

ANEC input to CEN Survey about Social Care Services standardisation

ANEC submitted to its members interested in the sector the preliminary survey on the situation across Europe regarding Social Care Services standards.

Below is a summary of the feedback received on the consumer perspective from:

Czech Republic, France, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom.

Czech republic expressed support for European standards in the social care services area. European standards may be an appropriate guide for running such facilities supposing that the standard will outline just a general framework for the given kind of service. There are deep differences in approach to the social services in different countries (given by different tradition, history, etc.). It thus might be difficult to standardise them.

On the other hand, people are moving from country to country a lot and have expectations in the new country, which might be met and fulfilled when minimum common standards exist for these services.

Czech members support the standardization in any sector of social care services supposing that the level of standardization would be appropriate and observant of national differences.

Our Czech members only have information on certification model developed by Asociace poskytovatelů sociálních služeb ČR, o. s. (Association of Providers of Social Services). The certificate relates to Quality Mark in Social Services – Houses for Seniors. It is in Czech, developed based on German model and experience.

The Czech members have information on some providers being certified under ISO 9001. It is not possible however to get any statistic from the national accreditation body (the Czech Institute for Accreditation – CIA). CIA does not collect the certificates issued by its accredited Certification bodies.

France has both legislation and standards for children services. Concerning transversal integrated care, France has standards and laws for palliative care and home continuous integrated care.

National standards and legislation also apply in services for disabled and elder people, European standards and further national standardisation is encouraged in these two areas.

Germany has laws that regulate services to the people with disabilities. German law regulates transversal integrated care as well. A national standard exists for elderly home care and care home services German members consider it advisable to standardize private social care systems and aspects of client contact, only where law does not regulate them. They consider that many national laws exist in the social care services field (at least this is the case in Germany). Furthermore, to

their knowledge cross-border social care services are not available in Europe, so standardisation should just take place on national level. We have also seen in previous projects that there are too many and strong differences in regulation and in the kind of services provided in the European countries.

Therefore the desirability of a European standard depends on the individual project and on whether national regulation is absent. Standardization should be intended to facilitate the comparability of cross-border private social care services.

German law already regulates most of the mentioned social care services.

Poland has legislation on all the services sectors mentioned in the survey (children, people with disabilities, transversal integrated care services, homeless and poor people). Further legislation is under development for children services and elder people.

Our Polish member has no opinion on whether standards should be developed.

United Kingdom confirms there is huge variation in the type and quality of social care provision across Europe, and it will not be easy to achieve standardisation. Even within the UK variation in care brings difficulties: e.g. the standard of residential care in Scotland is so much higher than in England that Scottish inspectors are refusing to authorise the transfer of public funding when people want to move "south of the border" to be nearer relatives in England.

Taking care of lessons learnt in the area, British members nevertheless have confidence that the challenge of European standards in this area can be faced.

ANEC recommendations

In light of ANEC's experience in European standardisation activities in the past years, especially on *Services for sheltered housing for the elderly* and the recent feedback received for this survey we would like to express both our interest and concern for the feasibility of European standards in the social care services area in the current diverse legal landscape.

The difficulties encountered in CEN TC 385 PC 'Sheltered housing services' standardisation confirm the concerns ANEC had expressed in its 2009 comments to AFNOR feasibility study on residential homes (<http://www.anec.eu/attachments/ANEC-SERV-2009-G-041.pdf>) ANEC supported the AFNOR report conclusion found that standards for residential homes for older people would be of benefit to consumers. However, as identified in the report, ANEC considers that voluntary standards on their own are not sufficient to ensure high quality, safe services and therefore supports the establishment of a European horizontal legislative framework to cover the safety and quality of all services. Such a framework should be underpinned by formal standards and apply to more vulnerable consumers, such as children or disabled people.

In conclusion, ANEC believes European services standards in fact can play an important role in helping to remove obstacles to consumer confidence and in the

correct functioning of the Internal Market for services and yet their implementation is impeded by differing legislation across Member States.

This is why ANEC keeps urging the Commission to address the lack of a horizontal legislative framework covering the safety of all services to consumers.