



# ESF Synthesis Report of 2021 AIRs

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# **ESF Synthesis Report of 2021 AIRs**

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## Table of Contents

Executive summary .....	1
Résumé analytique .....	2
Zusammenfassung.....	3
1 Introduction .....	4
1.1 Background .....	4
1.2 Methodology .....	4
2 Scope of the ESF.....	6
2.1 Scope of overall budget.....	6
2.2 Response to COVID-19 .....	9
3 Summary of implementation .....	11
3.1 Introduction.....	11
3.2 Combined progress reported for ESF/REACT-EU/YEI .....	11
3.3 Progress for ESF.....	22
3.4 Progress for REACT-EU.....	37
3.5 Progress for YEI .....	44
4 Assessment of unit costs.....	53
4.1 Comparison of spending and outputs .....	53
4.2 Comparison of spending and results .....	55
5 ESF support to EU policy .....	59
5.1 Thematic Objective 8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility .....	59
5.2 Thematic Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty, and any discrimination.....	65
5.3 Thematic Objective 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning .....	72
5.4 Thematic Objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration .....	79
5.5 Horizontal review of contribution to the EU COVID-19 response .....	84
6 Conclusions .....	88
6.1 Scope of ESF/YEI and REACT-EU support .....	88
6.2 Progress in implementation .....	89
6.3 ESF support to EU policies .....	89
Annex I Sources of data .....	92
AIR versions used .....	92
Annex II – Reference .....	96
Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities.....	96
Indicators .....	97

## Executive summary

In recent years, the European Social Fund has provided a substantial crisis response. Nevertheless, by end of 2021, implementation has continued at a stable pace and the fund's achievements have also increased. The challenge will be committing the additional resources, in particular REACT-EU<sup>1</sup> budget and ensuring that end-beneficiaries are reached.

Following the anti-COVID response, in particular the substantial additional funding from REACT EU, ESF programmes now amount to EUR 142.9 billion (EU + national share)<sup>2</sup>, of which 104.8 billion is financed by the European Union. The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) amounts to a further 4.5 billion euros. This means an increase of 16.9 billion altogether compared to the initial funding. The strengthened capacity to combat the crisis also required a substantial review of the operational programmes, including shifting budgets, applying new flexibility for co-financing rates and introducing additional output and result indicators and targets. Thanks to the uptake by MS of the indicators recommended by COM services to monitor the anti-COVID response, the outcomes will be fully visible in the next ESF synthesis report. At the same time, Member States are further adapting their programmes by using the new crisis-response initiatives, namely, to respond to the influx of refugees due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the huge increase of households' energy costs.

By the end of 2021, implementation advanced steadily. The share of declared expenditure against the allocated budgets has increased and already reached an average of 63 %. However, with only two years left to declare the remaining expenditure and considering the increased budget allocations that have been provided since 2020, most programmes will need to considerably increase their spending during the last two years of implementation.

Member States currently report a total of 55.2 million participations across the various ESF/YEI interventions, including those supported by REACT-EU top-ups. While COVID-19 had clear impacts on the programming and priorities of ESF/YEI programmes, so far there are no clear indications that it had a negative impact on the actual implementation, according to numbers of participations and shares of costs reported by Managing Authorities. Overall, participants benefitting from ESF/YEI measures have different backgrounds, but most participants were unemployed (36%) or inactive (38%) and 44% of them were below 25 years old. Among the groups with different educational background, ESF targeted the most the low-skilled who made up 47% of the participants. The increase in participation in the Youth Employment Initiative has slowed down as YEI programmes are getting closer to their targets (median target achievement rate: 96%).

Overall, until the end of 2021, the substantial numbers of participation reached with ESF and YEI helped 6.4 million participants find a job, while another 8.8 million participants gained a qualification, 1.3 million are engaged in job-searching and 2.6 million are in education / training. Additionally, a total of 5.9 million disadvantaged participants achieved one of these positive results.

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<sup>1</sup> Recovery assistance for cohesion and the territories of Europe.

<sup>2</sup> This total of EUR 142.9 billion already includes the recent REACT-EU top-up of EUR 16.1 billion.

## Résumé analytique

Ces dernières années, le Fonds social européen a apporté une réponse substantielle à la crise. Néanmoins, fin 2021, la mise en œuvre se poursuivait à un rythme stable et les réalisations du fonds ont également augmenté. Le défi consistera à engager les ressources supplémentaires, en particulier le budget REACT-EU<sup>3</sup>, et à atteindre les bénéficiaires finaux.

À la suite de la réponse anti-COVID, en particulier le financement supplémentaire conséquent apporté par REACT-EU, les programmes du FSE s'élèvent désormais à 142,9 milliards d'euros (part de l'UE + part nationale)<sup>4</sup>, dont 104,8 milliards sont financés par l'Union européenne. L'Initiative pour l'Emploi des Jeunes (IEJ) s'élève à 4,5 milliards d'euros supplémentaires. Cela signifie une augmentation totale de 16,9 milliards par rapport au financement initial. Le renforcement de la capacité de lutte contre la crise a également nécessité un examen approfondi des programmes opérationnels, y compris le transfert de budgets, l'application d'une nouvelle flexibilité pour les taux de cofinancement et l'introduction d'indicateurs de réalisation et de résultat et d'objectifs supplémentaires. Grâce à l'adoption par les États membres des indicateurs recommandés par les services de la Commission pour le suivi de la réponse anti-COVID, les résultats seront pleinement visibles dans le prochain rapport de synthèse du FSE. Dans le même temps, les États membres continuent d'adapter leurs programmes en recourant aux nouvelles initiatives de réponse à la crise, à savoir pour faire face à l'afflux de réfugiés dû à l'agression de la Russie contre l'Ukraine et à l'augmentation considérable des coûts de l'énergie pour les ménages.

Fin 2021, la mise en œuvre avait progressé de façon régulière. La part des dépenses déclarées par rapport aux budgets alloués avait augmenté, atteignant déjà une moyenne de 63 %. Toutefois, étant donné qu'il ne reste que deux ans pour déclarer les dépenses restantes, et compte tenu de l'augmentation des dotations budgétaires allouées depuis 2020, la plupart des programmes devront augmenter considérablement leurs dépenses au cours des deux dernières années de mise en œuvre.

Les États membres déclarent actuellement un total de 55,2 millions de participations aux différentes interventions FSE/IEJ, y compris celles soutenues par les compléments REACT-EU. Bien que la COVID-19 ait eu un impact évident sur la programmation et les priorités des programmes FSE/IEJ, rien n'indique à ce jour qu'elle ait eu une incidence négative sur la mise en œuvre effective, au vu du nombre de participations et de la part des coûts déclarés par les autorités de gestion. Dans l'ensemble, les participants bénéficiant des mesures FSE/IEJ ont des caractéristiques différentes, mais la plupart étaient sans emploi (36 %) ou inactifs (38 %) et 44 % d'entre eux étaient âgés de moins de 25 ans. Parmi les groupes ayant des parcours scolaires différents, le FSE a surtout ciblé les personnes les moins qualifiées qui représentaient 47 % des participants. L'accroissement de la participation à l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes ralentit à mesure que les programmes de l'IEJ se rapprochent de leurs objectifs (avec un taux médian de réalisation des objectifs de 96 %).

Dans l'ensemble, jusqu'à la fin de l'année 2021, le nombre important de participations aux programmes FSE et IEJ a permis à 6,4 millions de participants de trouver un emploi, tandis que 8,8 millions d'entre eux ont obtenu une qualification, 1,3 million sont engagés dans la recherche d'un emploi et 2,6 millions suivent un enseignement ou une formation. En outre, un total de 5,9 millions de participants défavorisés ont obtenu l'un de ces résultats positifs.

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<sup>3</sup> Soutien à la reprise en faveur de la cohésion et des territoires de l'Europe.

<sup>4</sup> Ce montant total de 142,9 milliards d'euros comprend déjà le récent complément REACT-EU de 16,1 milliards d'euros.

## Zusammenfassung

In den letzten Jahren hat der Europäische Sozialfonds eine substantielle Krisenreaktion geleistet. Dennoch hat sich die Umsetzung bis Ende 2021 in einem stabilen Tempo fortgesetzt, und die Ergebnisse des Fonds haben ebenfalls zugenommen. Die Herausforderung besteht darin, die zusätzlichen Mittel zu sichern, insbesondere den Haushalt REACT-EU<sup>5</sup>, und sicherzustellen, dass die Endbegünstigten erreicht werden.

Im Rahmen der Maßnahmen zur Bewältigung der COVID-19-Pandemie, insbesondere der erheblichen zusätzlichen Mittel aus REACT EU, belaufen sich die ESF-Programme nun auf 142,9 Mrd. EUR (EU + nationaler Anteil)<sup>6</sup>, wovon 104,8 Mrd. EUR von der Europäischen Union finanziert werden. Die Beschäftigungsinitiative für junge Menschen (YEI) beläuft sich auf weitere 4,5 Milliarden Euro. Dies bedeutet insgesamt einen Anstieg von 16,9 Mrd. EUR gegenüber der ursprünglichen Finanzierung. Die Stärkung der Kapazitäten zur Krisenbewältigung erforderte auch eine umfassende Überprüfung der operationellen Programme, einschließlich der Verlagerung der Haushaltsmittel, der Anwendung neuer Flexibilität bei Kofinanzierungsätzen und der Einführung zusätzlicher Output- und Ergebnisindikatoren und -ziele. Dank der Einführung der von den Kommissionsdienststellen empfohlenen Indikatoren zum Monitoring der Reaktion gegen COVID-19 durch die Mitgliedstaaten werden die Ergebnisse im nächsten ESF-Synthesebericht vollständig sichtbar sein. Gleichzeitig passen die Mitgliedstaaten ihre Programme weiter an, indem sie die neuen Krisenreaktionsinitiativen nutzen, um auf den Zustrom von Flüchtlingen zu reagieren, der auf die Aggression Russlands gegen die Ukraine und auf den enormen Anstieg der Energiekosten der Haushalte.

Bis Ende 2021 ist die Umsetzung stetig vorangekommen. Der Anteil der gemeldeten Ausgaben an den zugewiesenen Haushaltsmitteln ist gestiegen und erreichte bereits durchschnittlich 63 %. Da jedoch nur noch zwei Jahre verbleiben, um die verbleibenden Ausgaben zu melden, und angesichts der seit 2020 aufgestockten Mittelzuweisungen müssen die meisten Programme ihre Ausgaben in den letzten zwei Jahren der Durchführung erheblich erhöhen.

Die Mitgliedstaaten melden derzeit insgesamt 55,2 Millionen Beteiligungen an den verschiedenen ESF/YEI-Interventionen, einschließlich derjenigen, die durch REACT-EU-Aufstockungen unterstützt werden. Während COVID-19 eindeutige Auswirkungen auf die Programmplanung und die Prioritäten der ESF/YEI-Programme hatte, gibt es bislang keine eindeutigen Hinweise darauf, dass sich dies nach der Zahl der Beteiligungen und der Kostenanteile, die von den Verwaltungsbehörden gemeldet wurden, negativ auf die tatsächliche Umsetzung auswirkte. Insgesamt haben Teilnehmende an ESF/YEI-Maßnahmen unterschiedliche Hintergründe, aber die meisten waren arbeitslos (36 %) oder nicht erwerbstätig (38 %) und 44 % von ihnen waren jünger als 25 Jahre. Unter den Gruppen mit unterschiedlichem Bildungshintergrund richtete sich der ESF an die am geringsten Qualifizierten, die 47 % der Teilnehmenden ausmachten. Der Anstieg der Beteiligung an der Beschäftigungsinitiative für junge Menschen hat sich verlangsamt, da diese Programme ihren Zielen näherkommen (mediane Zielerreichungsquote: 96 %).

Insgesamt haben die beträchtlichen Teilnehmerzahlen, die mit ESF und der Beschäftigungsinitiative für junge Menschen erreicht wurden, bis Ende 2021 dazu beigetragen, dass 6,4 Millionen Teilnehmende einen Arbeitsplatz gefunden haben, während weitere 8,8 Millionen Teilnehmer eine Qualifikation erworben haben, 1,3 Millionen auf Arbeitssuche sind und 2,6 Millionen sich in einer Aus- oder Weiterbildung befinden. Darüber hinaus erzielten insgesamt 5,9 Millionen benachteiligte Teilnehmende eines dieser positiven Ergebnisse.

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<sup>5</sup> Aufbauhilfe für den Zusammenhalt und die Gebiete Europas.

<sup>6</sup> Diese Summe von 142,9 Mrd. EUR beinhaltet bereits die jüngste REACT-EU-Aufstockung von 16,1 Mrd. EUR.



## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The present summary report is prepared as part of Task 4 of the ESF+ Data Support Centre, providing support to the monitoring of ESF, FEAD and ESF+ (VT/2021/040). It provides a summary of monitoring information of the European Social Fund 2014-2020 up to the year 2021. This information is provided in the 2021 Annual Implementation Reports (AIR2021), due to be submitted to the European Commission by May 31, 2022. This report uses all monitoring information delivered by July 13, 2022. It covers both the measures implemented under the ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

This report provides input for the Annual Summary Report to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (according to Article 53(1) of the CPR).

*Figure 1. Overview: contents of the report*

#### Scope

- Overview of budget allocations
- Changes to operational programmes since the start of the programming period

#### Summary of implementation

- Overview of progress in implementation for all funds
- Reported progress of ESF implementation
- Reported progress of REACT-EU implementation
- Reported progress of YEI implementation

#### Assessment of unit costs

- Unit costs
- Costs per result

#### ESF support to EU policy objectives

- An analysis of the contribution to the main EU policy objectives. The assessment of the contribution of ESF / YEI / REACT-EU to these objectives is based on the monitoring data included in the AIRs 2021.

### 1.2 Methodology

This report is based on a total of 188 AIRs submitted via SFC2014 (the System for Fund Management in the European Union), by **July 13, 2022**. Most AIRs had been submitted and were in the approval process. This means that for AIRs that had not yet been submitted by that time, the latest possible monitoring information was used as input for this report. This can result in minor differences from more updated or approved versions. The table below summarises the status of each of the AIRs used as input for this report.

*Table 1. Number of AIRs by status*

MS	Total OP	Not formally submitted	AIRs returned for modification	AIRs admissible	Accepted by EC
AT	1			1	
BE	4		4		
BG	3			3	
CY	1				1
CZ	3				3
DE	18		3	6	9
DK	1				1
EE	1			1	
ES	23			20	3
FI	2				2

FR	33	7	7	11	8
GR	17			16	1
HR	1			1	
HU	5			5	
IE	1				1
IT	29		3	12	14
LT	1		1		
LU	1				1
LV	1				1
MT	1				1
NL	1				1
PL	17		8	1	8
PT	10		2	8	
RO	2			2	
SE	2			2	
SI	1		1		
SK	2			1	1
UK	6			4	1
EU 28	188	7	29	94	57

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

This year's summary report of the AIRs follows a similar methodological approach as the reports from previous years, which consists of an analysis of all data on financial expenditure and progress indicators from the 188 programmes. The original number of 187 Operational Programmes (also reported in earlier versions of the ESF synthesis report) were complemented with a dedicated Operational Programme of REACT-EU interventions in Germany (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) starting in 2021. The monitoring data obtained for all programmes from SFC2014 was quality checked and in some cases revised to account for inconsistencies in data input and to avoid extreme outliers that may affect the results. More details on the methodological approach and considerations can be found in reports from earlier years<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre](#): final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

## 2 Scope of the ESF

### 2.1 Scope of overall budget

The European Social Fund (ESF) is structured into 188 ESF Operational Programmes (OPs) for the 2014-2020 programming period, adopted submitted by the 27 Member States and the United Kingdom<sup>8</sup>. Currently, the total EU budget for the ESF is EUR 104.8 billion. This total consists of both of the original ESF allocation (EUR 84.6 billion), a recent top-up through REACT-EU (EUR 15.7 billion) and includes a share (EUR 4.5 billion) that is allocated to complement YEI funding. In addition, a separate budget line for the YEI provides another EUR 4.5 billion of EU funding, which brings the total for ESF and YEI together to EUR 109.2 billion. Table 2 below only presents the EU amounts; the shares of national co-financing are presented in table 3. The EU budgets per type of region are presented as well and show that the ESF/YEI total allocates roughly double the budget of transition regions to more developed regions, and again double that amount for less developed regions. The funds made available by the YEI and REACT-EU are not linked to types of regions and are presented separately.

Table 2. Allocated ESF/YEI budgets (2014-2020) – EU amounts only

MS	ESF (EU amount)			YEI	ESF+YEI Total	
	ESF – base	Contribution to YEI	Top-up by REACT-EU			Total ESF
AT	442.1	-	88.5	530.6	-	530.6
BE	973.4	64.4	159.2	1 197.0	64.4	1 261.4
BG	1 476.8	55.3	229.7	1 761.8	55.3	1 817.1
CY	150.3	18.1	65.0	233.5	18.1	251.6
CZ	3 656.8	13.6	-	3 670.4	13.6	3 684.0
DE	7 511.5	-	811.5	8 322.9	-	8 322.9
DK	213.0	-	54.7	267.7	-	267.7
EE	576.6	-	12.8	589.3	-	589.3
ES	7 087.1	1 392.3	3 979.1	12 458.5	1 392.3	13 850.8
FI	518.3	-	51.6	569.9	-	569.9
FR	5 458.4	483.7	923.1	6 865.2	480.9	7 346.0
GR	3 898.7	256.2	100.0	4 254.8	256.2	4 511.0
HR	1 414.7	103.2	530.0	2 047.9	103.2	2 151.0
HU	4 677.6	49.8	314.1	5 041.4	49.8	5 091.2
IE	416.4	68.1	88.3	572.9	68.1	641.0
IT	10 265.9	940.1	6 505.8	17 711.8	940.1	18 651.9
LT	1 200.4	31.8	46.0	1 278.1	31.8	1 309.9
LU	20.1	-	73.2	93.3	-	93.3
LV	647.7	29.0	20.6	697.3	29.0	726.3
MT	134.6	-	111.2	245.8	-	245.8
NL	510.3	-	220.4	730.7	-	730.7
PL	12 874.3	269.7	74.4	13 218.3	269.7	13 488.0
PT	7 176.4	225.2	268.6	7 670.1	225.2	7 895.3
RO	4 622.4	151.6	234.0	5 008.0	151.6	5 159.6
SE	719.6	44.2	293.1	1 056.9	44.2	1 101.1
SI	718.8	9.2	13.2	741.2	9.2	750.4
SK	2 471.7	86.1	468.6	3 026.4	86.1	3 112.5
UK	4 722.0	185.3	-	4 907.3	185.3	5 092.6
Total	84 555.8	4 476.7	15 736.7	104 769.2	4 473.9	109 243.1
More dev	23 611.8	1 772.4	-	25 384.2	-	25 384.2
Less dev	49 260.9	1 707.9	-	50 968.7	-	50 968.7
Transition	11 683.1	996.4	-	12 679.6	-	12 679.6
Not specified	-	-	15 736.7	15 736.7	4 473.9	20 210.6

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

<sup>8</sup> Under the terms of the UK–EU Withdrawal Agreement, the UK is eligible for its full allocation of ESF from the 2014–2020 budget cycle. Like all 27MS, it is allowed to submit claims for projects under the 2014-2020 programmes until 2023.

Table 3 below combines both the EU amounts and the national amounts available for ESF implementation. The level of economic development of a region determines the minimum share of national co-financing for ESF programmes. Investments under dedicated REACT-EU priority axes and the dedicated budget line for the YEI do not require national co-financing (can be funded 100 % by EU budget), but the ESF matching share for YEI needs to be complemented with co-financing. The table shows that, together with the national contributions, the total ESF 2014-2020 budget is EUR 142.9 billion, which includes of a recent top-up of EUR 16.1 billion by REACT-EU, as well as slightly under EUR 6.0 billion that is reserved for implementation of the YEI. If we combine both the EU and national budgets for the ESF and YEI together for 2014-2020, a total budget of EUR 147.4 billion is available. This amounts to a co-financing rate of 74 %, meaning that 74 % of the total budget is financed by the EU, and 26 % by national contributions.

