change our analytical method. Instead of analysing the available data, we had to look through the calls for tenders by tender (programme), one by one, and where people with disabilities were named and listed as a target group, we examined the lists of winners one by one (this item included several thousand beneficiaries). We examined the impact on people with disabilities by each successful tender (checking, for instance, in case of employment and education projects, whether they are named and involved, and, in case of developments in the area of services, whether social services that are meant specifically for this target group are being modernised, etc.).

In the following subsections we would like to demonstrate our achievements and to show, by processing the available – insufficient – data, what analyses and result statements are necessary in order to create an objective picture as regards the successfulness of the implemented and ongoing developments, and the impacts on the life conditions of people with disabilities.

## I.1. Result statements that can be produced based on the obtained data

### *A) Presence of people with disabilities as a target group in the examined programmes*

In the course of our research, the aspect we took into consideration when examining specific projects was to identify those (potential) projects that can, or do directly affect the target group of people with disabilities. Taking into account the difficulties presented above, the data of the tables and charts that follow were produced based on descriptions of winners of certain programmes (calls for tenders) published, and made accessible, on the website of the NDA. The descriptions were interpreted by our research team.

What we were particularly interested in was the proportion of developments from among those that affect the area of services, possibly developments introducing new approaches, that target people with disabilities.

Table 1. Distribution of projects that specify people with disabilities as a direct target group, 2004-2010, 1<sup>st</sup>. quarter

	Number of all examined projects	Number of investments in the area of elimination of barriers	Proportion of investments in the area of elimination of barriers (%)	Number of projects that directly affect our target group	Proportion of projects that directly affect our target group (%)
HRDOP	239	0	0	56	23.4%
I. NDP ROP	88	0	0	8	9.1%
II NDP ROP	859	760	45.8%	18	2.1%
SRP/SIOP	455	151	9.1%	71	15.6%

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix XXIII of the EC regulation No. 1828/2006 of Dec. 6, 2006, in connection with the European Social Fund.

EQUAL	16	0	0	7	43.8%
<b>Total/average</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>9.7%</b>

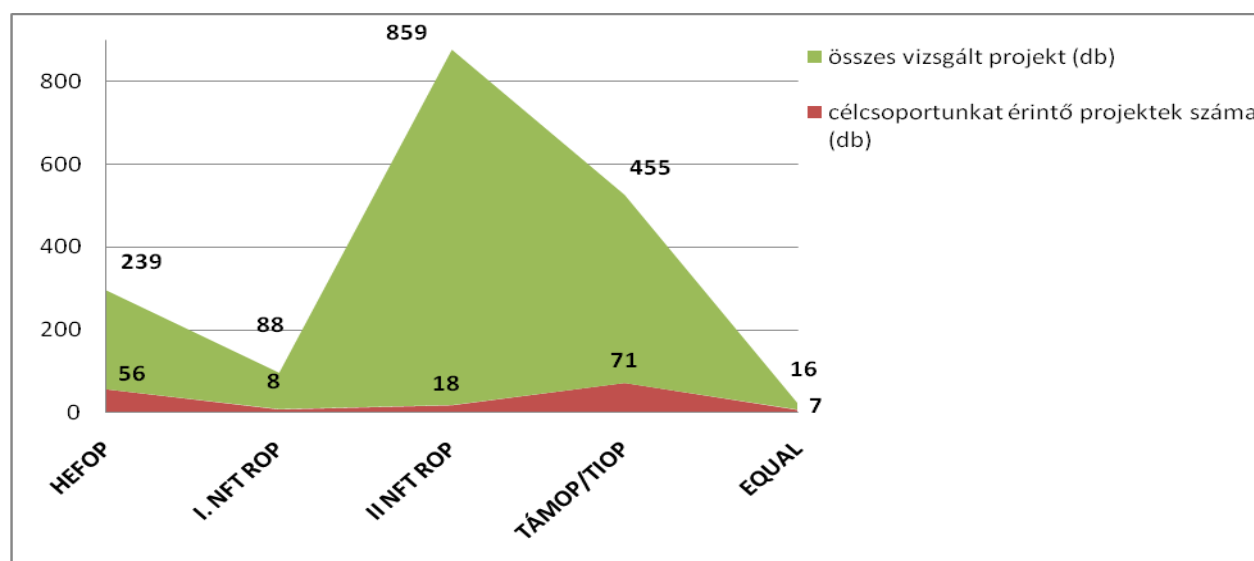
Own calculation, source of data: [www.nfu.hu](http://www.nfu.hu)

Based on the description of the call for tenders, any of the 1,657 projects examined here could have been elaborated specifically for people with disabilities. In reality, the majority of the projects, nearly 55 percent, were realised in the form of investments in the area of elimination of barriers, while approximately 10 percent of them were implemented in the form of projects focusing on employment and support provided to members of the target group.

The exploitation cannot reach 100 percent because a large number of projects are elaborated in such a way that potentially they reach out to several target groups (e.g. Roma, homeless, elderly, children), and it is only on the level of concrete tenders that the distribution gains final shape.

The 65-percent “efficiency” can, after all, be considered as good. However, one shall be reminded that exclusively those programmes had been selected for examination which, in their call for tenders/description, explicitly named the target group. Having filtered the developments for elimination of barriers of one-dimensional (that is, set) use, examination of the remaining approximately 700 projects shows that only one in four projects chose to utilise the funds for the support of people with disabilities. The distribution of the latter is shown in the chart below.

Chart 1: Projects focusing on people with disabilities (not those focussing on the elimination of barriers)



(Source: [www.nfu.hu](http://www.nfu.hu))

Green: Number of all examined projects

Red: Number of projects that affect our target group

One can clearly see from the chart that, understandably, the number of potential projects within the programmes announced in the framework of the ROP as well as SROP/SIOP programmes of the second New Hungary Development Plan is much higher. No programmes for the elimination of barriers were found in the 2004-2006 development period, and there was a much higher num-

ber of programmes for the development of services directly targeting the beneficiaries in the framework of the New Hungary Development Plan (NHDP). When linking this piece of information with the fact already mentioned in our previous study,<sup>4</sup> namely that housing related programmes as well as those targeting deinstitutionalisation and modernisation were also developed exclusively in the framework of the NHDP, we can make a clear conclusion that the issue of the situation of people with disabilities was considered in all detail only in the second development programme.

*B) Distribution of funds that target people with disabilities*

In addition to the numerical distribution of the projects, we also examined the percentage of the funds that were allocated directly for programmes that target people with disabilities.

Table 1: Overall budget of the examined projects

<b>Operational programmes</b>	<b>Budget</b>
HRDOP	49,058,603,743 HUF
I. NDP ROP	9,050,879,700 HUF
II NDP ROP	16,383,284,538 HUF
SROP/SIOP	100,157,994,692 HUF
EQUAL	2,598,973,976 HUF
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,249,736,649 HUF</b>

(Source: [www.nfu.hu](http://www.nfu.hu))

The cumulative figures show that, in the framework of the 1,657 projects selected on the basis of their content description, during the period of six years a total of 177 billion Hungarian Forints were allocated.