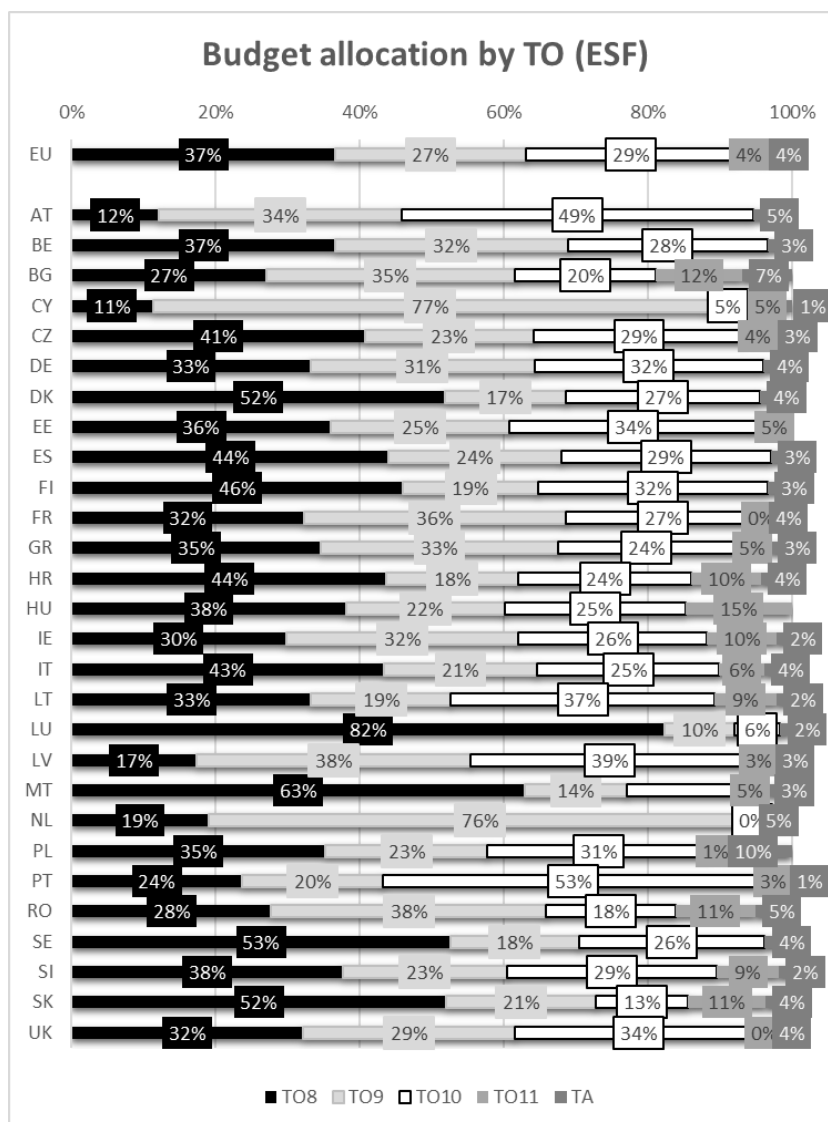
Table 3. Allocated ESF/YEI budgets (2014-2020) – EU + national amounts

MS	ESF (EU + national contribution)			YEI	ESF+YEI		
	ESF – base	Contribution to YEI	Top-up by REACT-EU		Total	% EU financing	
AT	875.7	-	88.5	964.2	-	964.2	55%
BE	2 166.9	128.8	164.0	2 459.6	64.4	2 524.0	50%
BG	1 736.2	65.0	229.7	2 030.9	55.3	2 086.2	87%
CY	176.8	21.3	65.0	263.2	18.1	281.3	89%
CZ	4 500.7	16.0	-	4 516.7	13.6	4 530.3	81%
DE	12 549.9	-	833.8	13 383.7	-	13 383.7	62%
DK	410.8	-	55.6	466.5	-	466.5	57%
EE	682.2	-	12.8	695.0	-	695.0	85%
ES	10 288.8	1 638.0	4 025.8	15 952.6	1 392.3	17 344.8	80%
FI	1 036.5	-	89.9	1 126.5	-	1 126.5	51%
FR	9 626.0	660.9	943.7	11 230.6	480.9	11 711.4	63%
GR	5 036.2	331.3	100.0	5 467.5	256.2	5 723.6	79%
HR	1 664.4	121.4	530.0	2 315.8	103.2	2 418.9	89%
HU	5 723.6	58.5	314.1	6 096.3	49.8	6 146.0	83%
IE	832.7	136.3	88.3	1 057.4	68.1	1 125.5	57%
IT	16 969.8	1 422.3	6 617.7	25 009.8	940.1	25 949.9	72%
LT	1 412.2	37.4	46.0	1 495.6	31.8	1 527.4	86%
LU	40.1	-	73.2	113.3	-	113.3	82%
LV	762.0	34.1	24.2	820.4	29.0	849.4	86%
MT	168.3	-	111.2	279.5	-	279.5	88%
NL	1 030.8	-	304.2	1 334.9	-	1 334.9	55%
PL	15 148.3	317.3	74.6	15 540.2	269.7	15 809.9	85%
PT	8 719.0	264.9	268.6	9 252.5	225.2	9 477.7	83%
RO	5 438.6	178.4	234.0	5 851.0	151.6	6 002.6	86%
SE	1 436.6	88.3	293.1	1 818.0	44.2	1 862.2	59%
SI	898.5	11.5	13.2	923.2	9.2	932.4	80%
SK	2 987.2	101.3	473.2	3 561.7	86.1	3 647.8	85%
UK	8 533.0	346.7	-	8 879.7	185.3	9 064.9	56%
Total	120 851.9	5 979.7	16 074.4	142 906.0	4 473.9	147 379.9	74%
More dev	44 679.1	2 503.5	-	47 182.6	-	47 182.6	54%
Less dev	59 708.4	2 160.0	-	61 868.4	-	61 868.4	82%
Transition	16 464.4	1 316.3	-	17 780.7	-	17 780.7	71%
Not specified	-	-	16 074.4	16 074.4	4 473.9	20 548.3	98%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

To better understand the priorities chosen by Member States within these overall budgets, the figure below summarises the share of ESF investments across all analysed OPs in the EU for the four ESF-relevant Thematic Objectives.

Figure 2. ESF allocation to thematic objectives



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The figure shows how Member States have been able to direct their ESF programmes to specific national priorities. In the Netherlands, for instance, 76 % of the budget is dedicated to Social Inclusion (Thematic Objective 9), compared to the legally required minimum of 20 % in Lithuania<sup>9</sup>. In Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg and Croatia the latest approved version of the operational programmes allocated less than 20 % to social inclusion objectives, which can happen in specific cases where there are specific priority axes with social innovation or transnational cooperation measures<sup>10</sup>.

The importance of employment objectives in Luxembourg (82 %), Malta (63 %), Denmark (52 %), Slovakia (52 %), and Sweden (53 %) also stands out, for instance in comparison to Cyprus (11 %), Austria (12 %), Latvia (17 %), and the Netherlands (19 %).

<sup>9</sup> As required by Article 4 of the ESF Regulation (2013/1304).

<sup>10</sup> Depending on how budgets are allocated to thematic objectives, the recent top-up from REACT-EU could also cause these percentages to be lower than 20%. However, the percentages for TO9 in these countries are not affected by REACT-EU funding.

## 2.2 Response to COVID-19

The European Commission responded to the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent economic fallout with specific measures that introduced flexible rules and additional budgets for the ESF and the YEI. These measures are described in more detail in last year's synthesis report<sup>11</sup>. In summary, the first packages (**Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives – CRII and CRII+**) launched in the first half of 2020 offered additional flexibility for reprogramming, for instance by allowing using funds that were programmed in other Cohesion Policy funds for ESF (and using ESF funds elsewhere, depending on the local needs). In addition, **REACT-EU**, launched in May 2020, offered fresh additional funding of EUR 50.6 billion to existing Cohesion Policy programmes for the years 2021 and 2022. Member States could decide how to allocate these funds across the funds (European Regional Development Fund - ERDF, the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived - FEAD, as well as the ESF and the YEI). As a result, the exact consequences of the use of this fresh funding for ESF/YEI cannot be determined before all amendments to ESF operational programmes (OPs) have been approved.

The variety of these measures in response to the coronavirus cannot be isolated from 'ordinary' programme amendments. The flexibility for reprogramming offered by CRII and CRII+ allows reshuffling existing ESF/YEI funds, as well as re-allocating programmed investments from ERDF and the Cohesion Fund (CF). REACT-EU stands out in the corona-response package, because its budget can be isolated from the other measures; either allocated to existing or new priority axes, the 'fresh' REACT-EU funds can only be programmed under a dedicated investment priority. To gain a full overview of the concrete budget effects of the Corona response packages for ESF and YEI programmes, these were compared before and after the period of programme amendments following the approval of REACT-EU<sup>12</sup>. Figure 3 below presents the results of this comparison and highlights the changes in budget allocation between the latest approved versions of the OPs and those approved before the COVID-19 response was put in place<sup>13</sup>. The figure shows that an overall increase in ESF/YEI funds of EUR 16.22 billion can likely be attributed to the Coronavirus response package so far. As the total REACT-EU allocations currently amount to EUR 16.07 billion (of programme amendments approved by July 2022, see table 3), an additional EUR 148 million can be related to the flexibility of reprogramming allocated funds from ERDF/CF under CRII/CRII+<sup>14</sup>. This is a net amount, including reallocations from and to ESF/YEI, measured by summing the EU amounts and national co-financing.

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<sup>11</sup> European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre](#): final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> It cannot be avoided that such a comparison also includes 'normal' amendments, which would have been proposed even without additional flexibility provisions and the challenges offered by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, most, if not all, amendments in this period of time seem to be in relation to CRII/CRII+.

<sup>13</sup> The latest approved versions of each operational programme by 31/5/2020 were used as baseline. These were subsequently compared against the latest approved versions of the operational programmes by July 13, 2022. At the time of writing the report, various operational programmes were still undergoing amendments, which means that the final estimates for REACT-EU, at the end of the programming period may be slightly different from the ones reported here.

<sup>14</sup> The values presented in this section represent the total allocated budgets, combining both the EU amount and national co-financing. If the comparison is conducted for EU amounts only, the additional allocations due to CRII flexibility rules amount to EUR 0.7 billion. The difference measured in EU amounts can be higher than the total because of the 100% EU co-financing that is exceptionally permitted by CRII+. In certain programmes this was used to reduce the national contribution to the total budget.

Figure 3. Development of OPs over time (2020-2022), since REACT-EU

Comparing OP May/20 against latest approved version OP (as of July 2022)										
	Total ESF/YEI - TO08 - YEI (incl OP2019)		ESF share to YEI					Total changes - ESF/YEI		% change
	(x€1,000)	(baseline)	TO08 - ESF	TO09 - ESF	TO10 - ESF	TO11 - ESF	TA - ESF			
AT	€ 875 739	€ -	€ -	€ 53 706.1	€ 34 804.0	€ -	€ -	€ 88 510.1	10%	
BE	€ 2 367 162	€ -363.2	€ 91 795.9	€ 35 436.4	€ 20 152.4	€ -	€ 9 423.8	€ 157 171.7	7%	
BG	€ 1 856 427	€ -188.3	€ 147 456.3	€ 137 961.6	€ 24 876.0	€ -58 707.5	€ -20 963.0	€ 230 811.7	12%	
CY	€ 216 321	€ -	€ -5 454.1	€ 123 006.9	€ -6 724.7	€ -3 460.0	€ -	€ 107 368.0	50%	
CZ	€ 4 232 156	€ -	€ 287 710.5	€ -	€ 0.0	€ -	€ 10 429.1	€ 298 139.6	7%	
DE	€ 12 531 930	€ -	€ 435 192.6	€ 155 217.8	€ 216 510.3	€ -	€ 36 924.7	€ 843 845.4	7%	
DK	€ 410 810	€ -	€ 55 715.9	€ -	€ -2 150.0	€ -	€ 1 933.5	€ 55 499.5	14%	
EE	€ 682 235	€ -	€ 9 000.0	€ -32 407.1	€ -3 372.6	€ 0.0	€ -	€ -26 779.7	-4%	
ES	€ 13 240 596	€ -15 052.6	€ 2 518 248.7	€ 418 765.4	€ 1 032 583.6	€ -	€ 72 140.1	€ 4 056 790.5	31%	
FI	€ 1 036 526	€ -	€ 47 154.7	€ 10 312.0	€ 25 951.8	€ -	€ 6 513.1	€ 89 931.6	9%	
FR	€ 10 798 619	€ -3 435.1	€ 543 611.7	€ 429 269.5	€ -236 268.4	€ -484.2	€ 27 261.1	€ 766 824.9	7%	
GR	€ 5 623 237	€ -2 446.8	€ -141 068.0	€ 510 855.1	€ -182 102.2	€ -63 390.2	€ -26 330.1	€ 100 411.4	2%	
HR	€ 1 888 910	€ -	€ 530 000.0	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 530 000.0	28%	
HU	€ 5 707 720	€ -	€ 306 622.0	€ 89 461.8	€ 42 224.1	€ -	€ -	€ 438 307.9	8%	
IE	€ 1 157 177	€ -	€ -120 000.0	€ -	€ -	€ 88 335.0	€ -	€ -31 665.0	-3%	
IT	€ 19 244 628	€ -10 519.3	€ 3 686 410.2	€ 1 296 108.1	€ 495 108.6	€ 487 396.9	€ 232 141.4	€ 6 207 684.5	32%	
LT	€ 1 481 363	€ -	€ 189 683.7	€ -988.2	€ -15 802.2	€ -3 529.4	€ -	€ 169 363.9	11%	
LU	€ 40 112	€ -	€ 71 696.5	€ 2 100.0	€ -500.0	€ -	€ -100.0	€ 73 196.5	182%	
LV	€ 825 134	€ -	€ 6 060.0	€ 37 801.4	€ 30 632.4	€ -310.0	€ -	€ 74 183.8	9%	
MT	€ 132 367	€ -	€ 149 696.3	€ -	€ -6 500.0	€ 2 500.0	€ 1 437.5	€ 147 133.8	111%	
NL	€ 1 030 771	€ -	€ -	€ 282 131.2	€ -	€ -	€ 22 041.5	€ 304 172.7	30%	
PL	€ 15 781 504	€ -	€ -137 524.5	€ 179 802.7	€ -21 098.2	€ -5 396.4	€ -233.4	€ 15 550.1	0%	
PT	€ 9 176 687	€ -153.3	€ 262 130.6	€ -84 772.0	€ 112 491.4	€ -58 638.0	€ -23 529.4	€ 207 835.9	2%	
RO	€ 5 768 093	€ -1 068.7	€ -91 830.5	€ 841 432.9	€ -462 192.7	€ 12 996.2	€ -61 767.0	€ 239 707.6	4%	
SE	€ 1 569 091	€ -	€ 229 111.1	€ -	€ 63 993.7	€ -	€ -	€ 293 104.8	19%	
SI	€ 919 188	€ -	€ -9 042.3	€ 17 421.7	€ 4 825.6	€ -	€ -	€ 13 205.0	1%	
SK	€ 2 689 617	€ 42 399.7	€ 724 286.1	€ 162 591.1	€ 26 396.8	€ 53 556.2	€ 14 603.5	€ 939 034.0	35%	
UK	€ 9 231 277	€ 6 364.8	€ -12 562.0	€ 387 369.6	€ -519 865.9	€ -26 000.0	€ 10 101.0	€ -167 322.2	-2%	
EU	€ 130 515 397	€ 15 537.3	€ 9 774 101.2	€ 5 052 584.3	€ 673 973.9	€ 424 868.5	€ 312 027.4	€ 16 222 018.0	12%	

Source: SFC2014, based on latest approved versions of operational programmes (data extracted on July 13, 2022). Amounts include EU + national co-financing.

So far, the most substantial increases in budget have been recorded in Italy (EUR 6.2 billion), Spain (EUR 4.1 billion), Slovakia (EUR 0.9 billion), Germany (EUR 0.8 billion), and France (EUR 0.8 billion). The largest relative budget increases so far can be seen in Luxembourg (an addition of EUR 73 million or 182 % of the original budget), Malta (EUR 147 million or 111 % of the original ESF budget), Cyprus (EUR 107 million, 50 %) and the Netherlands (EUR 304 million, 30 %). The budget increases identified in this table include both fresh funds made available through REACT-EU, as well as ERDF budgets that may have shifted from or towards the ESF under the flexibility rules introduced by CRII+. The figure suggests reductions of budgets in Ireland and the United Kingdom. In the case of the United Kingdom, this is related to the fact that it does not receive any additional funds under REACT-EU. For Ireland, this value does not yet include the most recent programme amendment, which is still pending is likely to result in a positive balance<sup>15</sup>. Also for Poland, no substantial increases are reported, because its REACT-EU related amendments have not been formally approved yet.

A review of the programming changes since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic allows charting the specific priorities selected by Member States in their response to the pandemic. Over half of the increase in budget (EUR 9.7 billion) is allocated to employment objectives (TO8), for instance supporting short-time work schemes and other types of support to workers. Social inclusion objectives (TO9) also received a considerable increase in budget (EUR 5.0 billion), with most support dedicated to entities that aim to combat the effects of COVID-19, as well as the provision of healthcare services and protective gear. Under thematic objective 10 (education objectives), an additional EUR 0.7 billion has been allocated, supporting the purchase of computers, other IT equipment, and software to facilitate distance learning. Chapter 5 presents more detail about the more specific choices made for investing these funds.

<sup>15</sup> Based on a review of the latest submitted version of the operational programme in Ireland by July 2022.

### 3 Summary of implementation

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the key progress in implementation of the ESF / YEI and the REACT-EU package that tops up these funds. Progress is first presented for these funds together to offer a full overview of the achievements reached. Afterwards, the chapter presents separate summaries for ESF, YEI, and REACT-EU dedicated priority axes. Each of these sections sets out the progress achieved in terms of 'input', which includes reporting on the progress in committing and spending financial allocations. Subsequently, each section reports on the outputs of these interventions and the results achieved. Finally, each section reviews progress against the targets set by the operational programmes themselves.

#### 3.2 Combined progress reported for ESF/REACT-EU/YEI

##### 3.2.1 Implementation against allocated budgets

The financial overview provided in this section serves to offer a first indication of whether implementation is on track. Table 4 below presents the key figures, distinguishing between the eligible costs of selected operations (based on which the project selection rate is calculated) and the declared expenditure (which serves as the basis for the implementation rate)<sup>16</sup>. Because the tables include values for REACT-EU, no comparison is made with earlier years; due to the recent programming of REACT-EU top-ups, their implementation was in the start-up phase throughout 2021.

Table 4. Progress in financial implementation by end-2021 of ESF/REACT-EU/YEI combined

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection % 2021	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Implementation rate 2021
AT	964.2	877.0	91%	573.8	60%
BE	2 524.0	2 597.6	103%	1 471.8	58%
BG	2 086.2	2 129.1	102%	1 505.9	72%
CY	281.3	280.9	100%	207.3	74%
CZ	4 530.3	4 974.2	110%	3 227.8	71%
DE	13 383.7	14 126.3	106%	10 654.4	80%
DK	466.5	477.5	102%	289.1	62%
EE	695.0	702.3	101%	474.9	68%
ES	17 344.8	20 229.0	117%	8 267.5	48%
FI	1 126.5	1 203.3	107%	820.9	73%
FR	11 711.4	13 646.6	117%	9 027.6	77%
GR	5 723.6	7 025.3	123%	4 045.7	71%
HR	2 418.9	2 263.2	94%	1 233.7	51%
HU	6 146.0	6 361.1	103%	4 453.8	72%
IE	1 125.5	1 125.5	100%	871.2	77%
IT	25 949.9	22 661.4	87%	12 426.8	48%
LT	1 527.4	1 674.9	110%	1 193.1	78%
LU	113.3	119.6	106%	103.9	92%
LV	849.4	833.1	98%	531.7	63%
MT	279.5	283.7	102%	201.8	72%
NL	1 334.9	1 619.0	121%	913.8	68%
PL	15 809.9	15 331.3	97%	10 335.6	65%
PT	9 477.7	11 040.4	116%	6 915.4	73%

<sup>16</sup> **Eligible costs of selected operations** means that managing authorities have allocated and reserved the funds for running specific projects. The funds are generally reserved once a selection procedure has been formally launched, and in some cases once a project agreement is signed. When compared against the total allocated budget, one obtains the 'project selection rate'. **Expenditures declared** means that formal expenditure reports have been drawn up by project beneficiaries and submitted to the MA. These expenditures are declared only *after* completing the project cycle, whereas the eligible costs for selected operations tend to be recorded at the start of implementation. A comparison of the declared expenditures against the total allocated budget produces the implementation rate.



RO	6 002.6	6 365.2	106%	3 240.0	54%
SE	1 862.2	1 499.8	81%	1 071.7	58%
SI	932.4	964.3	103%	645.7	69%
SK	3 647.8	3 896.1	107%	2 461.7	67%
UK	9 064.9	9 787.3	108%	5 424.3	60%
Total	147 379.9	154 150.5	105%	92 628.9	63%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The table shows that project selection rates have reached their full levels, with implementation continuing to increase. Project selection rates are an important measure to assess the progress of ongoing ESF/YEI operational programmes, and review a programme's future project pipeline. The declared expenditure rate however gives a more accurate picture of the activities on the ground that have already been concluded. A number of considerable differences in implementation appear, with implementation in Spain and Italy at 48 %, against for instance Luxembourg 92 %, Germany 80 %, and France 77 %. Part of the explanation is that Spain and Italy in particular have seen a considerable rise in their allocated budgets for 2021 and 2022 because of REACT-EU; this also increases the share of the budget that still needs to be implemented and thus lowers the implementation rate. For this reason, section 3.3 compares the implementation of the ESF and YEI separately from the REACT-EU budgets.

Considerable differences in the rate of project selection (eligible costs) and implementation (declared expenditures) can be found in Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Romania and United Kingdom. Such differences can be a sign for a substantial pipeline of active projects. However, particularly in countries where the eligible costs are already above 100 %, this can point to a practice where project funds are deliberately 'overcommitted', to build in a margin against future corrections that may follow from audits or other eligibility reviews.

### 3.2.2 Outputs – ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined

This section summarises the outputs achieved at EU level and aims to provide a better understanding of the number and type of individuals that were reached by ESF, YEI and REACT-EU at the end of 2021. With all three funds combined, a total of 58.2 million participations<sup>17</sup> were recorded, among which sufficient information on background characteristics (such as employment status) has been collected for 55.2 million<sup>18</sup>. Table 5 highlights that Greece (72 %) and Hungary (81 %) show the lowest shares of participations for which the required individuals' core characteristics were collected. Though comparatively low, it is already a considerable improvement against earlier years (in 2022 this was 63 % and 52 % respectively). While the Regulation permits that eligible participants are allowed to participate in ESF / YEI interventions if they do not want to share sensitive personal information, managing authorities and the European Commission have a responsibility to try to obtain as much of the background variables to have as complete data as possible to gain usable information for programme monitoring. This year's reporting round shows a notable improvement for Poland in this regard, which moved from 82 % of all participations in 2020 to 100 % of all participations for which individual characteristics were collected in 2021. DG EMPL's audit methodology uses 10 % as a benchmark for under-reporting at the level of the priority axis, above which an in-depth analysis about its causes, as well as additional efforts by managing authorities to reduce it, are necessary. Reporting on individual core characteristics for less than 90% of all participations is observed in Greece, Hungary, Spain and the United Kingdom.

<sup>17</sup> Throughout the report 'participation(s)' and 'participant(s)' are used interchangeably. In strict sense, output and result indicators count participations, as one person can take part in ESF programmes multiple times. However, multiple participation of the same person has significant physical limits, and is further restricted through eligibility criteria and targeting. Also, the indicators on persons usually express personal labour-market-status related and social characteristics, and express change in the participant's individual status.

<sup>18</sup> Please note that figures for "Grand total" reported in the AIRs are insufficiently detailed for analysis. Therefore, the synthesis report conducts all analyses on the basis of the total of the reported 55.2 million participations.