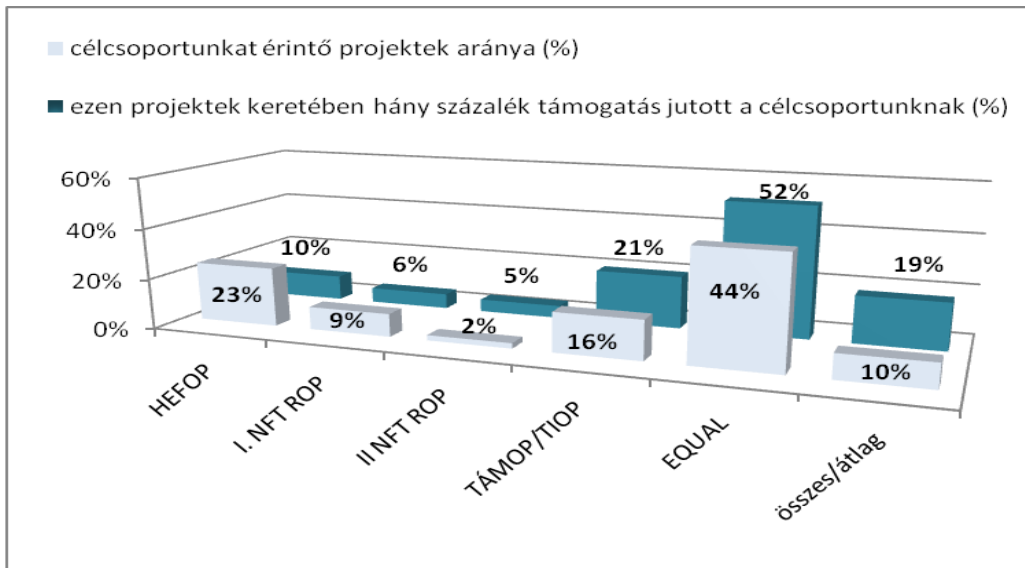
Programmes for people with disabilities that do not target the elimination of barriers constitute 160 programmes that are being implemented, which is less than 10 percent of all potential projects. If we examine the proportion of the share of these projects in terms of funding, we see that these 160 projects had nearly 33.5 billion forints at their disposal, which is 19 percent of all available funds.

The next chart (chart 2) shows the distribution of projects that focus on the development of services that support people with disabilities, in percentage of examined projects and the funds used by them.

Chart 2. Distribution of projects that focus on the development of services that support people with disabilities, in percentage of examined projects and the funds used by them

<sup>4</sup> „One step forward, two steps backwards” – Deinstitutionalisation of large institutions and promoting community-based living in Hungary through the use of the Structural Funds of the European Union, ELTE, Soteria Foundation, 2010. <http://www.box.net/shared/m0bj8yoq2l>





(Source: [www.nfu.hu](http://www.nfu.hu))

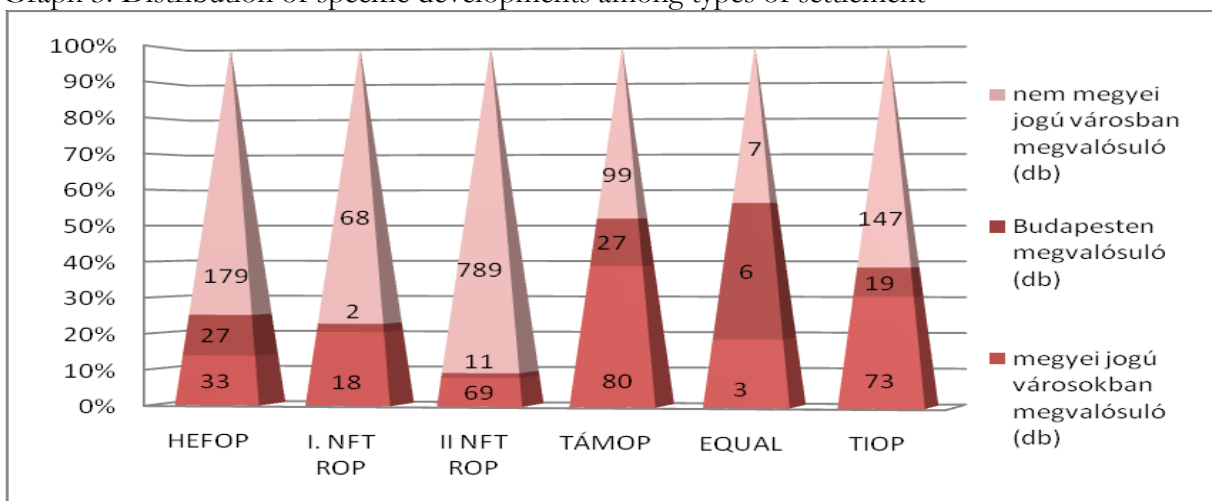
### C) Geographical distribution of projects that focus on people with disabilities

Using our own resources, we made an effort to map the geographical distribution of the projects that have been, or are being, implemented with the financial support of the EU. In case of a full-scale, detailed survey, we would find it important to be able to identify with respect to the existing service capacity or the geographical distribution of individual target groups, where specific developments have taken place. This dimension could be examined in its details if the researcher had access to the details of the project related information.

The following diagram structures all the projects that we have examined by place of implementation into three groups:

1. those implemented in Budapest
2. those implemented in cities (county seats)
3. those implemented in towns (not county seats)

Graph 3. Distribution of specific developments among types of settlement



(source: [www.nfu.hu](http://www.nfu.hu))

Pink: Number of projects implemented in towns that are not county seats

Dark red: Number of projects implemented in Budapest

Light red: Number of projects implemented in cities that are county seats

Contrary to our expectations, it was a positive experience to see that projects based in the capital city - which are traditionally better supplied in terms of services - do not demonstrate an outstandingly high proportion. This may point to the possibility that, with respect to both the elimination of barriers, or other issues, a kind of compensation may take place with the less developed areas catching up with the higher developed ones. What is particularly promising is the distribution of the various types of settlements in the second development plan of the ROP programmes.

Unfortunately, at this point of the analysis, we seriously faced the barriers created by the failures of data supply. In fact, on the level of specific projects, based on the concluded support contracts, tables of indicators, project progress reports and final narrative reports, we intended to examine in detail how many people with disabilities have indeed been reached by the development programmes, and exactly in what way.

The table below demonstrates the extent to which we were able to obtain the basic data of projects that do not fall in the category of “elimination of barriers” which we wished to examine in more detail, compared to the body of data necessary for a full-scale analysis.

Table 4. The state of the examined programmes

	Number of examined programmes / OP	Number of examined projects that (may) involve people with disabilities / OP	In how many of the examined projects we found / received relevant data	Percent of examined projects in which processable data were received
HRDOP	5	56	22	39.3%
EQAL	7	7	7	100.0%*
I. NDP – ROP	1	8	1	12.5%
II. NDP – ROPs	11	18	1	5.6%
SROP/SIOP	15	71	0	0.0%
<i>total / average</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>31.5%</i>

Source: [www.nfu.hu](http://www.nfu.hu)<sup>5</sup>

Within the examined programmes, detailed data suitable for processing were received only in case of 31.5 percent of projects that received funding. Such a proportion does not make meaningful research feasible: two-thirds of the necessary data are insufficient or completely missing.