Table 5. Absolute outputs (number of participations) ESF + YEI + REACT-EU

	ESF	REACT-EU	YEI	Total (common indicators)	Total (reported as grand total)	% Grand Total in common ind.
AT	227 639	52 255	-	279 894	305 184	92%
BE	1 347 620	22 331	200 149	1 570 100	1 577 164	100%
BG	1 853 980	123 749	80 946	2 058 675	2 059 242	100%
CY	72 412	-	6 789	79 201	79 201	100%
CZ	752 949	-	5 922	758 871	758 913	100%
DE	3 072 054	21 049	-	3 093 103	3 107 313	100%
DK	106 168	-	-	106 168	110 775	96%
EE	228 135	-	-	228 135	234 746	97%
ES	6 254 198	209 802	1 213 935	7 677 935	8 720 295	88%
FI	360 728	-	-	360 728	373 445	97%
FR	4 944 376	49 909	737 591	5 731 876	5 807 947	99%
GR	1 227 473	-	69 961	1 297 434	1 792 948	72%
HR	396 120	-	41 637	437 757	438 700	100%
HU	2 316 158	-	40 089	2 356 247	2 923 859	81%
IE	335 153	-	10 802	345 955	384 358	90%
IT	9 977 769	-	605 442	10 583 211	10 882 608	97%
LT	955 059	750	61 826	1 017 635	1 017 635	100%
LU	23 402	43 031	-	66 433	66 433	100%
LV	370 918	-	29 571	400 489	404 902	99%
MT	53 737	-	-	53 737	53 737	100%
NL	591 059	164 582	-	755 641	755 718	100%
PL	7 578 827	-	283 668	7 862 495	7 865 477	100%
PT	2 762 958	-	86 296	2 849 254	2 849 282	100%
RO	1 321 738	-	6 293	1 328 031	1 328 474	100%
SE	313 541	74	35 722	349 337	363 894	96%
SI	251 615	-	2 950	254 565	254 571	100%
SK	1 038 461	3 004	118 818	1 160 283	1 160 296	100%
UK	2 072 314	-	108 863	2 181 177	2 472 467	88%
Total	50 806 561	690 536	3 747 270	55 244 367	58 149 584	95%

*Discrepancies in totals reported by Member States (last column) and totals in first 3 columns arise when Member States do not collect all non-sensitive background characteristics or when participants refuse to report on some of these characteristics*

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Table 6 below reviews the trend in participation figures of the combined funds for participation with background characteristics. It shows a trend of increasing participation figures, with a total of 14.6 million participations recorded in the year 2021, reaching a cumulative total of 55.2 million in 2021. The pace at which participations have been recorded has increased consistently since 2016, but has particularly increased in Cyprus (more than five-fold increase) and Romania (from 0.8 million to 1.3 million). While both countries confirm in their AIR that the implementation of projects is ongoing at a good pace, no specific explanations are provided that can explain such high increases. In Italy and Poland a considerable increase in absolute numbers can also be observed (1.5 million in Italy, and slightly under 1.0 million in Poland).

Table 6. Total participation - cumulative progress (ESF/REACT-EU/YEI combined)

MS	Cumulative until 2016	Cumulative until 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021
AT	58 537	104 543	151 816	201 525	219 264	279 894
BE	451 637	701 681	958 379	1 219 809	1 427 270	1 570 100
BG	133 885	709 648	1 074 714	1 288 049	1 835 812	2 058 675
CY	7 375	10 084	11 845	13 238	14 956	79 201
CZ	17 443	98 120	304 453	465 264	610 509	758 871
DE	941 752	1 535 134	2 030 303	2 486 306	2 808 652	3 093 103
DK	7 290	18 553	38 805	64 158	85 899	106 168

EE	39 294	76 069	117 584	155 077	192 505	228 135
ES	1 831 547	3 313 305	4 746 570	6 034 956	7 152 078	7 677 935
FI	67 164	138 365	204 144	266 217	314 024	360 728
FR	1 913 856	2 920 650	3 905 868	4 674 797	5 334 730	5 731 876
GR	348 695	546 992	710 253	869 908	1 017 300	1 297 434
HR	63 410	116 393	180 837	229 101	402 512	437 757
HU	142 566	446 116	1 071 795	1 647 598	2 151 428	2 356 247
IE	129 612	197 626	282 589	345 955	345 955	345 955
IT	1 451 072	2 765 305	5 288 053	7 815 255	9 010 228	10 583 211
LT	185 158	265 032	500 708	751 197	897 115	1 017 635
LU	3 358	8 590	13 883	18 372	64 095	66 433
LV	56 581	122 091	219 703	306 583	353 865	400 489
MT	4 609	9 267	18 252	33 582	44 012	53 737
NL	266 366	435 331	509 665	561 724	647 730	755 641
PL	564 592	1 670 360	3 419 683	5 168 868	6 825 174	7 862 495
PT	943 909	1 361 660	1 922 850	2 388 054	2 751 198	2 849 254
RO	255	328	383 235	653 848	834 120	1 328 031
SE	44 346	102 050	165 381	235 576	291 131	349 337
SI	17 517	59 920	126 317	181 834	216 041	254 565
SK	93 757	259 790	466 392	742 641	956 773	1 160 283
UK	494 548	988 160	1 387 335	1 757 979	1 994 865	2 181 177
Total	4 549 606	10 280 131	18 981 163	30 211 412	40 577 471	55 244 367

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

For each of the three funds we reviewed the recorded background characteristics, with table 7 providing information on the total number and relative share of participations per type of common indicator. It shows that the share of unemployed and that of inactive persons is comparable (36 % against 38 % respectively for ESF and YEI), with slightly less employed persons reached. This is also where the funds differentiate in scope; REACT-EU reached 50 % of persons in employment, whereas the YEI does not target persons in employment at all. The largest age group of all funds combined is 25 to 54 year-olds (47 %), closely followed by persons below 25 years old (44 %). The data underlines how the YEI has had a substantial effect on the programming of employment interventions for young people (72 %). In terms of education level, most participants have qualifications at ISCED level 1 or 2 (47 %), followed by ISCED level 3 or 4 (30 %). There are no major differences between the three funds with regards to the education level of the recorded participations.

Table 7. Total common outputs for participations (all 3 funds combined), cumulative by end-2021, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Total ESF	Total REACT-EU	Total YEI	Overall				
<b>Employment status</b>								
<b>CO01</b> Unemployed	16 707 473	33%	177 233	26%	3 056 590	82%	19 941 296	36%
<b>CO02</b> of which Long-term unemployed	5 966 301	12%	91 801	13%	840 567	22%	6 898 669	12%
<b>CO03</b> Inactive	20 094 318	40%	169 059	24%	690 680	18%	20 954 057	38%
<b>CO04</b> of which not in education or training	3 443 230	7%	53 681	8%	675 550	18%	4 172 461	8%
<b>CO05</b> Employed, including self-employed	14 004 770	28%	344 244	50%	-	0%	14 349 014	26%
<b>Total CO1+CO3+CO5</b>	50 806 561		690 536		3 747 270		55 244 367	
<b>Age</b>								
<b>CO06</b> Below 25 years of age	21 300 763	42%	254 921	37%	2 689 710	72%	24 245 394	44%
<b>CO06a</b> Between 25-54 years of age	24 537 679	48%	343 978	50%	1 017 547	27%	25 899 204	47%
<b>CO07</b> Above 54 years of age	4 968 119	10%	91 637	13%	-	0%	5 059 756	9%

<b>CO08</b> Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	2 393 905	5%	39 781	6%	-	0%	2 433 686	4%
<b>Education</b>								
<b>CO09</b> With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	24 343 066	48%	316 136	46%	1 287 831	34%	25 947 033	47%
<b>CO10</b> With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	14 821 509	29%	224 511	33%	1 544 819	41%	16 590 839	30%
<b>CO11</b> With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	8 855 521	17%	111 190	16%	751 812	20%	9 718 523	18%
<b>CO11a</b> Other / unknown ISCED	2 786 465	5%	38 699	6%	162 808	4%	2 987 972	5%
<b>Other background characteristics</b>								
<b>CO15</b> Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	7 420 058	15%	159 997	46%	461 652	12%	8 041 707	15%
<b>CO16</b> Participants with disabilities	3 389 261	7%	61 852	33%	183 818	5%	3 634 931	7%
<b>CO17</b> Other disadvantaged	9 710 224	19%	40 435	16%	586 189	16%	10 336 848	19%
<b>CO18</b> Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	543 344	1%	1 802	6%	33 801	1%	578 947	1%
<b>CO19</b> From rural areas	10 444 325	21%	69 747	46%	576 165	15%	11 090 237	20%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The common output indicators recorded in the AIRs also measure the number of projects and entities supported, and show that, in addition to the reported 55.2 million participations, a total of 91 285 projects by social partners or non-governmental organisations were reported. Moreover, Member States reported to have supported 53 322 projects dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment. Another 73 598 projects targeted public administration / public services. The ESF has supported a total of 1 739 780 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) since 2014.

The number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or NGOs is relatively concentrated among a small number of Member States; almost half of such projects are reported by Italy. Germany and Poland are responsible for most projects dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in the labour market. Almost two-thirds of the projects targeting public administrations are found in Italy (69.4 %). Finally, the number of SMEs supported is mainly reported by France and Germany.

Table 8. Total number of projects / SMEs at EU level over 2014-2020 (entire ESF programme)

	Sum of 2014-2021 total	Sum of 2019	Sum of 2020	Sum of 2021	Sum of cumulative progress
Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or NGOs	70 368	11 975	9 651	5 291	97 285
Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment;	30 967	8 470	9 080	4 805	53 322

Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	29 805	23 271	8 933	11 589	73 598
Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative /social enterprises)	1 317 349	140 000	172 094	110 337	1 739 780

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.2.3 Results – ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined

The analysis proceeds with a review of the results achieved by the three combined funds, as recorded in the common result indicators. Table 9 below shows that the highest number of immediate results are reported in Spain, France, Germany, Poland and Italy. Interesting differences can be observed in the share of persons with a disadvantage among these results. These vary from 83 % in the Netherlands and 70 % in Austria, to 4 % in Slovenia, 6 % in Cyprus, 7 % in Lithuania.

Table 9. Overview of common indicators for immediate results by Member State until 2021 (ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined)

MS	Results immediately after the intervention						
	All results				Total	Disadvantaged	
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment		Any result	% of all results
AT	7 196	14 184	41 015	14 993	77 388	54 171	70%
BE	11 597	145 758	136 912	215 066	509 333	148 376	29%
BG	17 211	480 544	200 881	35 168	733 804	137 756	19%
CY	-	608	2 957	5 149	8 714	561	6%
CZ	2 478	17 805	202 081	120 781	343 145	75 079	22%
DE	55 974	295 021	1 374 984	234 996	1 960 975	511 528	26%
DK	559	1 617	8 217	2 372	12 765	4 911	38%
EE	600	16 180	51 884	19 960	88 624	34 691	39%
ES	268 358	345 887	2 454 107	1 357 917	4 426 269	1 005 571	23%
FI	1 929	8 880	6 356	17 185	34 350	11 754	34%
FR	485 558	383 197	538 438	1 218 084	2 625 277	1 500 814	57%
GR	37 210	35 142	292 686	65 324	430 362	67 627	16%
HR	3 608	2 769	23 097	43 165	72 639	11 598	16%
HU	14 255	45 250	547 023	333 921	940 449	106 157	11%
IE	4 875	85 764	122 112	26 016	238 767	79 746	33%
IT	163 430	296 840	469 286	747 836	1 677 392	213 144	13%
LT	5 085	24 742	147 074	91 703	268 604	18 342	7%
LU	304	-	-	1 611	1 915	220	11%
LV	1 413	15 233	36 412	35 117	88 175	29 022	33%
MT	460	2 820	12 550	3 102	18 932	4 977	26%
NL	11 749	14 624	20 924	118 240	165 537	137 758	83%
PL	91 414	54 449	1 022 840	998 148	2 166 851	955 701	44%
PT	60 297	79 439	259 478	294 987	694 201	25 012	4%
RO	24 835	30 902	81 824	122 295	259 856	72 291	28%
SE	2 814	21 341	32 715	31 647	88 517	42 596	48%
SI	157	3 513	38 942	32 056	74 668	2 717	4%
SK	649	8 503	11 235	8 018	28 405	11 961	42%
UK	61 613	173 306	692 099	247 672	1 174 690	619 574	53%
Total	1 335 628	2 604 318	8 828 129	6 442 529	19 210 604	5 883 655	31%

ESF – More dev	274 768	1 004 559	2 883 104	2 002 058	6 164 489	1 408 558	23%
ESF – Less dev.	682 322	1 004 658	3 270 779	2 361 115	7 318 874	2 899 498	40%
ESF - Transition	260 731	388 450	2 216 020	1 036 482	3 901 683	1 087 065	28%
REACT-EU	22 142	12 468	39 959	40 696	115 265	17 932	16%
YEI	95 665	194 183	418 229	1 002 178	1 710 255	470 602	28%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Table 10 presents the aggregated results 6 months after interventions are completed. When analysing these figures, it is important to realise that Member States may not have updated these figures, as this was only mandatory for AIR2019 and will only be reported again in the final implementation report at the end of the programming period (in 2023). Still, when combining the reporting for the three funds, a total of 6.2 million participants were reported to have found a job six months after participation (of which 1.1 million were achieved in YEI programmes), and another 1.1 million employed participants were reported to have improved their position on the labour market (of which less than ten thousand are achieved in YEI programmes). The number of results achieved by REACT-EU funded interventions is still relatively low, as its implementation in most Member States is still in its inception phase.

Table 10. Overview of common longer-term result indicators by Member State

MS	Six months after intervention						
	Entered employment	All groups Better LM position	Total	Above 54 years of age Entered employment	% of all that entered employment	Disadvantaged Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
AT	29 067	3 044	32 111	2 872	10%	25 451	88%
BE	399 863	25 012	424 875	3 245	1%	88 236	22%
BG	61 666	154 122	215 788	5 441	9%	13 019	21%
CY	4 065	1 904	5 969	284	7%	226	6%
CZ	102 865	16 431	119 296	12 649	12%	35 090	34%
DE	116 265	125 703	241 968	4 606	4%	47 361	41%
DK	28 669	2 889	31 558	470	2%	10 149	35%
EE	23 286	3 262	26 548	5 037	22%	14 135	61%
ES	470 038	31 404	501 442	14 436	3%	165 152	35%
FI	24 777	19 501	44 278	1 937	8%	11 621	47%
FR	1 898 238	251 181	2 149 419	82 137	4%	1 000 902	53%
GR	135 908	36 030	171 938	4 811	4%	22 570	17%
HR	67 224	2 152	69 376	3 260	5%	8 715	13%
HU	87 282	43 848	131 130	7 736	9%	16 225	19%
IE	12 109	4 450	16 559	725	6%	7 778	64%
IT	1 343 493	63 069	1 406 562	88 708	7%	251 393	19%
LT	33 931	11 426	45 357	8 674	26%	4 376	13%
LU	2 911	-	2 911	71	2%	419	14%
LV	37 755	14 374	52 129	4 383	12%	14 952	40%
MT	1 822	2 007	3 829	132	7%	957	53%
NL	129 029	66 676	195 705	6 692	5%	117 875	91%
PL	776 977	67 443	844 420	36 100	5%	322 780	42%
PT	173 751	44 147	217 898	3 360	2%	4 322	2%
RO	8 021	1 248	9 269	349	4%	1 131	14%
SE	28 765	71 079	99 844	1 128	4%	20 791	72%
SI	34	-	34	-	0%	-	0%
SK	536	929	1 465	61	11%	183	34%
UK	154 457	70 802	225 259	11 330	7%	88 029	57%
Total	6 152 804	1 134 133	7 286 937	310 634	5%	2 293 838	37%
	All results			Above 54 years of age		Disadvantaged	

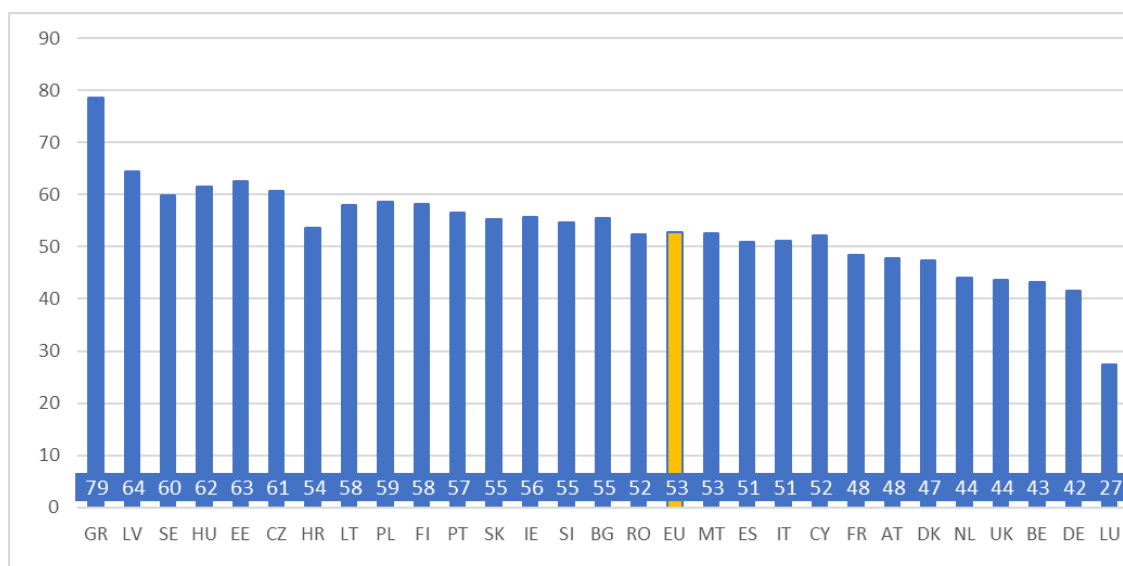
	Entered employment	Better LM position	Total	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
More	1 242 294	395 472	1 637 766	96 269	8%	281 833	23%
Less	2 968 228	546 754	3 514 982	178 353	6%	1 302 868	44%
Transition	840 669	180 574	1 021 243	35 859	4%	379 618	45%
REACT-EU	2 211	2 114	4 325	98	4%	1 702	77%
YEI	1 099 402	9 219	1 108 621	55	0%	327 817	30%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.2.4 Gender equality in outputs and results

The participation of women and men in interventions funded by ESF/YEI/REACT-EU is relatively equally distributed when aggregated at EU level (53 % of participants are women). There are, however, significant differences among Member States. In Greece, 79 % of participations are female, against only 27 % in Luxembourg. In Greece, this can be explained by the relatively large size of its investments that focus on reconciliation of family and professional life, both under the investment priority that focuses on Equality between men and women (8iv) in the national programme and by the large number of women reached in social inclusion (9i) in its regional OP. Moreover, in Greece a considerable share of support in the field of education focuses on teachers (10i), which in pre-primary and primary education is a female-dominated occupation. Luxembourg indicates that its ESF projects are designed in a gender-neutral way, but that some sectors of activity which are inherently gender-sensitive, such as sectors including public works and construction, are particularly targeted by the ESF and are mainly male-dominated sectors.

Figure 4. Relative share (%) of female participation across Member States (ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined)

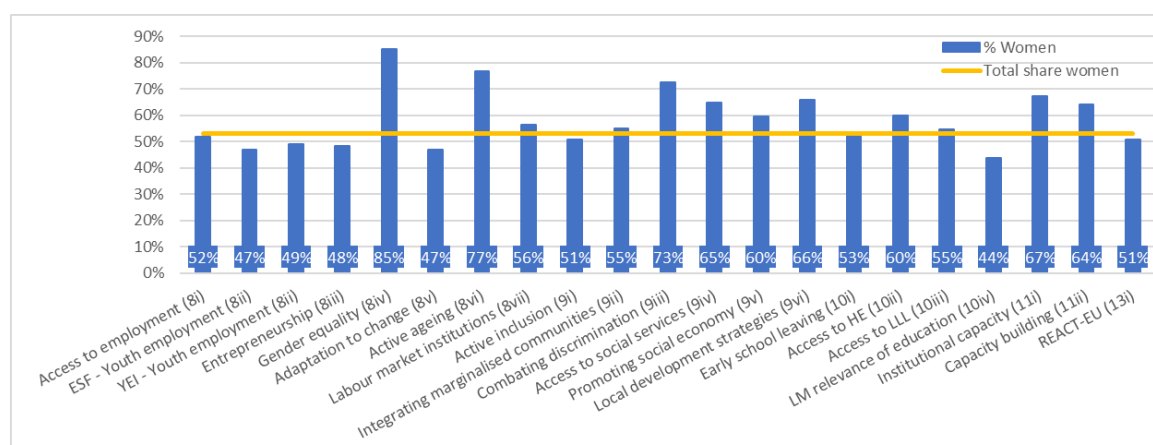


Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The distribution of men and women is also not equal across the different investment priorities. As can be expected, investments in gender equality (8iv) and combating discrimination (9iii) reached an above-average share of women (85 % and 73 % respectively). Additionally, figure 5 also shows high shares of women among recorded participations in investment priorities where this is not immediately obvious, such as among active ageing measures (77 %). It is worth noting, however, that this is exclusively due to Poland, where a high number of participations are recorded for active

ageing investments that focus on health check-ups (over 889 thousand). These check-ups were mostly focused on women (over 688 thousand participations). In other investment priorities the differences are visible yet less pronounced, such as in local development strategies (66 %: 9vi) and investments in institutional capacity (67 %). There are few investment priorities where women are at or around the 50% mark; from this perspective only investments focusing on the labour market relevance of education (10iv) stand out as relatively low in terms of women participation(44 %). This figure is particularly influenced by the German regional programmes, where the share of women in this investment priority varies from 19%-42% across the different regions. The annual implementation reports for these regional programmes do not provide any explanations for these lower shares; possibly the measures focus on (vocational) education programmes in male-dominated sectors.