One of the main pillars of any research activity is collecting and analysing reliable and detailed data, which, at the same time, is an essential condition for a successful research. The data collection required serious time and resource input, but, unfortunately, resulted in much less concrete and reliable data. The task we set out for ourselves was to identify, along with the budget planned/approved for specific measures,

- (1) the names of the successful organisations
- (2) the amount of the allocated financial support
- (3) the number of the involved target groups, and

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<sup>5</sup> Hereby we would like to thank the staff of the OFA – EQUAL Office for their assistance!

(4) within it, the number of people with disabilities and people with mental health problems.

Based on the analysis of these data, we intended to draw a conclusion on the tendering activity of institutions and organisations that support people with disabilities, and on the share of the group of people with disabilities received from EU funds.

In the course of the data collection which lasted for two weeks, 10 students documented the data of more than 1,600 projects. Despite the large bulk of data, it was not possible to obtain information of interpretable quantity and composition. Following a nearly one-year-long effort, we can state that, through the electronic data provision interface of the National Development Agency (and Intermediate Bodies), to the issues discussed in the previous paragraph we did not receive usable information.

## **I.2. Short description of experience obtained in the course of the data collection activity**

In the past years, even months, the website of the National Development Agency has undergone significant improvements. A spectacular search interface has been made accessible, the background of which is provided by the EMIR system that is used by all actors involved in the practical process of tendering.

Based on the data fed into the EMIR, the site is suitable for

1. showing successful projects by region
2. presenting successful projects by support programme
3. presenting successful projects by applicant
4. allowing enquiries by procedural steps.

For a researcher, at the first glance, these are interfaces that hold out hopes: graphic downloads and extraction of tables is made possible just as search of the details of specific projects.

The latest development (EUTÉR) was made accessible in May 2010, and doubtless it seems to be a promising application. At the same time, unfortunately, we have to say that it still does not fully meet the transparency requirements.

- There is no possibility to retrieve target group specific statistics from the system. Several researchers, policy-makers as well as the stakeholders themselves could be interested in what we were interested in, namely, what was the size of the EU financial support received by individual target groups. There is no interface where information related to specifically named target groups in various calls for tenders (HRDOP, SROP, SIOP, ROPs, etc.) could be retrieved.
- From the point of view of explorability and transparency of the processes, it shall be noted that we see the practice in which there is no possibility to track changes occurring in specific documents (see section of our previous study on AP (Action Plan) as an extremely problematic one. Several regulations, requirements, directives and guidelines that we believe are of fundamental importance (which can have a decisive influence with regard

to the procedure of specific programmes) are not accessible on the website of the NDA. At the same time, the authorities and the intermediate bodies regularly refer to those in their communication – generally subsequently. What is typical of other documents is that they are modified on a number of occasions, but it is always the most recent version that is accessible creating a false appearance that, in the period specified in the title of the document, the content that is accessible at a later stage is the governing one. One typical example of this is the SIOP action plan for the years 2007-2008.

- The project description column in the tender search service of the NDA was good as a starting point virtually for all calls for tenders, although we have found mistakes in it as well (e.g., in case of successful tenders, in the contract section there was a note that there is no contract under the selected tender yet, while the disbursements section stated that disbursements have been initiated for the applicant). We found information on the tenders ‘without contract’ through a Google search.
- With respect to data related to the target group, we could trust the data released by the successful applicants. Unfortunately, it led to disappointment that there are very few interfaces which share information about successful programmes. Neither the website of the NDA, nor the websites (if there were any) of organisations meet the requirement laid down in the Community principle, according to which the results shall be communicated to the wide public in an *easily* accessible way. In the Internet search, the significant negligence in releasing Internet-based data makes social control and following the results difficult.
- When making telephone inquiries, our experience was that project managers were kind and quick when answering questions (nearly from memory). The secretariat or any other staff member immediately provided us with the contact details of the person who knew the details of the given tender well, and through a consultation with them we were able to complete the information obtained from the Internet.
- The data on the number of people with disabilities reached by specific tenders was concluded from the number of persons the to-be-established institution was planned for, or on the basis of the capacity of the existing one that awaited renovation, elimination of barriers or expansion. There was no other source from where more concrete data would have been possible to obtain, neither on the level of specific tenders, nor on the website of the NDA, or the websites of the Intermediate Bodies.

The lack of information raises concerns also because the project implementers are obliged to provide the Funder with all information pertaining to the project in question. They have an ongoing reporting obligation, and, in the course of processing the tenders, the institutional system absorbs an enormous amount of data and information on specific projects (project progress reports, occasionally monthly status reports, exhaustive and detailed documentation related to disbursements) which frequently requires separate positions for the provision of data and liaison.

Compared to the detail and depth of the central data collection, however, researchers who deal with the subject of domestic and European taxpayers who essentially finance the programmes cannot get an insight into this information which is, in our view, of public interest. It can be concluded with respect to the use of EU funding that its social publicity is not, or only partially secured.

Information that is not available on the Internet could be complemented in the course of direct communication carried out with the NDA, the Managing Authorities, or even with the Intermediate Bodies. However, our experience shows that this is not an existing channel, or one that can be successfully used.

Since autumn 2009, via correspondence and personal meetings, our research team has been trying to obtain detailed information by target group, the collection and publication of which, for that matter, is required by a Community regulation (European Commission Regulation 1828/2006/EC).

In our judgement, nearly six years after the EU accession, it is not premature to put the question – either as a researcher or a citizen – how have the financial resources of the structural funds been used in Hungary in the period since the accession. To this question the NDA system and its current communication methods do not provide a satisfactory response supported with data.

**On the whole, we can state that, in the period between 2004-2009, Hungary administered considerable funds of several hundred billion forints. A significant part of these funds supported, or could have supported, the improvement and development of the situation of people with disabilities. Compared to earlier tendering systems, the system of distribution of EU funds operates within the framework of a separated, huge administration and by using significant resources. Despite all this, the current implementation system in reality is unable to secure the transparency of the distribution of funds. While there are indeed detailed data on the allocated amounts presented by means of modern computer-generated maps and search machines and in various distribution (territorial, governmental/non-governmental, etc.), it is not possible to know anything about the number of individuals within specific groups involved the developments, as well as how they were affected, which is unacceptable.**

## **II. Evaluation of the planning and implementation of EU funds based on the interviews made with stakeholders**

Following the examination of documentation and analysis of budgets, through the presentation of interviews made with actors involved in the EU funding, we will explore the system of distribution of funds made available for integration purposes.<sup>6</sup>

When selecting interviewees for structured interviews, we aimed at meeting with the key players in the managing of the National Development Plan and the New Hungary Development Plan. The respondents represent the central administration responsible for the planning and implementation of development plans, the National Development Agency and the Managing Authority. Also, we spoke with experts in the field of development policy, key players of advocacy organisations and with a senior official of a county municipality which is the maintainer of large institutions. Altogether nine interviews were made.

When selecting the actors, our goal was to make interviews with all those key players who are involved in the preparation and design of the programmes, as well as those who represent the applicants' side and the target group. We did not seek to meet with political decision-makers because we concentrated on the preparation of the development-related decision-making and on the implementation process.

Our general experience was that the interviewees were helpful and open to share their experience and recommendations in the relevant issues. Although the staff of the central administration, understandably, worded their views in a more cautious way (the timing of the interviews coincided with the campaign of the 2010 parliamentary elections), their opinions were still unambiguous and clear.