Figure 5. Relative share (%) of female participation – by investment priority



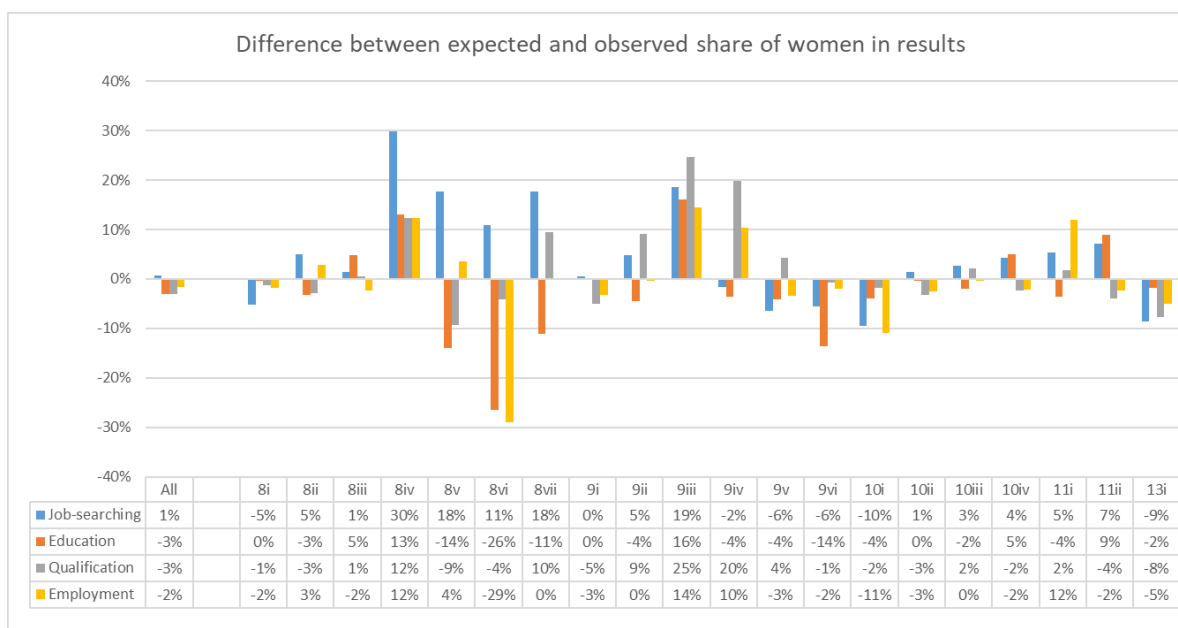
Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The review also assessed the share of women among the four types of results captured by the common indicators. These were compared against the share of women in the relevant output figures for all ESF/YEI/REACT-EU interventions together<sup>19</sup>. No substantial difference appears in terms of the number of women that were activated into job searching. Women made up 50 % of all participants that entered education or obtained a qualification on average, while women made up 53 % of all reported participations (hence -3% in figure 6, under 'all'). A share of 51.5 % of recorded participations by unemployed and inactive persons were women, while the share of women among those that found employment was 49.8 %, resulting in a rounded difference of 2 percentage points. These differences are almost negligible, which is an important and reassuring finding. There are relevant differences however across the different investment priorities and Member States, which are discussed in more detail below.

<sup>19</sup> By relevant, we mean the reference population for result indicators as defined in EC Guidance, Annex D - Practical guidance on data collection and validation, which identifies inactive people (CO03) as reference population for the common result of starting job-searching (CR01), all participations (CO01/CO03/CO05) for people entering education (CR02) or obtaining a qualification (CR03) and all unemployed and inactive participations for people (CO1/CO3) entering employment (CR04).



Figure 6. Difference (in percentage points) between observed share of women per result and share of women in reference population – by investment priority



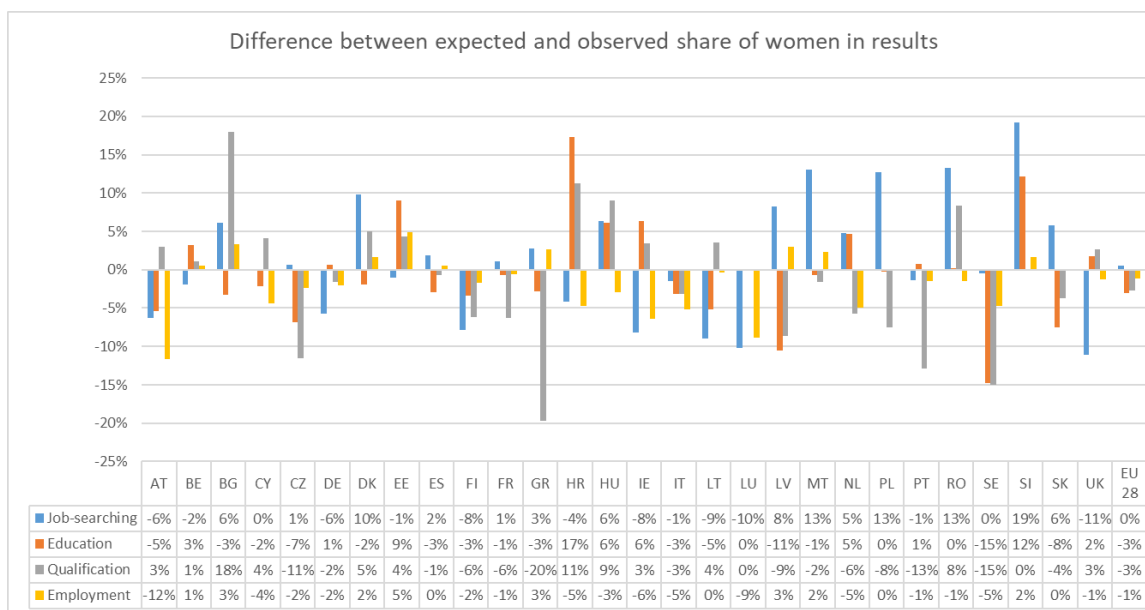
Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Most importantly, the different types of investment priorities show considerable variation. Women for instance appear highly overrepresented in the results of investments that focus on gender equality (8iv) and combating discrimination (9iii). We have already seen above that women make up substantial majorities of the total participation in these investment priorities (86 % and 70 % of all participations in these investment priorities), but figure 6 above shows that its results are even further tilted towards women. In gender equality measures (8iv) for instance 98 % of the individuals that were activated into job searching were women, while women made up 'only' 68 % of the inactive participations reported (hence the reported difference of 30 p.p. for this result). Where such equality measures targeted men, these did not seem to specifically aim at the activation of men to enter the labour market. The same can be observed for other types of results in these investment priorities. The considerable overrepresentation of men in the results of active ageing measures also calls for attention. While women make up the vast majority of participations of these measures (77 %, mainly due to programmes in Poland, see above), the share of women in this investment priority that entered education is considerably lower (51 %, a difference that is rounded off at 26 p.p.). Again, the types of measures in Poland highly influence this number; most women were targeted by health check-ups, none of which were focused on changing labour market status or moving towards education. The possible results achieved among women in these Polish interventions (better diagnostic care, diseases avoided) are not captured by the common result indicators.

The same analysis was also performed for each Member State, as shown in figure 7. A number of Member States report considerably lower shares of women with results considerably lower than what could be expected based on the recorded share of women among participations in that Member State. However, as seen in the figure above, most of such difference are more likely due to specific choices in programming specific types of measures rather than a systematic gender bias in these countries. In Austria, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Slovakia, and Sweden particularly, women represent a considerably smaller share of results than their participation figure would lead to expect. On the other hand of the scale are Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia, where women appear particularly over-represented among the results achieved compared to their participation figures. In other Member States, the picture is more diverse, with over-representation of women in one

particular type of result while reporting an underrepresentation of women in other types of result. Such a mixed picture by Member States can simply be the result of different types of interventions; a programme may for instance consist of activation measures that focus particularly on women (supporting childcare in combination with career guidance), while training measures are focused particularly on unemployed men (see for instance various regional Operational Programmes in Poland). From that perspective it is re-assuring to find that there is no structural difference in the share of women across different types of results.

Figure 7. Difference in percentage points between observed share of women per result and share of women in reference population – by Member State



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.3 Progress for ESF

#### 3.3.1 Implementation against allocated budgets

This section reviews the implementation of budgets across the EU specifically for the ESF until the end of 2021. Table 11 presents the key figures, distinguishing between the eligible costs for selected operations (based on which the project selection rate is calculated) and the declared expenditure (which serves as the basis for the implementation rate).

Table 11. Progress financial implementation 2021 ESF (EU + national share)

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	Implementation rate	
			2021	Δ2020		2021	Δ2020
AT	875.7	842.9	96%	1	573.8	66%	12
BE	2 166.9	2 337.0	108%	5	1 346.3	62%	13
BG	1 736.2	1 745.1	101%	8	1 268.2	73%	16
CY	176.8	243.2	138%	39	176.9	100%	54
CZ	4 500.7	4 940.4	110%	14	3 199.0	71%	19
DE	12 549.9	13 762.4	110%	6	10 630.1	85%	14
DK	410.8	432.3	105%	4	288.7	70%	20
EE	682.2	691.6	101%	3	474.9	70%	12
ES	10 288.8	14 707.5	143%	26	6 128.2	60%	18
FI	1 036.5	1 142.5	110%	9	820.6	79%	14
FR	9 626.0	12 014.0	125%	15	7 941.5	83%	15
GR	5 036.2	6 392.9	127%	18	3 785.8	75%	15
HR	1 664.4	2 041.7	123%	21	1 045.8	63%	25
HU	5 723.6	6 265.1	109%	9	4 352.7	76%	17
IE	832.7	832.7	100%	-	682.8	82%	29
IT	16 969.8	17 050.8	100%	14	10 805.7	64%	18
LT	1 412.2	1 559.2	110%	8	1 123.7	80%	19
LU	40.1	49.9	124%	4	34.2	85%	13
LV	762.0	766.6	101%	3	466.4	61%	14
MT	168.3	172.5	102%	25	130.8	78%	33
NL	1 030.8	1 307.0	127%	4	907.6	88%	11
PL	15 148.3	14 733.5	97%	8	9 783.8	65%	16
PT	8 719.0	10 370.7	119%	19	6 417.2	74%	16
RO	5 438.6	6 139.1	113%	13	3 217.5	59%	12
SE	1 436.6	1 262.4	88%	-0	951.4	66%	14
SI	898.5	943.4	105%	-1	627.1	70%	18
SK	2 987.2	3 208.3	107%	-2	2 152.4	72%	18
UK	8 533.0	9 295.7	109%	13	5 080.4	60%	13
Total	120 851.9	135 305.8	112%	12	84 451.2	70%	16
MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	% expenditure declared	
Less developed	59 708.4	64 434.3	108%	11	40 119.3	67%	16
More developed	44 679.1	51 146.1	114%	11	32 688.8	73%	16
Trans.	16 464.4	19 725.4	120%	19	11 643.1	71%	17

Totals are based on latest approved version of operational programmes by July 13, 2022.

Δ2020 shows the difference between 2021 and 2020 project selection rates. For AT, for instance, 12 means that the current implementation rate (66 %) increased by 12 percentage points in comparison to 2020 (54 %).

All values refer to the total ESF amount (EU + national share) and include TA, but exclude YEI and REACT-EU allocations in dedicated priority axes.

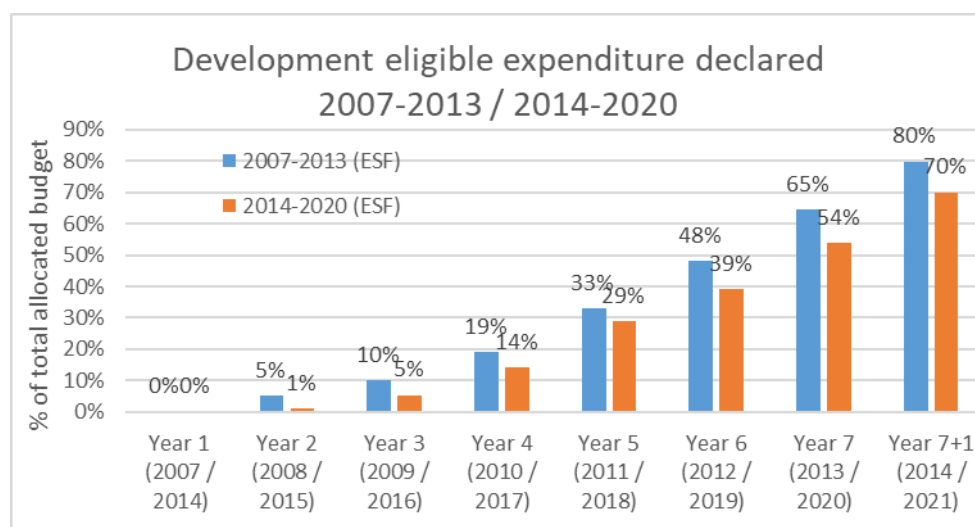
Project selection and implementation rates are calculated at MS level; the total costs / expenditure at MS level are divided by the total allocated budget at MS level

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The table shows full implementation in Cyprus, a considerable increase in percentage points compared to 2020 (54 p.p.), and implementation rates close to the allocated budgets for the ESF in the Netherlands (88 %), Germany (85 %), France (83 %), and Ireland (82 %). Implementation rates are below average in Austria (66 %), Belgium (62 %), Spain (60 %), Croatia (63 %), Latvia (61 %), Poland (65 %), Romania (59 %), Sweden (66 %) and the United Kingdom (60 %). Most programmes advanced steadily with implementation rates increasing by 10-20 percentage points compared to 2020. Minor differences can be observed between less developed regions (67 % implementation rate) and more developed (73 %) and transition regions (71 %).

While implementation of the 2014-2020 programmes has advanced over time, the gap with the progress of implementation in the 2007-2013 programming period has remained substantial, as shown in figure 8 below.

Figure 8. Expenditure declared to the European Commission (implementation rate): 2007-2013 (ESF) / 2014-2020 (ESF)



Source: AIRs 2021 – Ex Post synthesis evaluation ESF 2007-2013 (SFC2007)<sup>20</sup>

### 3.3.2 Outputs

This section reviews the outputs reported for the ESF, starting with an overview of the number of participations recorded cumulatively over time.

Table 12. Total participation in ESF - cumulative progress

MS	Cumulative until 2016	Cumulative until 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021
AT	58 537	104 543	151 816	201 525	219 264	227 639
BE	395 061	611 935	823 335	1 056 697	1 236 500	1 347 620
BG	107 347	671 306	1 023 287	1 223 819	1 691 795	1 853 980
CY	5 156	6 063	6 712	7 586	8 724	72 412
CZ	17 244	95 776	300 394	459 782	604 799	752 949
DE	941 752	1 535 134	2 030 303	2 486 306	2 808 429	3 072 054
DK	7 290	18 553	38 805	64 158	85 899	106 168
EE	39 294	76 069	117 584	155 077	192 505	228 135
ES	1 464 107	2 684 246	3 885 708	5 015 525	5 954 848	6 254 198
FI	67 164	138 365	204 144	266 217	314 024	360 728
FR	1 604 929	2 480 480	3 327 842	4 019 352	4 607 921	4 944 376
GR	302 181	489 738	646 086	802 231	947 985	1 227 473
HR	39 276	82 330	140 613	187 535	360 946	396 120

<sup>20</sup> ESF Ex-post Evaluation Synthesis 2007-2013 - EU synthesis report (2016)

HU	106 976	406 037	1 031 706	1 607 509	2 111 339	2 316 158
IE	125 005	187 826	271 813	335 153	335 153	335 153
IT	1 119 839	2 328 604	4 793 402	7 267 091	8 435 834	9 977 769
LT	173 738	220 796	439 126	689 371	835 289	955 059
LU	3 358	8 590	13 883	18 372	21 064	23 402
LV	38 110	96 803	190 535	277 037	324 294	370 918
MT	4 609	9 267	18 252	33 582	44 012	53 737
NL	266 366	435 331	509 665	561 724	583 261	591 059
PL	413 038	1 440 476	3 151 318	4 890 507	6 542 887	7 578 827
PT	881 733	1 295 078	1 848 176	2 303 204	2 664 979	2 762 958
RO	255	328	381 967	651 710	828 021	1 321 738
SE	27 554	75 207	136 342	203 762	256 623	313 541
SI	14 621	56 970	123 367	178 884	213 091	251 615
SK	78 891	215 280	381 164	631 087	837 965	1 038 461
UK	472 102	927 663	1 307 488	1 664 296	1 892 083	2 072 314
EU	8 775 533	16 698 794	27 294 833	37 259 099	44 959 534	50 806 561
MS	Cumulative until 2016	Cumulative until 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021
Less	2 262 680	5 331 473	10 843 542	16 173 030	20 552 846	23 971 733
More	4 662 968	8 197 622	11 896 018	15 095 752	17 360 978	19 200 114
Transition	1 849 885	3 169 699	4 555 273	5 990 317	7 045 710	7 634 714

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The table above also shows the total number of ESF participations split by different types of region. The highest values are reported for less developed regions (24.0 million), followed by participation in more developed regions (19.2 million) and the . The smallest number is recorded in transition regions (7.6 million)<sup>21</sup>. The low number of participations for transition regions can be explained by the fact that there are simply less transition regions than other types, which also have smaller budgets to implement ESF. The table below presents the distribution of the common output indicators for the ESF across these three different types of regions. The table shows the results of specific choices in programming and shows for instance how the inactive take up a larger share of participations in less developed regions, while (long-term) unemployed feature larger shares of total participation in more developed and transition regions.

Table 13. Totals common outputs for participations by type of region (funds combined), cumulative until 2021, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Less developed	More developed	Transition
<b>Employment status</b>			
<b>CO01</b> Unemployed	5 381 630	8 287 787	3 038 056
<b>CO02</b> of which Long-term unemployed	1 632 403	3 192 238	1 141 660
<b>CO03</b> Inactive	11 043 075	6 172 657	2 878 586
<b>CO04</b> of which not in education or training	1 105 976	1 685 541	651 713
<b>CO05</b> Employed, including self-employed	7 547 028	4 739 670	1 718 072
<b>Total CO1+CO3+CO5</b>	23 971 733	19 200 114	7 634 714
<b>Age</b>			
<b>CO06</b> Below 25 years of age	10 868 018	7 140 851	3 291 894
<b>CO06a</b> Between 25-54 years of age	10 335 207	10 324 545	3 877 927
<b>CO07</b> Above 54 years of age	2 768 508	1 734 718	464 893

<sup>21</sup> While the number of participations are relatively similar for more and less developed regions, the remainder of the report will show that reported expenditures are considerably different, with almost double the declared expenditures declared by beneficiaries reported for less developed regions.

<b>CO08</b> Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	1 013 814	4%	1 080 524	6%	299 567	4%
<b>Education</b>						
<b>CO09</b> With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	10 719 580	45%	9 278 450	48%	4 345 036	57%
<b>CO10</b> With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	7 471 895	31%	5 590 176	29%	1 759 438	23%
<b>CO11</b> With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	4 638 317	19%	3 244 833	17%	972 371	13%
<b>CO11a</b> Other / unknown ISCED	1 141 941	5%	1 086 655	6%	557 869	7%
<b>Other background characteristics</b>						
<b>CO15</b> Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	1 574 334	21%	4 819 657	65%	1 026 067	14%
<b>CO16</b> Participants with disabilities	1 157 790	34%	1 655 568	49%	575 903	17%
<b>CO17</b> Other disadvantaged	4 055 084	42%	3 934 835	41%	1 720 305	18%
<b>CO18</b> Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	105 800	19%	337 259	62%	100 285	18%
<b>CO19</b> From rural areas	6 933 453	66%	2 451 519	23%	1 059 353	10%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The table on the next page presents the reported participations at the level of individual ESF investment priorities and shows considerable differences in participation figures between these. Most participations are logically recorded in the investment priorities with the highest levels of funding, such as for investments in active inclusion (9i: 9.4 million), followed by early school leaving (10i: 9.3 million) and access to employment (8i: 7.7 million). This suggests that the participations are relatively well distributed across the various objectives, with lower numbers of participation in the remaining investment priorities.