The interviews were suitable for the presentation of different viewpoints. Naturally, our actors were affected by the processes, hence they expressed their thoughts increasingly based on their own viewpoints, knowledge, experiences and beliefs. At the same time, we were pleased to experience that, in the majority of cases, they were able to think in connection with the topic of our research from a distance, in a nuanced way and embedded in the more general processes. The summary of these opinions and recommendations is presented below.

### **II.1. General framework of the participation in the planning and implementation**

All of the experts we have interviewed almost without exceptions have been actors in these processes. The planner of the ministry and the official of the Managing Authority have taken part in the planning and implementation of EU funds essentially from the outset. This means, at the same time, that the actors know each other, the field and the problems well.

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<sup>6</sup> The interviews were made and summarised by the following students of the ELTE Faculty of Social Sciences: Anna Bordács, Bertold Szekeres, Erika Csernai, Dóra Tomcsik, Dóra Kozák, Ágnes Néray, Katalin Sipos and Zsófia Kogon. We wish to thank their work.

Influencing the events and changing the processes is taking place in a multi-actor, complicated space, which places those who wish to make changes in it in a very challenging situation. Nevertheless, we could also see that making changes and influencing is not impossible: whether we examine the application for deinstitutionalisation which makes the topicality of the present research (see programme under code number SIOP 341), or the development of other territories (such as, e.g., the complex development of the 33 most disadvantaged micro areas<sup>7</sup>).

What is striking in the careers of professionals who work in the field is that there is little, if any, overlapping between the governmental planning and those who work in implementation. There are few actors who have experience in both the strategic planning and project management as well. This apparently makes communication difficult. On several occasions we experience that, mainly younger, employees who work in implementing institutions of the government view their job only as the first step in their career, and in a few years' time they intend to continue their employment in the proposal writing field, the advisory or project management market. This is in no way discreditable, but does draw the attention to the fact that the state institutional system has a poor ability to retain and ensure a long-term employment of a large number of professionals.

It is important, however, that, within the major fields, the scope of activities that individual actors deal with is wide. For instance, in the framework of planning, the preparation of the potential receiving organisations, partnership; or, in case of implementation, participation in the monitoring in addition to the elaboration of the tenders related documentation, etc. From among our respondents, the expert who has been longest in the field has taken part in the processes since as far back as 1994, the time of the PHARE programmes.<sup>8</sup>

## **II.2. Experience related to the planning of the resources**

It was clear from the outset that, from the point of view of planning, Hungary has never seen so abundant resources, and this is particularly true for the social sector.

It is anyway a success that professionals who take part in the planning have been able to bring EU funds into the social sector. What is similarly important is that the state administration has recognised the fact that social policy and social work are tools that can help disadvantaged people (re)integrate into the world of work. At that time it was a very important opening, both from the perspective of state administration and of the social profession as well.

In the period starting from 2007, it has been certainly a positive result that, beyond the scope of employment, education and training, also developments such as community development, legal defence, volunteering, development of non-governmental organisations, or modernisation of care systems have been included in the programmes. Because of the EU regulation which excluded these, previously it was not possible to support them.

What shall certainly be mentioned as a negative experience in the area of planning is the failure of efforts to create complex developments (that is, support which provides financial assistance for projects in a coordinated, closely connected to each other way) when the goal was to establish an

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<sup>7</sup> In the framework of this research, we did not/have not examined its results and efficiency. That can be the subject of a future research.

<sup>8</sup> PHARE programmes are also developments based on EU support which, before Hungary's EU accession, supported developments of similar purpose to those of current EU Structural Fund, but from a significantly lower budget and in a narrower professional field.

efficient ‘solution package’ that would coordinate the set of sectoral tools in terms of space, time and resources.

Such was, for instance, the “a chance for children flagship programme” which has, practically, sunk. This is particularly sad for us also because several large social policy objectives can be realised exclusively within complex frameworks. Even programmes that aim at deinstitutionalisation that were detailed in our earlier study can be securely implemented only as complex programmes that span across sectors.

It shall be mentioned that, in case of social services, such a complex programme, unfortunately, has not been elaborated. While on the level of experts of the affected ministries there is some kind of cooperation, in the state administration system the programmes were generally fragmented to sectors, or during implementation it turned out that keeping comprehensive concepts together is unsolvable.

In our judgement, the European Union programmes have repeatedly cast light on the idea that the system of state administration needs to better adjust to the complex system of problems that indeed span across the sectors. It is a general experience that, while on the level of experts cooperation is good, agreements are made and common ideas are born, when there is a need to coordinate the tools and resources – that is much more difficult.

In the opinion of the actors who take part in the planning, the Managing Authority in many cases plays an excessively restrictive function, it does not operate in the planning phase the relatively regular inter-sectoral coordination forums, and, frequently, there are no coordination meetings on the changing domestic implementation rules either.

What makes an additional difficulty is that, while proposals are elaborated in the current legislative environment,

- (1) regulations keep changing, occasionally ignoring what has been initiated in the Community developments,
- (2) on other occasions, new regulations need to be created or amended in a targeted way for the developments, which typically fails to take place.

These often put out each other, or the deficiencies in legitimacy slow these down, and discourage the process of development. The result of this can also be that the readiness to apply may decrease, developments may fail to occur, and the planning itself may become unserious.

A definitely important innovation in the social field was that the responsible ministry prepared regional socio-political analyses of the situation and a strategy based on it (which covered the major adjoining territories as well). When preparing those, the specific regional directions for development were elaborated during local-level multi-occasional coordination processes. We believe that this was the right direction, and it would be important to assess the results of the developments in a similar way!

Being responsible for the shaping of the policy, the developments are planned by the ministry, both on the level of operational programmes and action plans. According to the general experience, the deadline for the planning of specific action plans and their socialisation was too short. This may lead to the problem that, in the given case, a development that targets a specific issue does not have the necessary support of society, which can be a problem when preparing future



calls for tenders, or also during public consultation with respect to announced calls for tenders. As it happened also in the case of deinstitutionalisation.

Despite the regional socio-political analyses of the situation that are under preparation, in many cases there are no elaborated short, medium and long-term professional strategies and concepts along which, based on the operational programme and action plans, the developments should be built in such a way that they be based upon one another. There are documents and directions that are meant to be the strategies, but the practice, 'life' so to speak, overrides these, they fail to fulfil their real role, and, as we earlier referred to it, these strategies can be overwritten, and the goals matched to the real performance.

From the point of view of the horizontal equal opportunities policy and the opinion of the expert/professional public, the role played by the ministry and the managing authority in the planning seemingly looks equal. However, several respondents signalled that the 'nature' of the planning to a large extent depended on their cooperation and professional competence as well.

*„If one of the parties from the professional point of view was better, then it was rather that party which steered the issue. In many cases there were quite serious professional disagreements between the ministries and the Managing Authorities, and often it was not rational arguments based on which a party came out as a winner from a conflict”,* said one of our interviewees.

Also, the scope of respondents see the two-year action plan as one that does not play the role that was originally intended for it, and handle this as a fact. The system has not become much more predictable in enabling applicants and the authorities to see in advance the release of the types of specific tenders and whether the developments are built upon one another. It is common practice that action plans are subsequently modified, since it may occur that those who prepare the calls for tenders make significant changes in the calls for proposal, so that the aspects set in the action plan as well (significantly) change.

According to another respondent, the problem of planning is true not only for the resource planning, but can be stated with respect to the whole of the EU programme planning. There is a problem with the whole of the planning process, since essentially a sectoral planning takes place. The planning as such has no objectives, no foundations (e.g. the starting value in the majority of action plans equals 0).

*“We don't know what we are planning for, there are no impact assessments. There are no data, and those that we do have are not public, and we don't use them. The long-term effects of the programmes and how they fit in the target system of the NDP and the NHDP are not examined, and, based on these, they don't go back to the target system as a whole, not even to the sectoral level. There is no monitoring either, or, to be precise, there is, but it fulfils only a role of inspection”,* as summarised by a respondent.

We consider this latter thought to be very important, therefore, would like to highlight it. We believe that the implementers of monitoring that seems to be spreading in the social and employment field – be it either developments or even operation of an existing institutional system – seriously misinterpret their role.

Even if some type of monitoring does take place, its content pertains rather to the control of authority nature of the existence of objectified conditions that have an indirect affect on the effi-

ciency (number of individuals involved, educational indicators, furniture, existence of permits, exact operation of documentation systems). In comparison, monitoring, in our judgement - with respect to both development programmes and the operation of the already existing institutional system – should concentrate rather on the direct realisation of the set policy objectives in such a coordination field in which, in addition to the sanctioning of possible failures, there can be space for the exploration and remedying of its causes as well. The lack of this has a seriously demoralising effect on organisations that are active in the sector, and although the control and accountability that are normally carried out with a high degree of rigour create the appearance of order, in reality we still do not have any tangible information on the efficiency of our programmes and services, and on the ‘return’ of the programmes.

There is no cooperation among individual sectors (ministries), the programmes are harmonised neither in their target system nor in chronological order (e.g. economic development and human development programmes), nor in professional terms. Complexity is currently incidental, or, in practice, it is left to the applicants whether they interconnect the possibilities. This is not planned centrally. Accordingly, the institutional system is built up in a fragmented way, there is no cooperation even among its elements.

The interviewed (non-governmental) expert saw a significant difference between the so-called tender funding and priority projects. In the case of the first one, applicants enter in a competition, while in the case of the latter – usually the organisations of the central government – they can receive funding without real contest or competition.

*“I had the feeling that, in the initial planning stage, the costs are rather ‘guesstimated’. The official of the NDA is not competent in this, and the experts of the ministry are perfectly unsuitable for such a task. On the whole, we can say that, in the majority of cases, the calculations that are sent by the ministries are exaggerated, at best due to incompetence or lack of information, all this happens ‘for safety’s sake’. All this is possible because there is no competition or selection when it comes to priority projects, applicants receive the funding automatically, thus it is not necessary for them to thoroughly elaborate the project.”*

From all this it follows that the well-foundedness of the developments is in several cases questionable. One essential problem of the social field is that there is a lack of data of proper quality and quantity on the basis of which it would be possible to identify the direction that the developments should follow. On the other hand, our impression is that there is an enormous amount of data that pours towards the bodies responsible for developments and the administration. However, this data normally disappears there, is not accessible for the ordinary people any more, nor do we come across these later in a processed form, in analyses, strategic plans, or, God forbid, in materials for debate. The contradiction between the circumstance that applicants have to submit an enormous amount of information on their activities, plans, implementation of the programme and the results, and the fact how much of this is processed and released six years after the launch of the programmes is shocking. As we mentioned earlier, to evaluate and further improve the EU developments is impossible without tangible data that are accessible to all.

What is also an ongoing problem is that there is impatience on the part of politics, but also generally, on the part of ‘everybody’, that these developments should, if possible, produce immediate and spectacular results, which is an unrealistic expectation and, in the absence of objective, public data, rather provides space for arbitrary interpretations based on uncontrollable numerology.

Making the developments professionally well-grounded could be reinforced if, for instance, meaningful impact assessments were indeed made. Those impact assessments which are made simultaneously with the closing of the project while, e.g. the effectiveness of a human resource development project on trainings could really be measured only years afterwards, are seen as being a compulsory routine. However, for enforcement of such aspects there is neither energy nor time left. Because of delays in preparation, a large number of projects end in the very last imaginable minute when both the tendering authority and the applicant are trying to get rid of the project related tasks.

However, this also only reinforces the volunteer spirit that seems to prevail, as well as the view that the only goal of monitoring is to catch the applicant red-handed. These impact assessments should rather concentrate on the realisation of the policy objectives, those are important not in terms of the accountability of the applicant, but provide important information for future developments. In order to demonstrate this with an example, to examine a few years afterwards whether there is any visible impact as a result of the ocean of professional HRDOP training programmes is not for the development agency to claim tens of millions back, but in order to find out whether it makes sense to introduce further trainings in the next development phase. In our experience, while nearly everybody has had a summary view following the end of the development period of 2004-2006, there is much less of rateable data. The preliminary (ex-ante) survey as well as some researches suggest that the invested billions have resulted practically in a minimal growth of employment.

Additionally, the availability of objective data is only one of the steps to a comprehensive evaluation of the developments. Processing those few existing surveys by professional circles and the public, and the traceability of incorporation of the lessons learned – unfortunately traditionally – is missing from the Hungarian planning processes.

### **II.3. Judgement of the objectives and methods of the developments**

Not surprisingly, government actors agree and easily identify with the current objectives and the budget of the developments.

*“I believe that the operational programme offers all those opportunities that are able – with various developments - to provide relevant answers to those issues which occur in the social area in Hungary today. We can cover a very wide scope of tenders and tender issues”,* says one of them.

Specifically with respect to people with disabilities, in connection with this issue, the problem that was mentioned earlier keeps to be a recurrent issue: it would be useful to have a long-term strategy which would show when and what programmes are realised for which target group, then, based on the seven-year implementation, to put together the three action plans.

Part of the experts hold critical views:

*“On the one hand, there are too many priorities, it is not possible to pursue developments in so many fields, and there are no first 3 main objectives on which we indeed want to work. They are poorly planned and are not considered structurally. On the other hand, the planning method is not evidence based. Slogans such as growth and expansion of employment are ‘administration’s out-of-date tune’. A different direction*

*should be considered, but it cannot make its way into the target system. Additionally, it is obsolete. Presumably, the reason for this is that the goals much rather serve individual and party interests than community interests”, sounds a summary opinion.*

The expert opinion from a different viewpoint does agree with the objectives, but by no means with the details and methods of implementation

*“For instance, employment projects are priority projects for us. They are supposed to promote the integration of disadvantaged people into the labour market, and these, in fact, have been specified as projects that improve employability. My problem with it is that these are not projects that improve employment, or employability, these are labour market projects”.*

The development plans had been drafted before the economic-employment crisis. All this means that, to the changed social and economic circumstances, they do not respond, or only in a sluggish manner. If we take into account that the elaboration of the specific development plans and the operational measures that are connected to them, coordination with Brussels, tendering specific programmes in line with the action plans, then the implementation of the developments themselves often involves a process that covers 4 to 6 years, then we have to admit that, in today’s amazingly rapidly changing environment, there is a need for a development policy that can be shaped in a way that is more flexible than the current one.