Table 14. Participations

	Access to employment	Youth employment (no YEI)	Entrepreneurs hip	Gender equality	Adaptation to change	Active ageing	LM Institutions	Active inclusion	Integration marginalised	Combating discrimination	Access to social services	Social economy	Local development	Early school leaving	Access to HE	Access to LLL	LM relevance education	Institutional capacity	Capacity building	Total ESF	%
MS	8i	8ii	8iii	8iv	8v	8vi	8vii	9i	9ii	9iii	9iv	9v	9vi	10i	10ii	10iii	10iv	11i	11i		
AT	2 455	-	-	4 643	-	-	-	97 528	-	-	-	-	-	96 243	-	26 770	-	-	-	227 639	0%
BE	296 713	193 735	8 963	-	6 410	-	-	389 436	618	-	-	507	-	12 963	-	438 275	-	-	-	1 347 620	3%
BG	75 579	24 232	7 360	-	96 187	-	1 304	24 052	199 402	-	241 669	5 309	-	501 406	24 380	519 444	54 500	79 156	-	1 853 980	4%
CY	2 993	1 663	-	-	-	-	-	1 489	-	-	63 028	-	-	-	-	2 085	1 154	-	-	72 412	0%
CZ	208 507	-	-	97 927	145 792	-	3 007	68 554	8 860	1 218	32 332	-	45 922	114 759	10 274	-	-	15 797	-	752 949	1%
DE	23 772	155 815	74 815	65 306	587 518	-	-	766 964	-	481	-	-	-	542 451	16 197	261 380	577 355	-	-	3 072 054	6%
DK	-	-	28 189	-	15 446	-	-	8 387	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12 050	42 096	-	-	106 168	0%
EE	110 995	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 399	-	-	28 951	-	-	14 087	-	60 684	-	3 019	-	228 135	0%
ES	980 293	89 162	671 407	186 634	240 117	-	721	1 221 452	37 126	273 934	79 764	33 256	-	907 875	12 136	892 344	627 977	-	-	6 254 198	12%
FI	92 222	-	-	4 582	53 755	-	-	55 239	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	154 930	-	-	-	360 728	1%
FR	555 391	54 506	329 012	-	313 936	104	10 768	2 908 710	3 641	12 427	2 167	1 490	-	142 767	4 303	587 080	18 074	-	-	4 944 376	10%
GR	124 362	-	11 505	268 229	68 579	-	1 996	274 620	144	7 420	3 074	-	81	183 467	20 525	23 602	135 333	104 536	-	1 227 473	2%
HR	147 828	15 442	-	-	-	-	17 658	60 534	-	-	29 033	1 635	-	-	43 364	49 362	9 784	7 469	14 011	396 120	1%
HU	362 484	131 626	-	-	181 711	-	-	185 668	112 786	-	126 787	202	1 049	263 058	40 269	654 785	20 562	235 171	-	2 316 158	5%
IE	25 725	-	-	-	-	-	-	68 227	-	63	-	-	-	-	50 572	190 566	-	-	-	335 153	1%
IT	2 081 68€	975 590	250	55 346	333 899	6 653	84 830	1 213 707	57 224	-	385 508	18 628	6 806	3 776 186	214 298	114 957	514 262	122 518	15 421	9 977 769	20%
LT	112 843	17 150	-	-	-	-	-	17 195	-	-	275 775	26 339	34 379	271 529	30 800	104 275	-	64 774	-	955 059	2%
LU	4 023	7 713	-	-	-	-	-	2 853	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 813	-	-	-	23 402	0%
LV	94 134	-	-	-	487	-	-	49 035	-	-	108 753	-	-	21 675	2 684	53 376	18 937	21 837	-	370 918	1%
MT	8 121	4 950	-	-	-	-	-	8 588	-	-	3 761	-	-	2 552	1 204	20 895	-	3 485	181	53 737	0%
NL	35 802	-	-	-	-	-	-	555 257	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	591 059	1%
PL	881 573	632 222	50 755	73 501	318 052	889 787	4 334	336 713	-	-	679 478	100 428	33 461	1 636 673	574 950	451 346	817 427	97 044	1 083	7 578 827	15%
PT	169 583	-	1 404	497	708 588	-	-	417 247	-	8 413	42 589	55	3 381	160 851	219 340	612 426	412 127	6 457	-	2 762 958	5%
RO	249 681	126 611	87 385	-	50 216	-	77	-	97 463	-	112 329	13 833	7 888	251 919	21 954	216 288	51 884	34 210	-	1 321 738	3%
SE	43 214	21 830	-	-	-	-	-	25 841	-	-	-	-	1 418	-	-	221 238	-	-	-	313 541	1%
SI	40 249	22 166	-	-	-	10 855	-	11 334	-	-	-	931	-	-	-	126 695	27 534	11 750	101	251 615	0%
SK	309 230	-	-	15 732	-	-	3 120	82 104	174 117	-	28 296	-	-	349 633	6 183	28 659	38 033	3 354	-	1 038 461	2%
UK	654 734	230 766	-	4 480	-	-	-	529 240	-	-	-	-	8 266	45 288	-	521 873	77 667	-	-	2 072 314	4%
Total	7 694 192	2 705 179	1 271 045	776 877	3 120 693	907 399	127 815	9 390 373	691 381	303 956	2 243 294	202 613	142 651	9 295 382	1 293 433	6 354 198	3 444 706	810 577	30 797	50 806 561	
%	15%	5%	3%	2%	6%	2%	0%	18%	1%	1%	4%	0%	0%	18%	3%	13%	7%	2%	0%		

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.3.3 Results

This section reports the total aggregation of the common result indicators for the ESF. Table 15 shows the immediate results of participants upon leaving an ESF-supported operation for each Member State and at EU level. The table shows the total absolute numbers of results achieved for each of the types of common result indicators. Moreover, it presents the number of disadvantaged participants that reached any positive results, and the share of disadvantaged participants with positive results compared to the total number of participants with positive results. In total 5.4 million participants who did not have a job entered employment, 8.4 million participants gained a qualification, 1.2 million participants became engaged in job searching, and 2.4 million persons entered education. Of these results, a total of more than 5.4 million were achieved by persons with a disadvantage (roughly 31 % of the total results).

Table 15. Overview of common immediate results by Member State until 2021

MS	Results immediately after intervention						
	All results				Disadvantaged		
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment	Total	Any result	% of all results
AT	7 196	14 184	41 015	14 993	77 388	54 171	70%
BE	9 716	129 447	129 761	207 977	476 901	143 089	30%
BG	14 248	479 756	185 200	19 262	698 466	131 325	19%
CY	-	447	1 552	3 600	5 599	370	7%
CZ	2 390	17 635	199 868	117 336	337 229	73 997	22%
DE	55 974	295 021	1 374 984	234 996	1 960 975	511 528	26%
DK	559	1 617	8 217	2 372	12 765	4 911	38%
EE	600	16 180	51 884	19 960	88 624	34 691	39%
ES	227 616	290 963	2 191 651	943 305	3 653 535	846 004	23%
FI	1 929	8 880	6 356	17 185	34 350	11 754	34%
FR	445 168	303 877	494 727	1 008 580	2 252 352	1 372 349	61%
GR	37 210	33 654	277 010	57 723	405 597	61 237	15%
HR	3 608	2 524	19 296	23 350	48 778	11 067	23%
HU	14 255	45 250	547 023	333 921	940 449	106 157	11%
IE	4 512	81 850	118 648	24 281	229 291	76 937	34%
IT	163 430	296 840	469 286	747 836	1 677 392	213 144	13%
LT	1 491	15 834	137 346	70 298	224 969	17 754	8%
LU	304	-	-	1 611	1 915	220	11%
LV	998	14 769	27 897	29 294	72 958	25 350	35%
MT	460	2 820	12 550	3 102	18 932	4 977	26%
NL	11 749	14 624	20 924	118 240	165 537	137 758	83%
PL	88 503	50 863	988 484	793 179	1 921 029	838 033	44%
PT	60 224	78 307	259 478	243 318	641 327	24 516	4%
RO	24 659	30 096	80 731	121 790	257 276	71 386	28%
SE	2 227	14 289	30 860	16 926	64 302	29 892	46%
SI	157	3 513	38 942	32 056	74 668	2 717	4%
SK	636	8 494	11 085	7 957	28 172	11 917	42%
UK	60 144	158 401	685 125	225 903	1 129 573	595 802	53%
Total	1 239 963	2 410 135	8 409 900	5 440 351	17 500 349	5 413 053	31%
	Results immediately after intervention						
	All results				Disadvantaged		
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment	Total	Any result	% of all results
More dev	274 768	1 004 559	2 883 104	2 002 058	6 164 489	1 408 558	23%
Less dev.	682 322	1 004 658	3 270 779	2 361 115	7 318 874	2 899 498	40%
Transition	260 731	388 450	2 216 020	1 036 482	3 901 683	1 087 065	28%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

There are some interesting differences among Member States in the share of disadvantaged participants, who achieved results. For some, these are only marginal shares of the total results (Cyprus – 6 %, Lithuania – 8 %, Luxembourg – 11 %,



Portugal – 4 %, Slovenia – 4 %), while in others these represent the largest part of the results achieved (Austria – 70 %, France – 61 %, the Netherlands – 83 %). These differences also persist at the regional level, with 23% of all results focused on disadvantaged participants in less developed regions, against 40% of the results in more developed regions.

Member States have to report on progress of longer-term results (i.e. those achieved 6 months after concluding an intervention) only in 2019 (AIR2018) and at the end of the programming period. Because reporting of these results is not mandatory for AIR2021, this year's figures may not fully reflect the actual situation on the ground. So far, a total of 5.1 million participants are reported to have entered employment six months after leaving an ESF-supported operation, while 1.1 million participants that were already employed were able to improve their labour market situation. A total of 0.3 million participants above 54 years old entered employment six months after leaving an ESF-supported operation, while 1.8 million disadvantaged persons were in employment 6 months after leaving an ESF-supported operation.

Table 16. Overview of common long-term results by Member State until 2021

MS	Six months after intervention						
	Entered employment	All results Better LM position	Total	Above 54 years of age Entered employment	% of all that entered employment	Disadvantaged Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
AT	29 067	3 044	32 111	2 872	10%	25 451	88%
BE	333 586	25 012	358 598	3 245	1%	79 164	24%
BG	30 726	154 122	184 848	5 441	18%	6 730	22%
CY	2 676	911	3 587	284	11%	186	7%
CZ	99 432	16 431	115 863	12 649	13%	34 291	34%
DE	116 265	125 703	241 968	4 606	4%	47 361	41%
DK	28 669	2 889	31 558	470	2%	10 149	35%
EE	23 286	3 262	26 548	5 037	22%	14 135	61%
ES	244 219	30 880	275 099	14 436	6%	102 867	42%
FI	24 777	19 501	44 278	1 937	8%	11 621	47%
FR	1 675 833	250 449	1 926 282	82 085	5%	912 756	55%
GR	117 746	36 030	153 776	4 811	4%	20 219	17%
HR	36 789	2 152	38 941	3 260	9%	6 987	19%
HU	87 282	43 848	131 130	7 736	9%	16 225	19%
IE	11 323	4 253	15 576	722	6%	7 598	67%
IT	1 147 002	63 069	1 210 071	88 708	8%	251 393	22%
LT	33 931	11 426	45 357	8 674	26%	4 376	13%
LU	2 911	-	2 911	71	2%	419	14%
LV	25 224	12 649	37 873	4 383	17%	11 283	45%
MT	1 822	2 007	3 829	132	7%	957	53%
NL	129 029	66 676	195 705	6 692	5%	117 875	91%
PL	574 847	67 443	642 290	36 100	6%	186 262	32%
PT	119 034	44 147	163 181	3 360	3%	3 781	3%
RO	6 693	968	7 661	349	5%	1 011	15%
SE	16 139	71 079	87 218	1 128	7%	14 880	92%
SI							
SK	469	929	1 398	61	13%	175	37%
UK	138 817	70 802	209 619	11 330	8%	77 869	56%
EU28	5 057 594	1 129 682	6 187 276	310 579	6%	1 966 021	39%
	Entered employment	All results Better LM position	Total	Above 54 years of age Entered employment	% of all that entered employment	Disadvantaged Entered employment	% of all that entered employment

More	1 242 294	395 472	1 637 766	96 269	8%	281 833	23%
Less	2 968 228	546 754	3 514 982	178 353	6%	1 302 868	44%
Transition	844 861	185 342	1 030 203	35 859	4%	379 618	45%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Most results reported by Member States were recorded for thematic objective 10 (Education), mainly due to the high number of people that gained a qualification upon leaving (5.1 million). ESF support through access to employment (thematic objective 8) most often resulted in participants entering a job (3.5 million participants), which reinforces its primary objective. ESF support focusing on social inclusion (thematic objective 9) also reports most results for individuals finding a job (1.5 million). The lower aggregated achievements shown for investment in institutional capacity (thematic objective 11) must be interpreted in light of the considerably lower financial allocations compared to the other objectives. Moreover, operations under this objective are often focused on entities and public administration organisations and the results are not best captured by counts of results achieved by individuals. Instead, these interventions more often lead to positive results in entities, as well as actions such as development of new tools, change management, studies, awareness raising activities, and partnerships.

Table 17. Total aggregated results reported for ESF per type of common result indicator, by Thematic Objective

	TO8 Access to employment	TO9 Social inclusion	TO10 Education	TO11 Institutional capacity
<b>CR01</b> - Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	234 222	624 296	359 039	264
<b>CR02</b> - Participants in education/training upon leaving	460 248	563 913	1 354 960	18 546
<b>CR03</b> - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	2 062 159	933 432	5 097 697	276 615
<b>CR04</b> - Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	3 457 305	1 473 315	466 334	2 701
<b>Total (CR1-4)</b>	<b>6 213 934</b>	<b>3 594 956</b>	<b>7 278 030</b>	<b>298 126</b>
<b>CR05</b> - Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1 683 003	2 459 072	1 245 108	7 938
	TO8	TO9	TO10	TO11
<b>CR06</b> - Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2 663 894	1 727 081	663 588	820
<b>CR07</b> - Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	389 677	284 684	392 675	60 532
<b>Total (CR6-7)</b>	<b>3 053 571</b>	<b>2 011 765</b>	<b>1 056 263</b>	<b>61 352</b>
<b>CR08</b> - Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	192 837	102 418	15 185	41
<b>CR09</b> - Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	689 524	1 118 448	160 121	96

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.3.4 Progress towards targets

While the absolute values presented in the previous section offer an overview on the breadth and outreach of the ESF, these do not allow for comparison (e.g. across Member States with different budget allocations or different thematic concentrations and scope

of ESF interventions). This section therefore proceeds with an assessment of the progress of output and result achievements against the final targets set in each operational programme. Earlier rounds of synthesis reports already highlight the multiple methods that can be adopted to do so<sup>22</sup>. This report follows the same logic and primarily uses the median target achievement for most comparisons<sup>23</sup>. In case the indicators are more alike, the use of weighed averages for target achievement can also be informative. This section starts with an assessment of the target achievement for output indicators. Across all annual implementation reports, a total of 39 730 common output indicators and 4 417 programme specific output indicator records are reported. Targets are defined for a total of 1 542 common output indicator records (4 %). A total of 4 302 programme specific output indicators have a target (97 %). In order to get a good overview of progress towards targets and compare this across the EU, it is therefore important to combine these different types of indicators together.

The 2021 annual implementation reports show a considerable increase in the number of indicators used compared to earlier years; compared for instance to the 3 715 programme specific indicators in the programmes used in the annual implementation reports for 2019 – submitted in 2020. This is a direct result of the reprogramming efforts in response to the additional flexibility offered by the COVID-19 response package, not only in REACT-EU dedicated priority axes (see section 3.4) but for entire operational programmes.

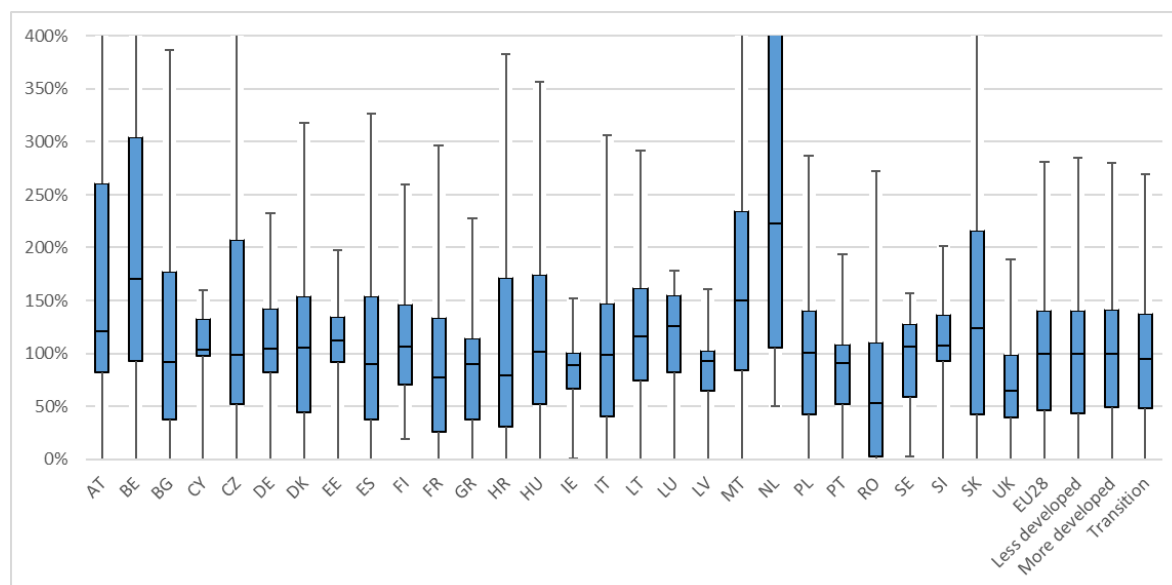
Figure 9 presents the range of output target achievement for each Member State graphically, and clearly shows how using the statistical average (mean) would no longer provide adequate insight in target achievement. All Member States report at least one output indicator with a target achievement far above 100 %, while also still reporting indicators at 0 %; only in Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden no indicator is at 0 % anymore. The black line separating the two blue boxes shows the median values for each Member State, which varies from 53 % in Romania, to 223 % in the Netherlands and anything in between. At EU level, the median target achievement for all output indicators with a target is currently 100 % (rounded), and the median only varies to a small extent between 95 % in transition regions, 99 % in more developed regions and 100 % in less developed regions. A number of Member States, and particularly Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, and the Netherlands stand out with median values above 100 %. This means that at least half of the output targets in these Member States were at or above their targets.

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<sup>22</sup> See for instance European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre: final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021](#), Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

<sup>23</sup> The median shows essentially the 'middle' value in a series of data points. This avoids distortions caused by the extremes and therefore gives a good measure of the 'typical' target achievement in a given set of indicators.

Figure 9. Range and median of output target achievement – by Member State (ESF)



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)<sup>24</sup>

While the figure above gives an insightful overview of target achievement at Member State level, there are also relevant differences between the target achievements of different types of indicators. When assessing the target achievement of similar types of indicators – regardless of how many of them – the weighed target achievement value is preferable. For this reason, table 18 below presents the weighed target achievement rates for various types of output indicators that measure individuals. Each of the categories presented contain both common and programme-specific indicators<sup>25</sup>.

Table 18. Average progress towards target achievement (weighed) of common and programme-specific indicators measuring individual outputs

MS	Un-employed	Inactive	Employed	Young	Old	vulnerable groups	Professionals	Other individuals
No.	496	132	269	471	161	766	302	708
Indicator								
AT	115%	127%	259%	90%		131%		263%
BE	370%	92%	98%	168%	288%	320%	72%	186%
BG	83%		204%	142%	92%	128%	93%	81%
CY	100%			110%		115%		92%
CZ	100%	193%		92%	73%	519%	586%	113%
DE	127%	81%	104%	103%	110%	119%	72%	95%
DK								105%
EE			90%	95%		151%	143%	160%
ES	139%	112%	91%	185%		137%	56%	44%
FI	101%	110%		95%	107%	117%	107%	169%
FR	97%	111%	93%	70%	29%	207%	0%	113%
GR	87%		125%	141%		43%	132%	3113%
HR	73%	0%	1821%	83%	223%	278%	77%	169%
HU	144%	78%		305%		68%	211%	228%
IE	96%			57%		86%		
IT	113%	134%	68%	90%	248%	100%	146%	86%
LT	167%		142%	111%	114%	247%	176%	129%

<sup>24</sup> Whiskers show a maximum of 1.5 times interquartile range. Outliers beyond these marks exist and are not displayed. Excluding indicators in technical assistance priority axes.

<sup>25</sup> Note that the indicators are presented based on a classification developed by the contractor. While some of the categories appear similar to the Annex I indicators, the categories used are deliberately broader, in order to also include similar types of programme-specific indicators. See Annex II of this document for an overview of how indicators were classified into these categories.

LU			126%	145%	82%	141%		89%
LV	96%		82%	83%	106%	55%	80%	136%
MT				192%	609%	33%		167%
NL						267%		669%
PL	104%	138%	112%	155%	168%	149%	122%	89%
PT	80%		78%	94%		82%	62%	74%
RO	2405%		28%	80%		39%	18%	61%
SE	3%		106%	59%				141%
SI			194%	110%	114%	73%	133%	128%
SK	54%		87%	242%	144%	114%	99%	121%
UK	90%	53%	83%	50%	87%	91%	0%	74%
Total	108%	105%	92%	110%	118%	103%	98%	242%
Less	88%	109%	86%	123%	140%	89%	95%	114%
More	117%	110%	98%	97%	99%	118%	107%	510%
Trans	129%	88%	104%	90%	92%	117%	113%	76%

Empty fields mean that no target was defined in that MS / region for that type of indicator. 0% means that no progress has been achieved towards a particular target set for that particular group of indicators. Percentages calculated as 'weighed' average target achievement; larger absolute targets have a larger impact on aggregated target achievement.

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Splitting out the target achievement of different types of output indicators allows to review whether progress on indicators of particular interest is on track, regardless of any other specific indicators. The target achievement for unemployed people for instance, as shown above in table 18, is currently reported at 108 %, with some difference between less developed regions (88 %) and more developed and transition regions (117 % and 129 % respectively). The inverse relation is found for achieving targets of indicators that focus on age groups, with 123 % of the targeted young people and 140 % of the targeted old people reached in less developed regions, while this remains below 100 % in more developed and transition regions. The allocated priority by managing authorities to target unemployed in the first years of ESF support appears from the results in table 18; the target achievement of these types of indicators is higher than the average target achievement of output indicators that measure progress in other areas, such as employed (92 % target achieved) and professionals (98 %).

Table 19 below shows the same for a second set of output indicators, the indicator for companies, entities and other types of organisations and projects. It shows highest target achievement rates for indicators measuring the number of companies in less developed regions (120 % compared to 83 % in transition regions). The average target achievement of indicators that measure public purpose entities (e.g. schools, healthcare centres, community organisations) and public entities are all considerably above 100 %.