In a paradoxical way, however, we can see that the system is least flexible where there it is most needed. Accidentally, on the side of project implementation.

#### **II.4. Experience related to the implementation of projects**

Although, logically, public consultation related to certain tenders is part of the planning phase, we, nevertheless, discuss it in the subsection on implementation because it is here that the specific implementers of the development programmes appear first in an explicit way.

In case of deinstitutionalisation, it came to light already in the course of public consultation where the earlier unsolved disagreements were.

Officials of a county municipality that operates large institutions made the following comment:

*Based on current experience, group homes as a form of care is uneconomical. The staff can be more economically employed in a concentrated way in case of larger numbers. This economic process creates a trap situation because for the maintainer it is uneconomical to choose the group home form of care. The number of those that were able to get on in some form and get out of the large institutions is below 10. The exit was made possible due to some sort of luck, an accidental positive change.*

*Those who live in large institutions like living there, the environment is pleasant, the mansion is nice, you can walk there and move around.”*

In fact, what the maintainers of large institutions voiced was that deinstitutionalisation is not a possible perspective for people with disabilities. For patients with severe disabilities who are una-

ble to take care of themselves and need permanent control and care, according to the representatives of the institutions, large institutions provide a better and more sustainable solution.

The confusing picture is well illustrated by the circumstance that the institutions of people with disabilities are seen primarily as workplaces (employment framework). In the current economic and social situation, they see deinstitutionalisation only as a complementary solution (this was emphasized on several occasions). At the same time, other actors clearly see that the postponement of deinstitutionalisation is not a solution, because it is not the time that is the problem.

*“Full deinstitutionalisation is the direction, that is clear. However, its feasibility is not even the problem of the scarcity of available resources. It is also the problem of services and their capacity that are accessible locally. Further, it is also the issue of sustainability and operational funds. And what about those who, due to their condition, are in need of ongoing institutional care? A deinstitutionalisation programme can be fair, implementable and efficient only after having considered and calculated all these issues and, additionally, having consulted with the stakeholders,”* said an official who works on the governmental side.

In comparison, the need for deinstitutionalisation is voiced in a much more articulated way by non-governmental institutions and experts in their comments made in the framework of public consultation. These were examined in detail in our previous study.

It was based exactly on the experience with respect to public consultation of tenders related to deinstitutionalisation that the following opinion was voiced:

*“Nonetheless, I believe that the fact that the opinion of social partners was incorporated into the decision-making process itself is very important. There was a possibility for protest in the framework of a public dialogue. What certainly needs to be acknowledged is that the publication of the tenders on the website of the National Development Agency with the purpose to enable public debate, this technique, is equal to expectations. If there had been no such a forum, the NGOs would not have been able to release a letter of protest in time, at a time when it still made sense to release it.”*

In connection with other tenders, however, there was also other experience:

*“...it also depends on individual approach, but even on the level of administrators, how seriously they take the task. It was sad to experience that, in case of an operational programme with the highest number of managed projects and where the scope of candidates was the most sensitive in being able to have a say in the process of tendering, they were least considered.”*

From the point of view of the implementers of tenders, the beneficiaries, one of the most frequently mentioned problem is the communication carried out with respect to the tenders.

*“Tons of paper had to be produced in order to be able to submit the projects at all. In a joking manner, I used to say that we have cut out a forest in the first planning cycle, and thus we ‘inhumanly well’ complied*

*with the environmental sustainability ... Practically, the situation is not better now either. It is not better because, on the one hand, now we use an electronic way to submit our financial and narrative reports, on the other hand these programmes are extremely inadequate. That is, often they have nothing in common with what is characteristic of the given project,”* says a professional with a more than 10 years of ‘beneficiary’ experience.

Our interviewees almost without exception all described the process of drawing funds as negative experience. The planner of the central administration told us:

*„It proceeds at a much slower pace than they would have liked.”*

For explanation, he pointed out that programmes are tendered at a much slower pace, and that the process from submission to the conclusion of contracts also happens slowly. Furthermore, often the programmes are not good at management, and there are few calls for funds. Nonetheless, it is also true that from the six priorities of the SROP, in addition to priority 1.2, priority No.5 is the third best one in the use of funds. It may seem peculiar, but it is mentioned with a pride that, with respect to the amount of funds per staff member who work in the institutional system, if considered the number of people working in the institutional system and the amount of funds managed, Hungary in this is the most efficient member state.

On the NGO side, respondents had a strong opinion on this:

*“... Hungary uses EU funds inefficiently. Programmes are poorly designed and are not coordinated. Professionally they are not justifiable, and there is no feedback and impact assessment. An additional problem is that, practically, we want to use the funds for essential tasks of the state.”*

Looking at things as a whole, the interviewee was wondering why we receive EU funding:

*“because if someone once looked into what has been produced beyond the infrastructure, they would get a disappointing picture. Looking from the societal point of view, the situation is much worse than it used to be (regardless of the crisis), while billions have been spent on what is in the system of tools.”*

From the point of view of implementation, however, there are a couple of aspects that earlier (in the NDP 2004-2006 period) worked better than now. For instance, there used to be regular so-called Monitoring Infodays on which the Intermediate Body met the applicants, and in which, in the majority of cases, the programme manager also took part. This gave an opportunity for a more direct feedback on what worked and what was a problem. In HRDOP, additionally, there was a project-support system whose essence was to support the applicants in the project generating and implementing phases to enable them to apply in a more efficient way. It would be progressive if it was possible to make those who work in the implementing institutional system interested in the successfulness of the tenders. They could also undertake tasks – in addition to preparing tenders – which would assist applicants in submitting successful tenders, in completing their programme, and in fully achieving the professional aspects articulated in the programme.

What one of our interviewees suggested casts light on the apparently eternal suggestion of the applicants, namely, that it would help a lot if applicants could decide what they would like to use the funds for, and were not forced to apply for complete tender programmes.

When we asked our interviewees about the largest winners and losers of the EU funds received so far, among the winners our respondents listed those that are strong anyway, have movable funds for avoiding liquidity problems, who are able to draft good tenders and, therefore, do not need a company that would draft those for them. Smaller organisations are generally the losers since they do not have sufficient human resource capacity and background resources. Such can be minor NGOs and organisations based in marginalised micro areas. Generally, programmes that were announced specifically for them were not really successful, while it is not certain at all that the large and strong organisations represent professional progressiveness and, on the other hand, the organisations of exactly the most disadvantaged areas are left out of the development funds. This circumstance significantly undermines the targeting nature of funds.

Thinking through the above issue from the point of view of people with disabilities, one governmental respondent highlighted the following:

*“today we wouldn’t have as many day care centres as we have, wouldn’t have such employers as we have, and the attitude has changed a lot. Today we cannot say any more that people with disabilities live excluded from society. Disability studies have been included in a number of higher education programmes. Five years ago it would have been unimaginable to see a higher education establishment announcing tomorrow a specialisation training related to the elimination of barriers. If there had been no tenders on the elimination of barriers, this need would not have emerged. I believe this has triggered important movements. That we could have generated much more is a different issue.”*

External experts see the preservation of the existing status quo rather than real, profound reforms. It is primarily the middle class that they call the winner, and, within it, that level of society which has created itself a knowledge monopoly (e.g. as proposal drafters or intermediate bodies...), and the actors of the political elite, prioritised state actors. That is, the largest beneficiaries are seen on the side of the tender designers and drafters. The poor, the Roma and those who live in disadvantaged areas were mentioned by our interviewee as the usual losers despite the circumstance that everything in the system is done on their behalf and for their good.