Table 19. Average progress towards target achievement (weighed) of most often used indicators measuring various outputs (ESF)

	Company	Public purpose entity	Public entity	Projects (not public admin)	Public administration project	Structures	Products
No. Indicator	210	476	134	331	249	123	535
AT	93%			422%			
BE		112%	103%	205%	171%	320%	147%
BG	176%	101%	59%	137%	168%		106%
CY		135%		108%	131%		43%
CZ	439%	598%		282%	45%		486%
DE	101%	174%	100%	64%	142%	74%	118%
DK	852%	466%					
EE		126%	100%	88%	120%		107%
ES	25%	84%		79%	114%	168%	138%

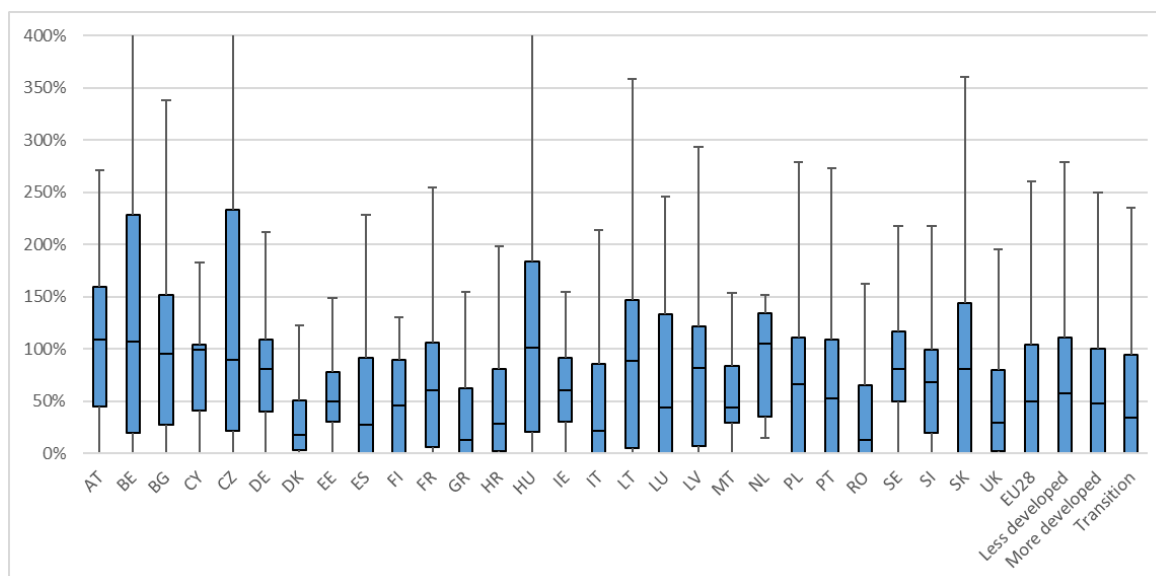
FI	142%	100%		284%			
FR	126%	0%		66%	4952%	25%	105%
GR	35%	112%	64%	62%	72%	83%	96%
HR	38%	205%	0%	90%	199%	0%	108%
HU	61%	233%	184%	36%	66%		163%
IE					88%		
IT	80%	76%	560%	46%	56%	11%	78%
LT	850%	47%	68%	145%	63%		131%
LU							
LV	37%	101%	138%	61%			94%
MT					122%		96%
NL	128%			50%			
PL	118%	123%	50%	88%	3%	98%	82%
PT	105%	54%		107%	102%		110%
RO	479%	4%	106%	181%	97%	0%	92%
SE				121%			
SI	108%	108%	178%	119%			85%
SK	181%	111%	81%	91%	170%	1115%	941%
UK	59%	251%	123%	99%	63%		20%
Total	103%	112%	239%	199%	137%	83%	85%
Less	120%	110%	154%	64%	57%	96%	202%
More	102%	123%	530%	233%	204%	71%	80%
Trans	83%	107%	539%	187%	590%	127%	84%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The same assessment of progress towards targets can be conducted for result indicators. Across all programmes, a total of 16 978 common result indicator records and 4 059 programme specific indicator records are defined. Targets are defined for a total of 855 common results indicators (5 %). In order to get a good overview of progress towards result targets and compare this across the EU, it is therefore important to combine these different types of indicators together.

Figure 10 presents the range of result target achievement for each Member State. It shows a considerable range of target achievement, generally from 0 % towards at least 100 %, and often considerably above that. At EU level, the median target achievement for result indicators is currently 50 %, with minor differences in the range of target achievement between different types of regions; the median target achievement of result indicators in transition regions are slightly lower (34 %) than those in more developed (48 %) and less developed regions (57 %). As expected, target achievement reported for result indicators remains generally below those of output indicators at this stage. Instead, these are roughly comparable to the financial implementation rates reported in section 3.3.1. Progress of result indicators is often reported later than that of outputs, even for the same interventions; target achievement is therefore also likely to get closer to the target achievements of output indicators.

Figure 10. Range and median of result target achievement – by Member State



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)<sup>26</sup>

While the figure above gives an interesting overview of target achievement at Member State level, possible differences between different types of indicators are also investigated. To analyse this, all common and programme-specific result indicators were classified into new categories and presented in the table below<sup>27</sup>. The target achievement rates reported combine both programme-specific and common indicators (the categories are defined in such a way as to allow grouping these different types together). It shows relatively similar target achievement rates for the main categories of indicators. Result indicators measuring progress towards targets such as entering employment after an intervention (67 %), entering education (73 %), or obtaining a qualification (77 %) are at quite similar levels, also roughly in line with the ESF's overall implementation rate of 70 % (see 3.3.1). Results measuring a variety of different types of results (other individual results), such as number of people starting apprenticeships, people receiving a certain kind of support, or persons that improve certain aspects of their lives stand out positively with a weighed target achievement of 93 %.

Table 20. Average progress towards target achievement (weighed) of common and programme-specific indicators measuring individual results (ESF)

	Employment	Employment LT	Improved Qualification LM	Education	Skills	Other individual
No. indicators	652	195	123	809	199	590
AT	27%		54%	72%	0%	177%
BE	79%	147%	480%	134%	704%	39%
BG	45%	270%	3759%	115%	141%	55%
CY	162%			42%	107%	45%
CZ	122%	11%	151%	85%	131%	349%
DE	50%	42%	120%	81%	61%	149%
DK	21%	53%		18%	89%	55%
EE	79%	132%		97%		116%
ES	80%	2%	44%	69%	50%	41%
FI	91%		0%	114%	42%	31%
FR	78%	123%	71%	105%	105%	9%

<sup>26</sup> Whiskers show 1.5 times interquartile range. Outliers beyond these marks exist and are not displayed. Excluding technical assistance.

<sup>27</sup> Note that the indicators are presented based on a classification developed by the contractor. While some of the categories appear similar to the Annex I indicators, the categories used are deliberately broader, in order to also include similar programme-specific result indicators.

GR	57%	0%	0%	53%	65%	292%	87%
HR	62%	34%	0%	68%	0%	6%	78%
HU	207%	183%		112%	183%	125%	124%
IE				77%			44%
IT	55%	93%	16%	27%	34%	48%	82%
LT	155%	164%	8 931%	111%	116%	115%	4 208%
LU		79%		0%			76%
LV	77%	137%	0%	116%		118%	92%
MT	4%			87%		0%	67%
NL	130%	136%					
PL	83%	34%	8%	113%	105%	64%	58%
PT		25%		52%	98%		49%
RO	57%			29%	33%		50%
SE	50%		115%		128%		80%
SI	56%			107%		99%	79%
SK	12%	3%		43%	42%	164%	167%
UK	35%	4%	6%	85%	36%	105%	61%
Total	74%	59%	44%	77%	73%	61%	93%
Less dev.	80%	96%	35%	77%	59%	67%	97%
More dev.	70%	60%	57%	73%	83%	44%	95%
Transition.	72%	4%	24%	82%	48%	52%	64%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Table 21 below shows target achievement rates for grouped indicators that measure various types of positive results in organisations or other types of results. Indicators measuring positive results for institutions score relatively high (on average 178 % of target achieved). The average target achievement of indicators measuring positive results for companies and education providers lies somewhat between other types of indicators (106 % and 64 % respectively). Indicators measuring positive results for authorities score remarkably low target achievement rates (2 %), both in less developed regions (3 %) and in more developed regions (1 %), but this is due to two indicators in Romania with a high target and no progress so far (one in less developed regions, another in a more developed region). If we exclude those two indicators, the weighed EU average would be 79% instead.

Table 21. Average progress towards target achievement (weighed) of most often used indicators measuring results for institutions / other

	Projects	Authorities	Education entities	Companies	Institutions	Welfare	Jobs	Other
No. indicators	250	201	199	143	213	281	137	254
AT	86%			139%				
BE	121%			54%		113%	116%	228%
BG	1%	55%	50%	174%		270%	55%	37%
CY		100%						
CZ	46%		137%		323%	139%	72%	1637%
DE	112%	100%	99%	43%	28%		168%	110%
DK		0%		0%			416%	0%
EE	78%	100%	109%					
ES	1%	0%	3%	47%	116%	3%	73%	70%
FI	50%		2%	0%				
FR	50%	118%		84%	99%	90%	16%	134%
GR	0%	7%	16%	0%	7%	7%	61%	
HR	10%	44%	24%		40%	30%		829%
HU	6%	134%		24%	92%	355%	112%	31%
IE								
IT	62%	61%	12%	44%	212%	66%	65%	264%
LT	26%	59%	34%	0%	140%	0%	95%	73%
LU								
LV	42%		35%	159%	100%	56%		999%



*ESF Synthesis Report of 2021 AIRs*

MT		15%	69%					142%
NL	129%							
PL	38%	59%	50%	131%	71%	62%	96%	108%
PT	79%		179%	71%	54%	57%		39%
RO	0%	0%**	0%	310%	45%		164%	25%
SE	56%							
SI	93%	44%	0%		0%	0%		567%
SK	33%	107%	92%	21%	245%	22%		10%
UK	0%			47%	0%	0%	0%	54%
Total	23%	2%**	64%	106%	178%	56%	98%	165%
Less dev.	2%	3%**	83%	122%	189%	55%	91%	169%
More dev.	69%	1%**	23%	82%	136%	68%	110%	228%
Transition	115%	42%	16%	31%	165%	11%	73%	133%

*\*\*Impacted by two similar indicators in Romania with a high target and no reported progress. If this indicator is excluded the average is 79% at EU level, 80% for less developed regions, and 77% in more developed regions. For Romania the average of this category would be 47% if excluding these two indicators.*

*Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)*

### 3.4 Progress for REACT-EU

REACT-EU offers additional EU funding from the Next Generation EU fund to top-up existing Cohesion Policy operational programmes funded under the ERDF, ESF (including YEI) and FEAD, to be used for programming in 2021 and 2022. This section reviews the overall progress in spending, as well as the reported outputs and results that can be linked to its interventions so far.

#### 3.4.1 Implementation against allocated budgets

Table 22 presents the key figures of spending of the additional resources made available through REACT-EU, distinguishing between the eligible costs for selected operations (based on which the project selection rate is calculated) and the declared expenditure (which serves as the basis for the implementation rate). From the total EUR 16.1 billion that was already programmed for ESF/YEI programmes at the time of writing the present report, a total of EUR 6.9 billion (43 %) has been selected for concrete projects. In Bulgaria, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta and the Netherlands the entire budget has already been allocated to projects. Implementation rates, based on the declared expenditure are still relatively low, at 3 % overall. While the REACT-EU resources need to be programmed for 2021 and 2022, expenditure can be declared until the end of 2023, which gives more time to process and declare the relevant investment after projects have been completed.

Table 22. Progress financial implementation 2021 REACT-EU funds

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection % 2021	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Implementation rate 2021
AT	88.5	34.2	39%	-	0%
BE	164.0	40.3	25%	5.9	4%
BG	229.7	263.9	115%	134.4	59%
CY	65.0	-	0%	-	0%
CZ	-	-	-	-	-
DE	833.8	363.9	44%	24.3	3%
DK	55.6	45.2	81%	0.4	1%
EE	12.8	10.8	84%	-	0%
ES	4 025.8	1 156.9	29%	49.9	1%
FI	89.9	60.8	68%	0.4	0%
FR	943.7	45.1	5%	-	0%
GR	100.0	101.4	101%	13.5	14%
HR	530.0	-	0%	-	0%
HU	314.1	-	0%	-	0%
IE	88.3	88.3	100%	-	0%
IT	6 617.7	3 460.5	52%	-	0%
LT	46.0	46.0	100%	0.6	1%
LU	73.2	69.7	95%	69.7	95%
LV	24.2	-	0%	-	0%
MT	111.2	111.2	100%	71.0	64%
NL	304.2	312.0	103%	6.2	2%
PL	74.6	1.8	2%	-	0%
PT	268.6	132.2	49%	-	0%
RO	234.0	-	0%	-	0%
SE	293.1	113.4	39%	1.4	0%
SI	13.2	-	0%	-	0%
SK	473.2	399.4	84%	125.0	26%
UK	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16 074.4	6 856.9	43%	502.7	3%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.4.2 Outputs – REACT-EU dedicated priority axes

The total participation recorded under the priority axes dedicated to REACT-EU stands at 0.7 million. REACT-EU investments have mainly reached persons in employment (50 % of participations), unemployed (26 %) and inactive persons (24 %). This reflects the priority of the additional budgets, which primarily provide investment to support job maintenance, including through short-time work schemes and support for the self-employed.

Table 23. Total figures for participations (REACT-EU only), cumulative until 2021, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Total REACT-EU	
	Total	%
<b>Employment status</b>		
<b>CO01</b> Unemployed	177 233	26%
<b>CO02</b> of which Long-term unemployed	91 801	13%
<b>CO03</b> Inactive	169 059	24%
<b>CO04</b> of which not in education or training	53 681	8%
<b>CO05</b> Employed, including self-employed	344 244	50%
<b>Total CO1+CO3+CO5</b>	690 536	
<b>Age</b>		
<b>CO06</b> Below 25 years of age	254 921	37%
<b>CO06a</b> Between 25-54 years of age	343 978	50%
<b>CO07</b> Above 54 years of age	91 637	13%
<b>CO08</b> Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	39 781	6%
<b>Education</b>		
<b>CO09</b> With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	316 136	46%
<b>CO10</b> With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	224 511	33%
<b>CO11</b> With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	111 190	16%
<b>CO11a</b> Other / unknown ISCED	38 699	6%
<b>Other background characteristics</b>		
<b>CO15</b> Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	159 997	23%
<b>CO16</b> Participants with disabilities	61 852	9%
<b>CO17</b> Other disadvantaged	40 435	6%
<b>CO18</b> Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	1 802	0%
<b>CO19</b> From rural areas	69 747	10%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The highest level of participation recorded for REACT-EU so far can be found in Bulgaria, Spain and the Netherlands, as presented in the table below. This roughly reflects the progress in project selection, but there are some interesting differences. First of all, the Spanish project selection rate of 29%, in combination with already the highest number of participations suggests that a considerable larger number of participations can be expected in the coming year for Spain. At the same time, despite high project selection rates no (substantial) participation is recorded yet for Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, and Slovakia. These participation figures are expected in the next year's reporting, also because the interventions in these countries could have been ongoing by the end of 2021, and therefore not yet reported all participations.

Table 24. Comparison of REACT-EU participation recorded by Member States

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Project selection % 2021	Implementation rate 2021	Total participation
AT	88.5	39%	0%	52 255
BE	164.0	25%	4%	22 331

BG	229.7	115%	59%	123 749
CY	65.0	0%	0%	-
CZ	-	-	-	-
DE	833.8	44%	3%	21 049
DK	55.6	81%	1%	-
EE	12.8	84%	0%	-
ES	4 025.8	29%	1%	209 802
FI	89.9	68%	0%	-
FR	943.7	5%	0%	49 909
GR	100.0	101%	14%	-
HR	530.0	0%	0%	-
HU	314.1	0%	0%	-
IE	88.3	100%	0%	-
IT	6 617.7	52%	0%	-
LT	46.0	100%	1%	750
LU	73.2	95%	95%	43 031
LV	24.2	0%	0%	-
MT	111.2	100%	64%	-
NL	304.2	103%	2%	164 582
PL	74.6	2%	0%	-
PT	268.6	49%	0%	-
RO	234.0	0%	0%	-
SE	293.1	39%	0%	74
SI	13.2	0%	0%	-
SK	473.2	84%	26%	3 004
UK	-	-	-	-
Total	16 074.4	43%	3%	690 536

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.4.3 Results – REACT-EU dedicated priority axes

In view of the fact that the 2021 annual implementation reports include insights on the implementation of the first year of REACT-EU, the results reported so far are not yet aligned to the recorded level of participation. A total of 115 thousand individual results have been reported so far, but only for a limited number of Member States; Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, and the Netherlands. Other Member States only reported marginal or no results so far. For that reason, no results for longer-term results are presented at this stage.

Table 25. Overview of common indicators for immediate results by Member State until 2021 (REACT-EU only)

MS	Results immediately after intervention							
	Active job-searching	All results				Total	Disadvantaged	
		Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment	Any result		% of all results	
AT	37	124	13	64	238	195	82%	
BE	412	1 489	1 149	2 397	5 447	2 464	45%	
BG	-	4	-	6	10	3	30%	
CY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
DE	96	266	7 576	610	8 548	1 345	16%	
DK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
ES	21 014	7 087	26 828	8 820	63 749	8 091	13%	
FI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
FR	298	3 409	4 338	21 832	29 877	17	0%	
GR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
HR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
HU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

IE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LT	-	-	-	119	119	-	0%
LU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LV	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NL	285	88	54	6 848	7 275	5 817	80%
PL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
RO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SK	-	1	1	-	2	-	0%
UK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	22 142	12 468	39 959	40 696	115 265	17 932	16%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.4.4 Achievement of targets – REACT-EU only

As for indicators for 'regular' ESF implementation, we also classified indicators with targets used for operations in REACT-EU dedicated priority axes. Most indicators fall within the category 'individuals supported', for which an average target achievement can be reported of 12 %.

Table 26. Progress towards target achievement of common and programme-specific indicators measuring individual outputs (REACT-EU only)

MS	Individuals supported	Un-employed	Inactive	Employed	Young	Vulnerable groups	Professionals
No. Indicator	77	23	1	9	9	12	6
AT	120%				78%		
BE	44%						
BG	12%			111%	0%		
CY	0%						
CZ							
DE	15%	27%		0%	155%		
DK	0%						
EE	7%						
ES	16%	9%		25%	44%	86%	0%
FI	1%						
FR	5%	7%	1%	0%	0%		
GR							
HR	0%						
HU	0%						
IE							
IT	0%	0%					0%
LT		7%					
LU	215%						
LV	0%				0%		0%
MT	165%						
NL	91%						
PL							0%
PT	0%			0%	0%		
RO	0%					0%	
SE	0%						
SI	0%						
SK	89%						55%
UK							
Total	12%	6%	1%	46%	0%	20%	3%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Other types of indicators, related to a variety of organisations, such as companies, public purpose entities or authorities are used considerably less frequently. Those targeting public purpose entities are seen the most often, including for the most part education providers. For this type, average target achievement has progressed to 21 % of the average targets.

Table 27. Progress towards target achievement of most often used indicators measuring various outputs (REACT-EU only)

	Company	Public purpose entity	Public entity	Projects	Public administration project	Structures	Products
No. Indicator	2	24	-	9	2	-	5
AT							
BE		0%					
BG							
CY							
CZ							
DE		17%		88%			78%
DK	0%						0%
EE							
ES	105%	52%		0%	0%		
FI							
FR		0%					
GR		0%					
HR							
HU							
IE							
IT		0%		0%	0%		
LT							
LU							
LV		0%					
MT							
NL							
PL				0%			
PT							
RO		0%					
SE							
SI							
SK							0%
UK							
Total	96%	21%		2%	0%		10%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The results measured for REACT-EU investments are spread among individual results gaining employment (32 indicators), gaining employment after some time (34 indicators), and gaining a qualification (41). Target achievement is on average progressing, from 14 %, 32 % and 16 % respectively.

Table 28. Progress towards target achievement of common and programme-specific indicators measuring individual results (REACT-EU only)

	Employment	Employment LT	Improved LM	Qualification	Education	Skills	Other individual
No. indicators	32	34	4	41	5	6	31
AT			179%	0%			
BE	240%	0%		0%		0%	177%
BG	11%	77%		0%	0%	0%	8%

CY							0%
CZ							
DE	24%	8%		12%	2%	21%	30%
DK				0%			
EE	0%	0%					
ES	2%	23%	75%	38%	96%	0%	4%
FI		45%		0%			
FR	3%	0%		9%		0%	0%
GR							0%
HR		0%					
HU		0%					
IE							
IT	0%	0%			0%		0%
LT	3%						
LU		196%					
LV	0%			0%			0%
MT	96%						
NL							
PL						0%	
PT		0%					
RO		0%					
SE	0%				0%		
SI							
SK		87%		0%			0%
UK							
Total	14%	32%	76%	16%	14%	0%	0%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

As table 29 shows, the categories used for reviewing target achievement of ESF does not fit the REACT-EU indicators very well. All empty cells mean that that type is not used in that Member States. Except for positive results achieved by education entities (achievement 52 %, mainly because of Spain), these indicators are not often used.

Table 29. Progress towards target achievement of most often used indicators measuring results for institutions / other (REACT-EU only)

	Projects	Authorities	Education entities	Companies	Institutions	Welfare	Jobs	Other
No. indicators	5	3	14	5	3	4	4	9
AT								
BE			0%					
BG								
CY								
CZ								
DE	0%			11%		6%		0%
DK								
EE								
ES		0%	53%		0%	0%		0%
FI								
FR	0%				0%		61%	
GR								
HR								
HU								
IE					0%			
IT		0%		0%				0%
LT								
LU								
LV			0%					
MT								
NL								

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PL									
PT								0%	
RO									
SE									
SI									
SK			0%				18%		
UK									
Total	0%	0%	52%	11%	0%	18%	61%	0%	

*Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)*



### 3.5 Progress for YEI

#### 3.5.1 Implementation against allocated budgets

The YEI provides financial support to Member States worst hit by youth unemployment, according to set percentages of youth unemployment at regional level<sup>28</sup>. After a top-up in 2017, a total budget of EUR 10.5 billion (EU + national co-financing) is available for YEI objectives, as shown in table 30 below<sup>29</sup>.

Table 30. Progress of YEI financial implementation by end-2021

MS	Total EU amount (€ million)	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	% expenditure declared	
				2021	Δ2020		2021	Δ2020
BE	128.8	193.2	220.2	114%	-3	119.6	62%	12
BG	110.6	120.3	120.1	100%	-0	103.4	86%	7
CY	36.3	39.5	37.7	95%	-0	30.4	77%	12
CZ	27.2	29.6	33.8	114%	0	28.8	97%	1
ES	2 784.5	3 030.2	4 364.6	144%	14	2 089.4	69%	11
FR	964.5	1 141.8	1 587.4	139%	17	1 086.1	95%	12
GR	512.4	587.4	531.0	90%	32	246.4	42%	1
HR	206.3	224.5	221.5	99%	3	187.9	84%	5
HU	99.5	108.3	96.0	89%	3	101.1	93%	8
IE	136.3	204.4	204.4	100%	0	188.5	92%	4
IT	1 880.2	2 362.4	2 150.1	91%	16	1 621.1	69%	4
LT	63.6	69.2	69.7	101%	0	68.8	100%	0
LV	58.0	63.1	66.5	105%	0	65.3	103%	2
PL	539.4	586.9	596.1	102%	-0	551.8	94%	0
PT	450.3	490.0	537.6	110%	-1	498.2	102%	8
RO	303.2	330.0	226.1	69%	56	22.5	7%	5
SE	88.3	132.5	124.0	94%	-0	119.0	90%	5
SI	18.4	20.7	21.0	101%	-0	18.6	90%	0
SK	172.3	187.5	288.4	154%	-11	184.4	98%	10
UK	370.6	532.0	491.5	92%	19	344.0	65%	10
Total	8 950.6	10 453.7	11 987.7	115%	15	7 675.0	73%	7

**Total EU amount** consists of the EU amount of the dedicated YEI budget line and the matching equivalent in ESF contribution

**Total allocated budget** presents the allocated budget by end- 2021– EU amount topped up with the national co-financing to ESF contributions allocated to the YEI.