In addition to the thematic developments, we also asked questions about the realisation of the horizontal (that is, to be enforced in each development) equal opportunities.

Looking at it with the eye of a planner-expert, some of the equal opportunities objectives and indicators had a ‘painfully simplified, emptied content’, mostly in the issue of genders in society - of course, not all of them. In our judgement, compared to the NDP, the system has gone through a significant development as regards horizontal aspects. However, it has not yet gone as far as being planned and implemented in a programme specific way. Supporting equal opportunities in such a way is essentially unsuccessful. The beneficiaries effectively do not pay attention to this aspect and get done with this requirement by providing general answers, without specifics. In many cases, there is feedback according to which applicants view horizontal equality of opportunities as an unavoidable bad.

The European Commission expects us to enforce these horizontal principles. These appeared in the New Hungary Development Plan and in the operational programmes as well. Due to the nature of the documents, these principles are included in a very general way. And, in fact, we cannot expect more from them. It may be possible to do more on the level of action plans where currently they do not appear at all. The other problem is related to the implementing institutional system: as articulated by our interviewee, currently, there is no staff in the implementing system

who are experts in any field. Therefore, there is a need for them to be trained. This affects a large number of individuals in the system (at minimum several hundred people).

With respect to social reintegration developments which specifically target people with disabilities and people with mental health problems, we received diverse opinions. Apparently it is here that the difference in views is most pronounced, as regards respondents with various background.

Generally speaking, there is a large number of developmental opportunities in the Social Renewal Operational Programme (SROP), and, generally, in the New Hungary Development Plan (NHDP), targeting people with disabilities. Such are, for instance, the Regional Operational Programmes on elimination of barriers as well as basic and day care services, deinstitutionalisation and modernisation of residential institutions in the Social Infrastructure Operational Programme, as well as elimination of barriers in state institutions. Both the SROP and the NHDP contain programmes and rehabilitation developments (the latter primarily for visually impaired) that aim at the development of rehabilitation of people with disabilities, while in SROP there is a priority project which is about knowledge and foundation of methods promoting access to equal opportunities. All this means that, compared to NDP (and, in many cases, also compared to other target groups), there are larger funds available for the improvement of the situation of people with disabilities.

With respect to deinstitutionalisation (or its debate), the opinion of a respondent who represents the governmental side probably reflects best the governmental position:

*“... I see deinstitutionalisation of large institutions as the adequate vision of the future; the interpretation of the law on the rights of people with disabilities whose deadline (by now repealed) NGOs refer to is not uniform. In 1998, when the law was passed, it stated that, based on the ability of people with disabilities for independent living, large institutions have to be modernised, or for people with disabilities who are capable of independent living, group homes shall be provided. It means that the law did not state that large residential institutions shall be deinstitutionalised. It specified a deadline – January 1, 2010, but by this deadline, in fact, following a starting diagnosis, on the basis of the diagnosis either modernisation or deinstitutionalisation had to be carried out. In 2001, a governmental decree set up an expert committee whose task was to review the state of each person with disability placed in a large residential institution. This review took place indeed. The result of this review was that 95 percent of the people are unfit for independent living, therefore, they shall not move to group homes, modernisation is sufficient. The nearly 20 billion forints spent in the past 11 years on modernisation of large residential institutions is, anyway, not in contradiction with the task related to the deadline set in the law on the rights of people with disabilities. Since the review concluded that they are not fit for independent living, in other words, the environment around them had to be modernised. As the second option, for those who in the course of the review appeared to be fit for independent living, group homes have to be set up. As a result, the slightly more than 100 group homes were set up with state funding. It is a different issue that I never agreed with the circumstance that a committee examines the condition of a person with disabilities and not the people with disabilities decide on the conditions they wish to live in. Similarly, I still disagree that the condition is judged on the basis of a snapshot, whether the person is capable for independent living or not, since these abilities can be developed. Therefore, those who at this point of time are unfit for independent living can be made fit for it, let alone that, in line with my own set of values, not only people who are fit for independent living can move into a group home. Support services with which people who are otherwise unfit, or nearly unfit for independent living can be organised also in the group home environment. In my view, if there has been an instance of malpractice in the past 12 years, then it is that we failed to make it clear in the disability law*



*that there is no modernisation, only community-based services, only group home services, that is, during 12 years we left the legal possibility for modernisation open. This law should have been amended much earlier.”*

What also reflects the government’s attitude is that the social act was amended at the beginning of 2010 with a view to replace the previous regulation whereby a strategy on deinstitutionalisation has to be elaborated by December 31, 2010.

According to an interviewee who is an external expert, while deinstitutionalisation is a stumbling block indeed, there are also positive initiatives. We can talk about people with disabilities using two approaches: on the one hand, the needs of people with disabilities as a horizontal aspect, and in this case not only the SIOP, SROP apply to them, but any priority project, either economic or environmental. The other approach is the measures that specifically target people with disabilities.

As regards the first approach, the final outcome, also in the opinion of the interviewee, is disgraceful because

*“nobody thought further than to devote 5 points of the 100 in the questionnaire to people with disabilities. To check whether there is an equal opportunity plan, whether there is cooperation with a local organisation, if its building is barrier free and whether sign language interpreters are secured on conferences. I have seen that it does not work well at all, still I was not able to do anything with any of my fellow experts. It was also our fault.”*

*“As regards targeted subsidies, there are fewer negative things to tell. There were many useful initiatives that directly involved people with disabilities, for instance, barrier-free access to public buildings or elaboration of training packages or methodological developments for children with special educational needs. What isn’t good about them is that they happened in isolation. But if one public foundation hadn’t done a training programme specifically related to people with disabilities, then such would not have happened at all. Those couple of programmes which were planned had been well chosen by the disability policy. Of course, a lot of things failed to happen, but this is always the case, since there are no sufficient funds and time.”*

According to another interviewee, an expert, it is not necessarily the funding policy that is problematic, that is, the problem is not rooted there, it is not this that needs to be changed in the first place. The current EU funds could give the situation an impetus if there was an intention behind them. Money in itself is not help, it is up to the engine that operates the whole thing which will determine everything. In his view, there is plenty of funds, just that we want too much at once, this is how it is squandered and lost.

*“What becomes an item on the agenda and is important, and what is not, is decided in a strange way. On the one hand, we throw out billions on the elimination of barriers, on the other hand, show an owner of a building who was fined because it was not made barrier-free.”*

*“You cannot do everything at once. We should build and find those points where, with relatively concentrated intervention, with this amount of funds, results can be achieved in the long run. With respect to deinstitutionalisation, it may be more reasonable to, first, deinstitutionalise a specific group (e.g. young adults), and only then move on to the next group, and not all at once. Because we’ll let them out to no avail, they need to make the next step from there, find a job, retain that job...”*

## II.5. Recommendations

What can certainly be viewed as a success is that professionals who take part in the planning were able to bring EU funds into the social field. It is also important that state administration has recognised: social policy and social work are tools which can help disadvantaged people to (re)integrate in the world of work.