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

YEI implementation has been considerably ahead of ESF implementation throughout the earlier 2014-2020 programming years. The YEI started with frontloaded investments in 2015 and 2016, and its implementation was prioritised to be used before resources from ESF interventions targeting young people. However, by the end of 2021 the difference between ESF / YEI implementation is no longer visible, with YEI implementation rates (73 %) at comparable levels with the larger ESF (70 %). So far, three Member States have declared expenditure at the level of their entire budget (Lithuania, Latvia, and Portugal), while other Member States still have varying levels of implementation costs to declare. From this perspective particularly Belgium (implementation rate of 62 %), Romania (7 %), Greece (42 %), and the United Kingdom (65 %) call for attention.

<sup>28</sup> Art. 16 ESF Regulation

<sup>29</sup> This total combines the EU amount of the dedicated YEI budget line, with the matching ESF share (EU contribution) and national co-financing to this matching ESF share. See for a more detailed review of developments regarding the YEI budget since 2014 for instance European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre: final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021](#), Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

Whereas Romania had mentioned a variety of structural features that affected implementation of the YEI, it currently reports that the number of NEETs aged 15-24 years old in the country that had been anticipated during programming has turned out to be lower, which will make it difficult to reach the numbers originally foreseen. To help speed up implementation, the managing authority responded by broadening the scope to also include 25-29 year olds from 2020 onwards. The Greek managing authority for the YEI does not mention any particular bottlenecks in implementation. It mentions that the pandemic had affected both programming and implementation of the YEI but does not further specify how or what consequences can be attributed to the pandemic, nor how the issue will be addressed with the YEI specifically. The UK managing authority for England reports that since the start of the programming period, the number of NEETS has been falling. The COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on youth unemployment and inactivity, but by the end of 2021 these levels are again at, or near, pre-pandemic levels. Hence, the difficulties to commit the remaining YEI allocation and related ESF funding persist. After a re-allocation of funding from more developed to transition regions in 2020, as part of the added flexibility under CRII/CRII+, a request for more flexibility in the implementation of YEI operations and to move ESF funds earmarked to the YEI to other priorities was not granted by the European Commission.

### 3.5.2 Outputs – YEI

This section assesses the number of participations reached by the YEI by the end of 2021<sup>30</sup> and the participants' distribution by their personal characteristics. The figure shows that since 2018 the number of reported participations has been increasing steadily, after considerable increases in 2016-2018. As programmes are finalising implementation, the annual number of participations in 2021 has been slowing down, advancing from a cumulative total of 3.6 million in 2020 to 3.7 million in 2021. Since 2018, all Member States show a certain level of participations, including Romania. As can be expected, given their larger programmes and number of potential NEETs to be reached, Spain, France and Italy are reporting more than half of all participations.

Table 31. Total participation in YEI - cumulative progress

MS	Cumulative until 2015	Cumulative until 2016	Cumulative until 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021
BE	27 629	56 576	89 746	135 044	163 112	190 770	200 149
BG	4 735	26 538	38 342	51 427	64 230	75 403	80 946
CY	1 651	2 219	4 021	5 133	5 652	6 232	6 789
CZ	-	199	2 344	4 059	5 482	5 710	5 922
ES	181 991	367 440	629 059	860 862	1 019 431	1 139 800	1 213 935
FR	179 260	308 927	440 170	578 026	655 445	726 809	737 591
GR	40 078	46 514	57 254	64 167	67 677	69 315	69 961
HR	12 791	24 134	34 063	40 224	41 566	41 566	41 637
HU	19 557	35 590	40 079	40 089	40 089	40 089	40 089
IE	2 734	4 607	9 800	10 776	10 802	10 802	10 802
IT	201 106	331 233	436 701	494 651	548 164	574 394	605 442
LT	-	11 420	44 236	61 582	61 826	61 826	61 826
LV	10 655	18 471	25 288	29 168	29 546	29 571	29 571
PL	74 277	151 554	229 884	268 365	278 361	282 287	283 668
PT	60 127	62 176	66 582	74 674	84 850	86 219	86 296
RO	-	-	-	1 268	2 138	6 099	6 293
SE	6 490	16 792	26 843	29 039	31 814	34 508	35 722
SI	38	2 896	2 950	2 950	2 950	2 950	2 950
SK	2 904	14 866	44 510	85 228	111 554	118 805	118 818
UK	2 686	22 446	60 497	79 847	93 683	102 782	108 863
Total	828 709	1 504 598	2 282 369	2 916 579	3 318 372	3 605 937	3 747 270

<sup>30</sup> The monitoring data does not allow differentiating between unique participants and individuals who participated in ESF/YEI multiple times. Throughout this report, the number of participations is reported, which means that an individual that participates in multiple interventions is also counted multiple times.

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The table below presents the personal characteristics related to participation in the YEI over the years. As expected, most participants are in the category below 25 years old (72 %), and with comparatively higher levels of education completed (61 % with at least ISCED 3/4). The share of persons with a particular disadvantage is relatively low, with 16 % of participants with disabilities.

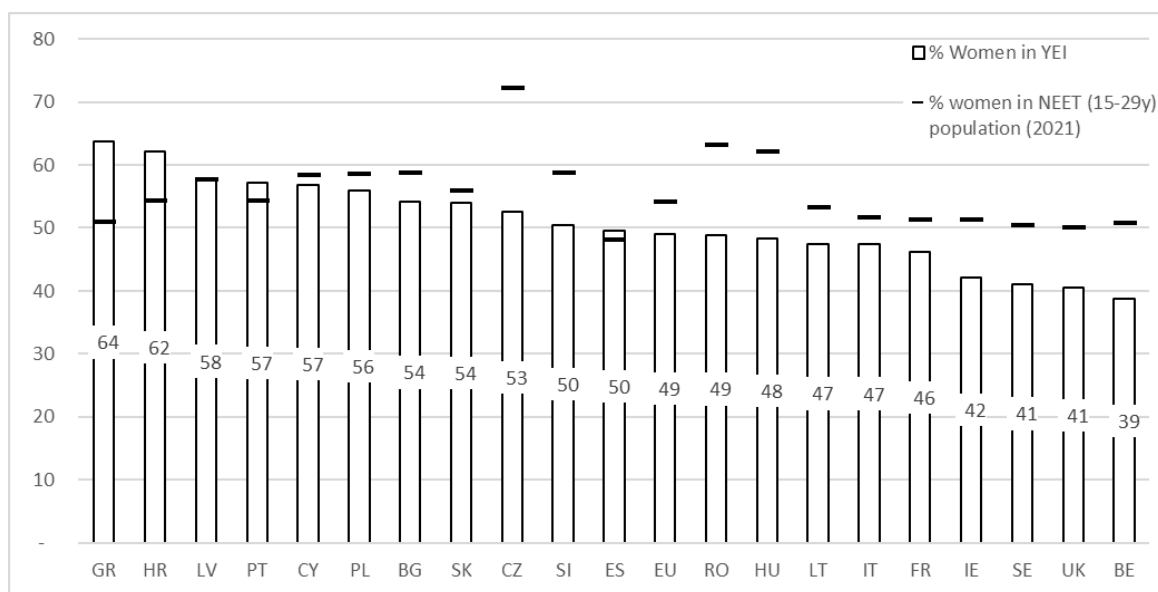
Table 32. Total common outputs for participations (YEI only), cumulative by end-2021, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Total YEI
<b>Employment status</b>	
<b>CO01</b> Unemployed	3 056 590 82%
<b>CO02</b> of which Long-term unemployed	840 567 22%
<b>CO03</b> Inactive	690 680 18%
<b>CO04</b> of which not in education or training	675 550 18%
<b>CO05</b> Employed, including self-employed	- 0%
<b>Total CO1+CO3+CO5</b>	3 747 270
<b>Age</b>	
<b>CO06</b> Below 25 years of age	2 689 710 72%
<b>CO06a</b> Between 25-54 years of age	1 017 547 27%
<b>CO07</b> Above 54 years of age	- 0%
<b>CO08</b> Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	- 0%
<b>Education</b>	
<b>CO09</b> With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	1 287 831 34%
<b>CO10</b> With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	1 544 819 41%
<b>CO11</b> With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	751 812 20%
<b>CO11a</b> Other / unknown ISCED	162 808 4%
<b>Other background characteristics</b>	
<b>CO15</b> Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	461 652 12%
<b>CO16</b> Participants with disabilities	183 818 5%
<b>CO17</b> Other disadvantaged	586 189 16%
<b>CO18</b> Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	33 801 1%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

At EU level, the share of women among all YEI participations is 49 %. In view of the general overrepresentation of women in the population that is neither in employment nor education (NEET) at EU level (53.8 % in 2021, for NEETs between 15-29 years old), this means that young men are slightly overrepresented in YEI participation. Only in some Member States the share of women in YEI participations actually exceeds the overall share of women in the young NEETs population (Croatia, Greece, Latvia, Portugal, Lithuania); in all other Member States, the share of women in YEI participations is lower than what could be expected based on the share of young women in the overall NEET population. YEI interventions in Croatia predominantly reached young women (63 %, against 54 % of young NEETs that are women), as well as in Greece (64 % women, against 51 % in the young NEET population). In Belgium, on the other end of the scale, youth unemployment initiatives reached the smallest share of women (39 %, against 51 % of women in its NEETs population). These substantial gender disparities in YEI participation across the EU appear to be the result of programmes' focus on fighting unemployment, as opposed to mobilising inactive women.

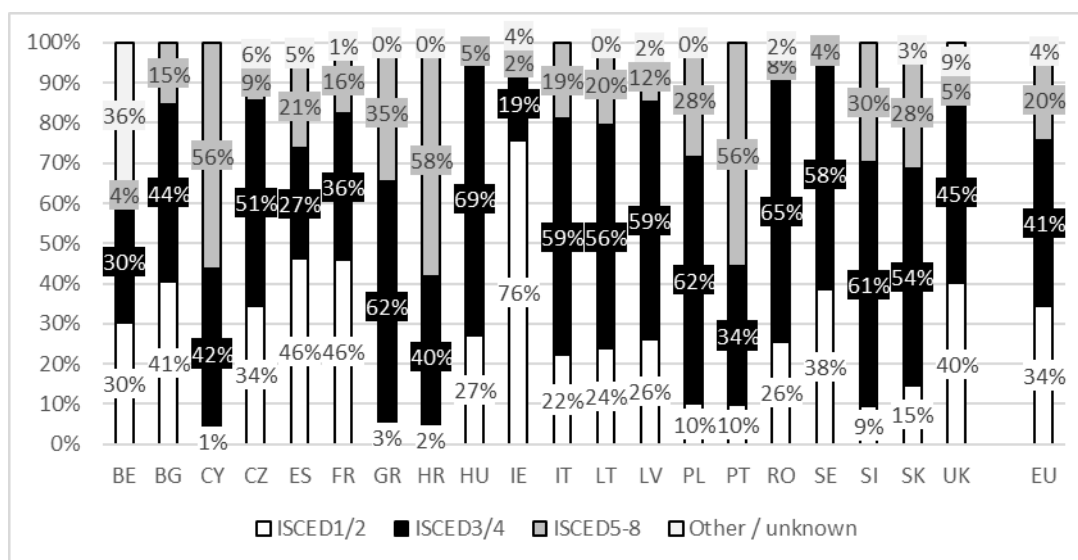
Figure 11. Relative share (%) of (fe)male participation across Member States over 2014-2020 – YEI only



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Figure 12 below shows the substantial differences in types of target groups addressed by YEI programmes in different Member States. The YEI reached predominantly youth at ISCED level 1 and 2 in Ireland (76%), Spain (46%) and France (46%). On the other hand, in Greece (3%), Croatia (2%), and Cyprus (1%) the share of young people at this education level is only marginal. YEI programmes in Cyprus, Croatia and Portugal reached predominantly higher education youth (56%, 58% and 56% respectively).

Figure 12. Relative share (%) of participation in different ISCED levels across Member States over 2014-2020 YEI



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.5.3 Results – YEI

This section explores the results reported for the 35 YEI operational programmes across the twenty Member States receiving YEI funding. Table 33 presents an overview of the

total results achieved by the YEI in each Member State, measured by the ESF common result indicators. It also presents the number of disadvantaged participants that reached a positive result, and the share of disadvantaged participants with positive results compared to the total number of participants with positive results. It is worth noting that in 2021 a number of Member States (still) do not report any YEI results for ESF common result indicators in YEI, despite reporting progress in YEI common result indicators (confer table 33 for Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia, or review the low values for Slovakia). No explanations were provided by managing authorities in their AIRs for this incomplete reporting.

Table 33. Overview of ESF common indicators for immediate results by Member State by end-2021 (YEI-funded interventions only)

MS	Results immediately after intervention						
	All results				Disadvantaged		
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment	Total	Any result	% of all results
BE	1 881	16 311	7 151	7 089	32 432	5 287	16%
BG	2 963	788	15 681	15 906	35 338	6 431	18%
CY	-	161	1 405	1 549	3 115	191	6%
CZ	88	170	2 213	3 445	5 916	1 082	18%
ES	40 742	54 924	262 456	414 612	772 734	159 567	21%
FR	40 390	79 320	43 711	209 504	372 925	128 465	34%
GR	-	1 488	15 676	7 601	24 765	6 390	26%
HR	-	245	3 801	19 815	23 861	531	2%
HU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IE	363	3 914	3 464	1 735	9 476	2 809	30%
IT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LT	3 594	8 908	9 728	21 405	43 635	588	1%
LV	415	464	8 515	5 823	15 217	3 672	24%
PL	2 911	3 586	34 356	204 969	245 822	117 668	48%
PT	73	1 132	-	51 669	52 874	496	1%
RO	176	806	1 093	505	2 580	905	35%
SE	587	7 052	1 855	14 721	24 215	12 704	52%
SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SK	13	9	150	61	233	44	19%
UK	1 469	14 905	6 974	21 769	45 117	23 772	53%
Total	95 665	194 183	418 229	1 002 178	1 710 255	470 602	28%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The longer-term results, as presented in table 34 below, capture the situation of an individual participating in a YEI intervention six months after the intervention ended. The table shows a number of inconsistencies with other reported data; Italy and Slovenia for instance report results six months after the intervention, even though no short-term results are reported. Hungary continues without results reported, despite its reported results measured in common indicators in table 35. In Slovakia, the number of disadvantaged people reported to have entered employment is higher than the total number of participants that entered employment. Continuing revisions of the annual implementation reports offer the possibility to address these inconsistencies.

Table 34. Overview of ESF common indicators for long-term results by Member State by end-2021 (YEI only)

MS	Six months after intervention				
	All results			Disadvantaged	
	Entered employment	Better LM position	Total	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
BE	66 277	-	66 277	9 072	14%
BG	30 940	-	30 940	6 289	20%
CY	1 389	993	2 382	40	3%

CZ	3 433	-	3 433	799	23%
ES	225 819	524	226 343	62 285	28%
FR	226 597	5 500	232 097	88 146	39%
GR	18 162	-	18 162	2 351	13%
HR	30 435	-	30 435	1 728	6%
HU	-	-	-	-	-
IE	786	197	983	180	23%
IT	196 491	-	196 491	-	0%
LT	-	-	-	-	-
LV	12 531	1 725	14 256	3 669	29%
PL	202 130	-	202 130	136 518	68%
PT	54 717	-	54 717	541	1%
RO	1 328	280	1 608	120	9%
SE	12 626	-	12 626	5 911	47%
SI	34	-	34	-	0%
SK	67	-	67	8	12%
UK	15 640	-	15 640	10 160	65%
Total	1 099 402	9 219	1 108 621	327 817	30%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The table below shows the total aggregation per Member State and at EU level for each common YEI result indicator (as defined in Annex II of the ESF regulation). It also reports on the total number of female participants that have been supported, along with the target achievement per type of YEI indicator. The table below shows results for the:

- The **young unemployed**: Almost 2.1 million unemployed persons completed a YEI intervention, which amounts to over half the total YEI participations (3.7 million participations counted for YEI interventions, as reported in section 3.5.2 above). This equals on average 87 % of all the target values set for this indicator. It is worth noting that many participations may continue to be supported at the moment of measurement and an additional 0.4 million inactive completed the intervention (see table 36 below). A total of 0.9 million unemployed persons received an offer after completing the intervention (with an average target achievement of 70 %), while 1.5 million unemployed were in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (95 % of the target achievement).
- The **long-term young unemployed**: Over 0.6 million long-term unemployed completed the YEI intervention (85 % of target achievement), while 0.2 million received an offer (65 % of target achievement), and 0.4 million persons were activated into education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (90 % of target achievement).

Table 35. Total YEI common indicators for results, aggregated by Member State

	Unemployed participants			Long-term unemployed participants		
	who completed the YEI-supported intervention	who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	in education / training, gain a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	who completed the YEI-supported intervention	who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	in education / training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
BE	47 147	6 413	12 758	29 194	1 688	4 109
BG	29 113	1 618	29 070	8 174	246	4 549
CY	4 360	721	3 204	783	449	437
CZ	4 666	460	3 933	316	122	237
ES	614 654	208 211	564 514	115 757	29 148	111 272
FR	388 269	273 997	259 820	102 162	65 167	62 384
GR	60 930	13 600	23 609	47 313	9 664	14 855
HR	35 979	19 916	23 045	-	49	26
HU	30 456	39 196	29 237	7 652	9 602	6 992

IE	2 162	40	2 160	930	1	1 023
IT	350 011	56 246	171 861	178 113	29 625	74 220
LT	42 620	24 571	32 742	4 494	4 756	6 587
LV	16 171	12 050	8 325	3 487	4 618	3 345
PL	224 714	160 433	206 240	87 674	64 660	77 003
PT	75 062	56 788	52 378	6 152	4 814	4 575
RO	2 478	1 672	1 223	952	857	554
SE	6 120	1 359	19 168	1 890	412	4 645
SI	130	118	-	41	134	-
SK	118 169	163	254	58	27	7
UK	44 259	22 743	29 990	15 137	7 923	10 047
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 097 470</b>	<b>900 315</b>	<b>1 473 531</b>	<b>610 279</b>	<b>233 962</b>	<b>386 867</b>
Target achievement (weighed)	87%	70%	95%	85%	65%	90%
No. women	1 072 774	468 158	742 204	317 901	125 040	198 874
% of women	51%	52%	50%	52%	53%	51%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

- **Inactive young people:** A total of 0.4 million inactive persons completed the YEI intervention (92 % of target achievement), while 0.2 million of these received an offer (79 % of the target achievement), and 0.3 million are in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (100 % of target achievement). In comparison to earlier years the targets were substantially reduced to account for difficulties in encountering this specific target group in various Member States. Moreover, targets were often set in economically more averse conditions, when the number of NEETs was higher.
- Finally, a total of 0.4 million participants are reported to be in education or training after six months (target achievement of 39 %), 1.1 million are in employment after six months (96 % target achievement)<sup>31</sup>, and 0.08 are in self-employment after six months (39 % target achievement).

Table 36. Total YEI common indicators for results, aggregated by Member State (2)

	Inactive participants			All participants, six months after leaving		
	who completed the YEI-supported intervention	who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	in education / training, gain a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship	in employment	in self-employment
BE	29 676	7 388	26 133	26 436	66 276	36
BG	17 556	13 592	3 305	1 100	30 940	1 317
CY	-	-	-	48	1 389	13
CZ	365	225	336	711	3 434	261
ES	75 160	23 886	48 232	86 256	225 819	13 466
FR	75 994	52 422	48 003	77 728	224 906	3 766
GR	-	-	-	1 705	17 568	1 003
HR	-	-	-	4 744	30 435	1 097
HU	666	872	630	506	26 101	677
IE	5 102	99	4 477	359	723	474
IT	175 396	32 602	107 223	111 947	196 491	-
LT	6 763	1 692	2 049	5 767	16 678	205
LV	6 474	2 745	3 206	2 214	11 511	86

<sup>31</sup> The comparatively high weighed target achievement for people in employment is particularly influenced by a target achievement of 438% in the National French YEI programme with over 200 000 participations. Without this outlier, the overall EU target achievement for this indicator is 80%.

PL	21 825	19 443	22 502	73 024	202 130	58 298
PT	381	31	45	2 211	54 717	868
RO	-	-	-	14	682	34
SE	1 652	571	3 070	6 319	12 584	42
SI	-	-	-	-	34	-
SK	111	58	12	3	67	3
UK	20 730	12 727	14 279	4 167	1 607	4
<b>Total YEI</b>	<b>437 851</b>	<b>168 353</b>	<b>283 502</b>	<b>405 259</b>	<b>1 124 092</b>	<b>81 650</b>
Target achievement (weighed)	92%	79%	100%	39%	96%	39%
No. women	198 797	78 227	125 191	194 186	536 853	37 774
% of women	45%	46%	44%	48%	48%	46%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 3.5.4 Achievement of targets – YEI only

Out of the 432 common result indicator records measuring progress for the YEI (annex II), Member States set targets for a total of 380 indicators. By the end of 2021, 356 indicators are progressing towards their final targets. The remaining common result indicators with a target are not yet reporting progress (0 % target achievement). This is the case for Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom. It mostly concerns longer-term result indicators (i.e. results 6 months after the participant has left the operation). Such results are only required to be reported based on monitoring data in 2019 and 2023, and may therefore not be complete in AIR2021. In a handful of cases, such indicators without progress concern those that measure more specific target groups, such as long-term unemployed or inactive persons.