In the period starting from 2007, it is certainly a positive result that, beyond the scope of employment, education and training, development directions were included in the developments such as community development, legal defence, volunteering, NGO development or modernisation of care systems. Earlier, because of the exclusion by EU regulation, they were not eligible for funding.

In the course of making the interviews, we arrived at the conclusion we held earlier: **while funds that have never been seen earlier arrived for social policy developments from the EU structural funds, their use, according to the opinion of the interviewed participating experts, is full of numerous structural contradictions.**

It is a recurrent conclusion that, in the absence of objective data of proper depth which can be accessed by everybody, assessing the use of funds is, in fact, impossible. This is annoying also because both from the budget analysis and from the interviews we concluded that a number of significant developments were/are being made in the area of integration of people with disabilities and people with mental health problems, and it can easily be the case that an examination of these undertaken openly (or made possible) could even give reason for satisfaction. However, six years after the accession, the system is still unsuitable for objective examination of its indicators. **Our recommendation is simply that, following the closing of specific programmes (when competition advantage does not justify the secrecy any more), data and documentation of all projects that are submitted to intermediate bodies shall be made public.**

From the point of view of development programmes, the two-year action plans have a special operational significance. Repeating our earlier recommendations, we consider it necessary to firmly stabilise the ideas on this level, and to create the possibility for flexibility. **It would be important for the horizontal aspects related to equal opportunities to appear also in the action plan, and that further detailed instructions be made there with respect to the programmes.**

A two-year interval is probably short enough for the action plans to be able (compared to the development plans) to flexibly adapt to the meanwhile occurring changes, while their documenting is indispensable exactly for reasons of predictability and traceability. **We consider the publicity in the elaboration of action plans so much important that we recommend that personal responsibility be assigned to the issue and that it should appear on the governmental level.**

We believe that the tension that can be sensed between the ministry and the Managing Authorities during the planning and implementation gives cause for serious concern. In our view, with the establishment of the Managing Authorities that are independent from the ministry, a parallel power structure came about which overrides professional decisions despite the circumstance that

there is only a limited number of experts in its staff who have an in-depth knowledge in this field. We recommend **a significant reorganisation that would affect the Managing Authorities' jurisdiction.** In professional issues it is the **ministries that are considered as competent actors, the task of the Managing Authorities is to create a communication space among the sectors and the operation of coordination fora.** In comparison, the tendency that has prevailed is that while these fora do not function at all, step by step, referring to the bureaucratic rules of implementation, the Managing Authorities in many cases have taken over also the functions of the professional control. However important the aspect of maximising accessible EU funds and minimising subsequent repayment obligations is, we would like to emphasise that these continue to be policy development programmes.

At the same time, it is important to note that the discussion of professional issues related to development shall not stop on the level of specific ministries. There is no development task before us that can be safely and in a complex way solved in the framework of one single sector. Therefore, **sectoral mechanisms have to be built into the development process.** In principle, this could also have been the task of the Managing Authorities, but it seems that this was not feasible.

Connecting the various sectors shows significant deficiencies already in the course of planning. In the current system, it is virtually unimaginable that an economic development programme can be closely linked to an employment and social policy programme which is possibly refreshing a cultural project making it perceivable both for the population and the public. This kind of complexity, while it is of essential importance, is unfeasible. We believe that the success of the deinstitutionalisation programmes which we have on several occasions discussed in detail can be secured only if, along with the purely social policy development programme (SIOP), employment, economic development, maybe tourism or cultural programmes can appear in the same place which is intended to fill in the empty space that came about as a result of the institution (as the largest employer in the area) that became vacant.

The necessity of all this is possibly even more clearly seen as regards the applicant, the implementer. The task of deciding whether the feasibility study shall discuss the utilisation of the mansion building - whether it shall be used for tourism, culture or education purposes, the income originating from it, or the local employment challenges that arise from the loss of work places as a result of deinstitutionalisation, all these lie with the manager of the institution who, in connection with deinstitutionalisation tenders, is the one who eventually compiles the tender documentation and whose educational background is, at best, in the social field.

Apparently, this person will not be suitable for this. In fact, nobody in one single person will be suitable for this, neither on the local, nor on the central level. We would like to very clearly point out that the **social issues that are in the centre of EU developments require an approach that is much more complex than the current one,** and this complexity certainly needs to be able to appear on the operational levels as well. In connection with the deinstitutionalisation programmes, the preparation of the patients, shaping the new environment, overcoming the resistance of the local population and the existing staff, the utilisation of the vacant real estate and the arising employment issues need to be managed all at once. Simply dumping these tasks on the manager of the institution or the local maintainer practically encodes the future failure. Our concrete recommendation is that **programmes that cover wider areas financed from EU sources shall appear in a concentrated way,** and, for successful implementation, **support groups** to manage the implementation shall be set up with the involvement of economic, communication and employment professionals.

The monitoring system has been discussed in detail. With a seemingly bold stroke, we have connected this scope of issues with the current control mechanisms of the social care system that is already in place. However, we believe that here we are facing the same problem. **Our monitoring systems are empty**, the current practice is shifting in the direction of sanctioning official controls, which is a problem not because it may not catch the defaulting applicants/service providers red-handed, but because it in no way secures the understanding the identified problems and avoiding them in the future. We further recommend that the **monitoring systems and impact assessment shall be completely separated from the actors in the area of both planning and implementation**. Those actors, it seems, are naturally interested in that impact assessments, in some easily performed way, should present efficiency.

The monitoring systems related to tenders and the control mechanisms of services that are already in place - we believe - shall be transformed in such a way that they shall monitor the successfulness of the developments/interventions **directly from the point of view of the social policy objectives to be delivered**, and not measure static input dimensions of indirect effect, material conditions and bureaucratic achievements.

What would be pointing ahead is **if the staff who work in the implementing institutional system could be made interested in the successfulness of tenders**. In addition to announcing tenders, they could also assist the applicants to submit a successful tender, to assist the applicants finish their programme, and to fully comply with the content and objectives of the programme.

Finally, we would like to thank again our interviewees for sharing their views and for their contribution made to the set of recommendations put together in cooperation by ELTE and Soteria Foundation in the interest of a more efficient use of EU integration funds.

### **Recommendations in bullet points**

- Data and documentation in relation to all projects that arrive to intermediate bodies shall be made public.
- Horizontal aspects related to equal opportunities shall appear also in the action plans which shall contain further detailed guidelines in relation to specific programmes.
- There shall be personal responsibility on governmental level for ensuring publicity of the evolvement of action plans.
- We recommend a significant restructuring to be made in the competence of the Managing Authorities: the ministries are the competent actors, and the task of the Managing Authorities is to create a communication space among the sectors and to operate coordination fora.
- Inter-sectoral mechanisms need to be inbuilt in the development process.
- European Union development programmes need to appear in areas involved in deinstitutionalisation in a concentrated way; their implementation can be aided by the expert support groups that provide help in the management.
- Monitoring and the control systems shall directly examine the realisation of the set social policy objectives.
- The monitoring systems and the impact assessment shall be separated from the actors of both the planning and the implementation.

- Individuals who work in the implementing institutional system (particularly those in the intermediate bodies) shall be made interested in the successfulness of the tenders.