However, such specific targets can represent only a small share of the overall programme, and therefore do not automatically suggest that YEI implementation in these Member States remains behind other Member States. Table 37 below provides an overview of the median target achievement of the YEI common result indicators across Member States. By presenting median target achievement, the values reported in table 37 diverge from the target achievement presented in the previous section, which are (weighed) means.

When interpreting the target achievement as presented in table 37, it is important to realise that most Member States programmed the YEI in one Operational Programme (within one priority axis), and hence defined only one target for each type of common indicator. As such, the target achievement presented for all Member States, except for Belgium, France and the United Kingdom, are the target achievement rates of one indicator. For these two Member States and the UK, indicators were defined in multiple Operational Programmes; in this case the median target achievement is presented. The main element that stands out is the relatively high achievement rates, often above 100 % in various Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia). In most cases this due to a single indicator, possibly with a conservative target setting.

Table 37. Progress towards target achievement of common result indicators that have a target value (median % of target achievement)

MS	Median target achievement	Unemployed participants			Long-term unemployed participants			Inactive, after leaving			All participants, six months after leaving		
		Completed	With offer	Pos. result	Completed	With offer	Pos. result	Completed	With offer	Pos. result	Completed	With offer	Pos. result
BE*	176	160	125	264	171	39	45	732	763	2168	227	862	100
BG	138	159	88	185	160	48	119	125	772	25	611	76	425
CY	65	75	27	118	61	114	111	0	0	0	5	69	3



CZ	247	187	31	393	61	39	113	235	250	517	711	410	414
ES	46	71	41	79	72	33	82	84	46	66	14	42	14
FR*	106	101	90	107	102	95	110	97	160	166	121	145	43
GR	37	94	37	77	100	36	66	0	0	0	5	53	8
HR	59	96	165	210				0	0	0	63	210	53
HU	144	131		259	99		194	83		158		326	
IE	24	20	1	34	12	0	21	271	10	906	28	11	237
IT	75	85	35	73	82	37	60	76	37	82	69	136	0
LT	117	104	90	120	113	187	318	261	76	276	58	61	4
LV	106	125	107	74	102	225	163	96	97	97	132	170	108
PL	110	95	83	116	92	83	129	86	127	110	64	135	98
PT	120	146	120	122	157	136	161	149	14	25	9	141	10
RO	5	4	6	3	7	15	7				0	2	8
SE	80	25	24	336	29	29	324	37	54	289	118	107	11
SI	11	5	5		4	16						2	0
SK	1	236	1	1	1	1	0	8	14	2	0	0	0
UK*	84	142	87	183	100	74	132	96	100	117	59	30	0
Total	96	97	82	113	88	74	110	91	62	111	64	107	11

\* More than one Operational Programme per Member State. All other Member States report only one target per type of indicator  
 Empty fields mean that no targets have been defined in that Member State for that particular investment priority  
 0% means that no progress has been achieved towards a particular target set for that investment priority.

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

YEI result indicators measure the number of participants that complete an intervention (first column for each type of participant), the number of participants that received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving (second column) and the number of participants that are in education/training, gained a qualification, actually found a job upon leaving (other positive result – third column for each group). Remarkably, the YEI indicators that measure the third type of result (participants finding a job, continuing education or otherwise positive) also have the highest target achievement rates, except for the last column with long-term results for all participations. Unemployed participants show the highest median for such positive results (113 %), followed by inactive (111 %) and long-term unemployed (110 %). These high results for achieving positive results are remarkable, because in theory these results would be the hardest to achieve from the three common indicators (i.e. compared to ‘completing intervention’ and ‘receiving offer’). As such, this could have been a reflection of the better-than-expected macro-economic conditions in the years before COVID-19, leading to outperforming the previously set targets in a number of Member States. Often, managing authorities were careful and set modest targets for this type of indicators, which can explain why these targets were the first to be (over)achieved.

## 4 Assessment of unit costs

The unit costs of operational programmes, both within and across Member States and policy themes can be a relevant indicator for monitoring implementation of operational programmes. This chapter explores the variation in unit costs across Member States, thematic objectives and regions, which helps to estimate the extent to which expenditure and participations are recorded in a balanced way. The section 4.1 starts by exploring the costs per individual output, and section 4.2 further explores the costs per result. The assessment in this chapter is conducted for ESF and YEI.

This chapter analyses and compares unit costs and does so by referring only to the declared expenditure<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration that unit costs may not always represent the full picture. Some operational programmes may record participants only after operations are fully implemented, while others do so even when operations are partly implemented. Moreover, unit costs as a measure for efficiency are not able to account for system-level interventions, for which other measures of efficiency need to be applied. In these cases, comparisons should be limited to similar types of interventions, for instance those in a single investment priority, as the share of costs spent on other units (e.g. entities), not represented by the given indicator, remains unknown. As a result, it is recommended that unit costs are only used as a measure for efficiency at the final stage of implementation of programmes, when more operations are fully implemented, and findings are less distorted by different proportions of fully and partially implemented operations. While unit costs can still not account for costs spent on entities not even at the final stage of implementation, all programmes will have included individuals. This can then offer a better comparison for assessing the efficiency of programmes.

### 4.1 Comparison of spending and outputs

Comparisons between the number of individual participants against the total eligible expenditure declared for ESF and YEI are presented in the table below<sup>33</sup>.

Table 38. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per participation (ESF + YEI)

MS	Total participation	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Overall unit cost	Employment TO8 ESF (€)	Employment TO8 YEI (€)	Social Inclusion TO9 (€)	Education TO10 (€)
AT	227 639	557.7	2 450	8 770		1 826	2 580
BE	1 547 769	1 419.6	917	1 001	597	1 329	609
BG	1 934 926	1 271.5	657	2 333	1 277	753	180
CY	79 201	205.6	2 596	6 060	4 482	1 868	4 298
CZ	758 871	3 143.0	4 142	2 957	4 859	4 588	7 470
DE	3 072 054	10 310.0	3 356	3 756		4 493	2 472
DK	106 168	272.9	2 570	3 004		7 001	1 534
EE	228 135	474.9	2 082	1 453		2 922	2 332
ES	7 468 133	8 059.4	1 079	1 071	1 721	983	832
FI	360 728	781.3	2 166	2 243		2 766	1 877
FR	5 625 930	8 791.1	1 563	1 647	1 526	1 216	2 850
GR	1 297 434	3 918.3	3 020	2 477	3 522	4 667	2 847
HR	437 757	1 183.6	2 704	1 567	4 514	4 441	2 310
HU	2 356 247	4 453.8	1 890	2 404	2 522	2 032	1 133
IE	345 955	861.6	2 491	8 985	17 449	2 942	1 000
IT	10 583 211	12 059.7	1 140	976	2 678	1 821	768
LT	1 016 885	1 174.9	1 155	3 136	1 113	742	909
LU	23 402	33.1	1 416	1 582		2 871	725

<sup>32</sup> Expenditures declared means that formal expenditure reports have been drawn up by project beneficiaries and submitted to the MA. These expenditures are declared only after completing the project cycle and are therefore the best financial measure as input for unit costs.

<sup>33</sup> The total number of participants is calculated by summing common output indicators 1 (unemployed, including long-term unemployed), 3 (inactive), and 5 (employed). These categories are mutually exclusive and represent a complete description of the range of individuals participating in an intervention.

LV	400 489	515.2	1 286	1 096	2 207	1 008	1 759
MT	53 737	126.6	2 356	4 471		2 358	1 243
NL	591 059	907.6	1 536	5 309		1 292	
PL	7 862 495	9 382.4	1 193	1 326	1 945	1 870	805
PT	2 849 254	6 861.0	2 408	1 478	5 773	2 464	2 688
RO	1 328 031	3 120.1	2 349	1 985	3 574	6 056	728
SE	349 263	1 022.6	2 928	6 360	3 330	9 061	1 098
SI	254 565	633.6	2 489	3 102	6 294	11 949	1 256
SK	1 157 279	2 241.8	1 937	3 987	1 552	1 321	515
UK	2 181 177	5 329.0	2 443	1 911	3 160	2 658	2 872
Total	54 497 794	89 112	1 635	1 696	2 062	1 911	1 280
MS	Total participation	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Overall unit cost (€)	Employment TO8 ESF (€)	Employment TO8 YEI (€)	Social Inclusion TO9 (€)	Education TO10 (€)
Less dev.	23 971 733	38 429	1 603	1 931		1 990	1 133
More dev.	19 200 114	31 711	1 652	1 495		1 923	1 576
Trans.	7 604 563	11 297	1 486	1 576		1 708	1 254
YEI - No region	3 721 384	7 675	2 062		2 062		
<i>Empty fields indicate that no interventions are programmed for that thematic objective in that Member State or category of region. Note that YEI interventions are not assigned to a particular category of region. Thematic objective 11 and REACT-EU not included in this table, because still reporting relatively low number of participations.</i>							

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Overall, the table shows a cost per participation of EUR 1 635, which is considerably above the unit costs that were found in the ex-post evaluation of ESF 2007-2013<sup>34</sup>. This aggregated figure does no justice to relevant differences across Member States and thematic objectives. Though the variation between figures reported appears high, most of these differences are not as substantial as they seem; large differences can be the result of the ongoing nature of entering monitoring data and may vary considerably each year. No particular reasons were mentioned in the annual implementation reports for 2021 that explain these relatively high figures, other than that the number of participations reported is lower than those actually participating, often because interventions are still ongoing, i.e. costs' reporting advances that of participations. Another explanation is that managing authorities received the data from intermediary bodies or project managers and are still reviewing the participation figures. The same holds true for low values (for instance in Belgium or Bulgaria); it is also possible that Member States recorded the number of participations accurately in SFC, but still need to file declarations of expenditures.

To further review progress from a thematic point of view, table 39 below also summarises the aggregated unit costs per investment priority, both for all regions as well as by types of region.

Table 39. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per participation – by investment priority (only ESF) and category of region

	Unit costs			
	More developed	Transition	Less developed	All regions
Access to employment (8i)	1 077	1 324	2 196	1 564
Youth employment (8ii - ESF)	1 687	1 284	2 518	1 972
Entrepreneurship (8iii)	1 590	893	5 463	1 918
Gender equality (8iv)	1 140	1 071	1 941	1 486
Adaptation to change (8v)	2 361	3 651	1 126	1 896
Active ageing (8vi)	8 319	32 783	134	364

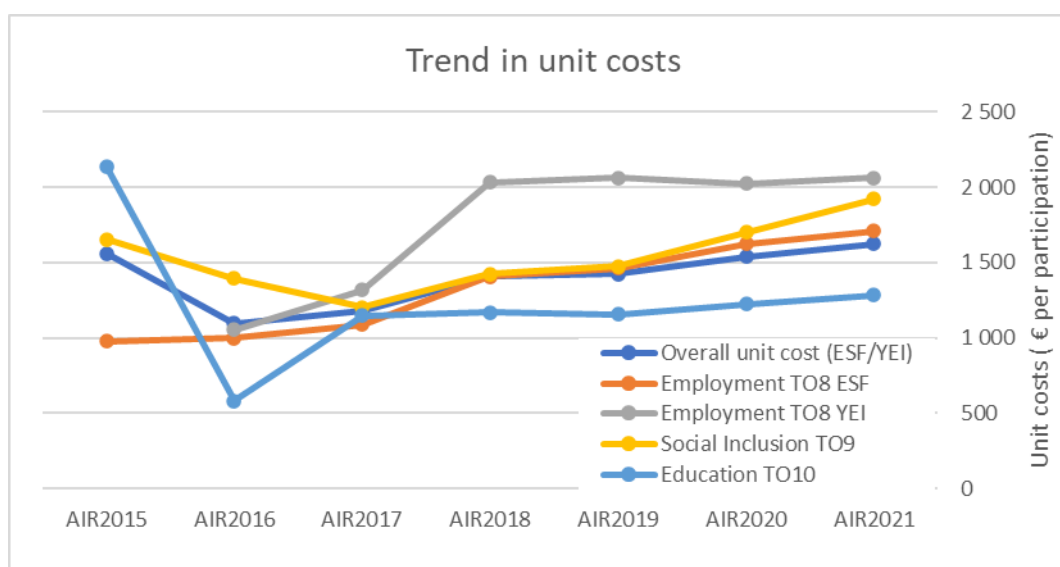
<sup>34</sup> The synthesis report of the ex-post evaluation of ESF 2007-2013 report an overall cost per participants of EUR 897, with EUR 1 113 for Access to Employment, EUR 681 for Human Capital & Adaptability, and EUR 1 763 for Social Inclusion.

Labour market institutions (8vii)	2 659	9 045	22 361	7 435
Thematic Objective 8	1 495	1 576	1 931	1 763
Active inclusion (9i)	1 772	1 579	1 765	1 728
Integrating marginalised communities (9ii)	2 803	1 451	1 539	1 611
Combating discrimination (9iii)	779	851	4 656	1 103
Access to social services (9iv)	3 802	17 898	2 274	2 763
Promoting social economy (9v)	1 461	1 918	4 371	3 548
Local development strategies (9vi)	4 555	12 486	1 087	1 463
Thematic Objective 9	1 923	1 708	1 990	1 911
Early school leaving (10i)	1 074	1 115	739	872
Access to higher education (10ii)	2 774	4 070	2 565	2 678
Access to lifelong learning (10iii)	1 759	892	845	1 146
LM relevance of education (10iv)	2 035	2 154	2 133	2 101
Thematic Objective 10	1 576	1 254	1 133	1 280

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Finally, the development of the unit costs across thematic objectives was analysed across time. As shown in the figure below, unit costs have been relatively stable over time, showing a minor – yet consistent - increase over the years. In AIR2021 particularly, the increase in unit costs related to social inclusion interventions (TO9) stands out, which is most likely related to the changing nature of these interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend is further described in section 5.5, which highlights for instance how specifically ESF investments in TO9 were used for purchasing of medical equipment, ensuring access to testing facilities, as well as counteracting the effects of the pandemic more generally. The different character of these investments can explain at least partly the increased unit costs.

Figure 13. Trend in reported unit costs



Source: authors, based on extracts from AIR2015-AIR2021 (July 13, 2022).

## 4.2 Comparison of spending and results

A similar analysis has been performed to analyse the costs of achieving immediate individual common results (finding a job, obtaining a qualification, entering education

or searching jobs)<sup>35</sup>. Also for this analysis the declared expenditure is compared with the immediate individual results reported. For this analysis, it is again important to note that large variations among Member States may not necessarily reflect differences among actual costs per results, but are more likely to represent differences in the extent to which costs and results are recorded at this point in time during implementation and the share of expenditure on systems and structures. Some Member States may already report costs before reporting results, while others may already report results while costs are still being scrutinized by audit and/or certifying authorities. The results of this analysis are presented in table 40 below, where the costs declared for investment priorities are compared with the immediate results reported.

Table 40. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per immediate individual result achieved (ESF+YEI)

MS	Total participation	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Overall cost per result (€)	Employment TO8 ESF (€)	Employment TO8 YEI (€)	Social Inclusion TO9 (€)	Education TO10 (€)
AT	77 150	557.7	7 229	20 566		5 497	7 606
BE	503 886	1 419.6	2 817	2 634	3 687	3 803	1 924
BG	733 794	1 271.5	1 733	18 629	2 925	3 835	363
CY	8 714	205.6	23 597	10 160	9 768	223 558	6 097
CZ	343 145	3 143.0	9 160	4 594	4 864	31 630	100 631
DE	1 952 427	10 310.0	5 281	5 290		9 064	3 723
DK	12 765	272.9	21 377	16 049		36 158	27 940
EE	88 624	474.9	5 358	8 086		23 782	2 760
ES	4 362 520	8 059.4	1 847	2 805	2 704	2 419	970
FI	34 350	781.3	22 747	15 497		28 629	40 285
FR	2 576 646	8 791.1	3 412	3 657	2 912	2 921	4 954
GR	430 362	3 918.3	9 105	8 933	9 949	45 879	6 235
HR	72 639	1 183.6	16 294	9 246	7 876	33 172	45 959
HU	940 449	4 453.8	4 736	4 805		10 025	2 602
IE	238 767	861.6	3 609	10 411	19 890	5 550	1 411
IT	1 677 392	12 059.7	7 190	3 335		26 247	7 095
LT	268 485	1 174.9	4 376	3 694	1 577	9 415	6 151
LU	1 915	33.1	17 307	11 669		32 633	87 472
LV	88 175	515.2	5 843	2 422	4 288	15 145	8 818
MT	18 932	126.6	6 688	6 666		5 134	8 026
NL	158 262	907.6	5 735	25 348		4 759	
PL	2 166 851	9 382.4	4 330	3 910	2 245	7 424	4 248
PT	694 201	6 861.0	9 883	8 050	9 421	31 085	8 534
RO	259 856	3 120.1	12 007	6 824	8 716	42 667	7 426
SE	88 517	1 022.6	11 553	15 037	4 912	22 611	9 393
SI	74 668	633.6	8 486	6 218		44 710	5 564
SK	28 403	2 241.8	78 927	217 218	791 259	111 856	11 585
UK	1 174 690	5 329.0	4 537	3 212	7 624	8 056	4 379
Total	19 076 585	89 112	4 671	4 532	4 488	6 899	3 589
MS	Total participation	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Overall cost per result (€)	Employment TO8 ESF (€)	Employment TO8 YEI (€)	Social Inclusion TO9 (€)	Education TO10 (€)
Less dev.	6 164 489	38 429	6 234	5 759		14 024	4 488
More dev.	7 318 874	31 711	4 333	3 825		5 682	3 816
Trans.	3 882 929	11 297	2 909	3 535		4 213	1 971
YEI - No region	1 710 293	7 675	4 488		4 488		

<sup>35</sup> The total number of individual results was calculated by summing common result indicators 1-4, which all present mutually-exclusive types of results in terms of improved labour market position of individual participants that may be reached. CR05 was not included as it is not an exclusive category from common result indicators 1-4; it would introduce double counts and therefore taint the analysis. Nevertheless, the figures presented should be read with some caution, since participants could achieve more results at the same time.

Empty fields indicate that no interventions are programmed for that thematic objective in that Member State or category of region. Note that YEI interventions are not assigned to a particular category of region.  
Thematic objective 11 and REACT-EU not included in this table, because relatively low number of participations.

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

At the EU level, the costs for a single short-term result in the analysis amount to EUR 4 671. Behind this value there are substantially larger variations among Member States and among Thematic Objectives. These variations are influenced by the fragmented way of reporting individual short-term results in SFC, which should improve as Managing Authorities wrap up their reporting in 2023. However, an analysis of the costs per single result (similar to an analysis of the unit costs per participation), can be insightful to compare the extent to which results and eligible expenditure are registered into SFC in relatively equal shares across Member States. When used for this purpose, unit costs do not necessarily tell us much about efficiency, but rather about the balance in reporting between results and financial progress. Table 40 above shows how many Member States still report relatively small numbers of results in relation to their budgets, particularly in Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Croatia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania, Sweden and Slovakia. This is further reflected in substantial differences by region; for one reported result in less developed regions EUR 6 234 of declared expenditure is reported, against EUR 4 333 in more developed regions, and EUR 2 909 in transition regions. To further review the costs per result from a thematic point of view, table 41 below also summarises the aggregated unit costs per investment priority, both for all regions as well as by type of region. It highlights some outliers in investment priorities related to active ageing (8vi) and access to social services (9iv). This is in line with expectations, as both priorities have anticipated results that are more often focused on entities and not the type of results that are captured in the immediate individual results (i.e. individuals in job search, in education, with qualification or in employment). The same applies to other investment priorities that show comparatively high costs, but are not high enough to be outliers, such as gender equality (8iv), labour market institutions (8vii), integrating marginalised communities (9ii), and local development strategies (9vi).

Table 41. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per immediate individual result achieved – by investment priority (ESF only)

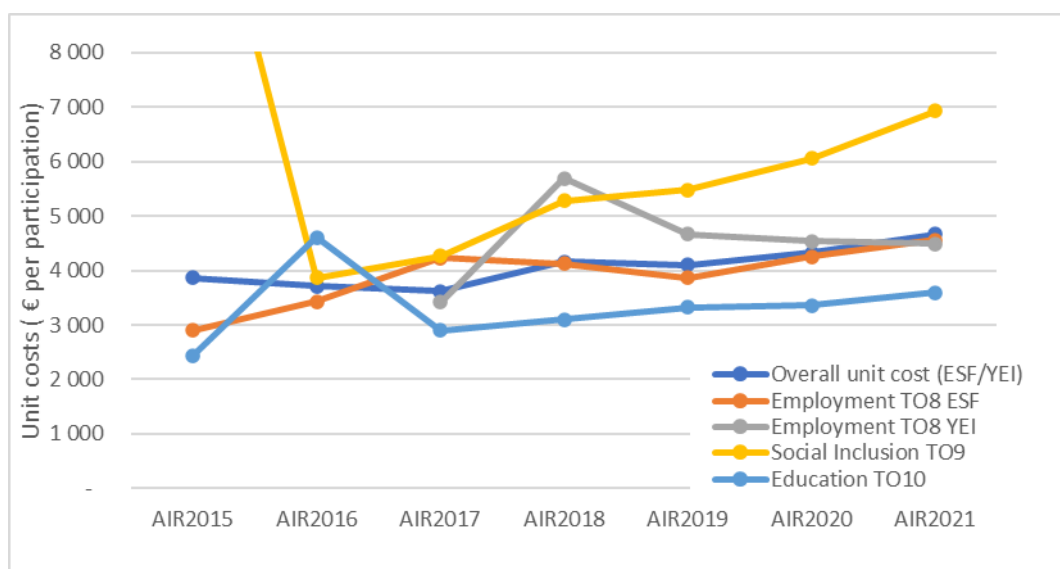
	Costs per result achieved			
	More developed	Transition	Less developed	All regions
Access to employment (8i)	2 755	3 053	4 616	3 630
Youth employment (8ii - ESF)	3 945	2 248	5 236	4 249
Entrepreneurship (8iii)	4 595	1 762	14 930	4 509
Gender equality (8iv)	7 313	7 049	16 643	10 771
Adaptation to change (8v)	5 222	10 109	6 316	6 223
Active ageing (8vi)	664 628	458 957	6 098	16 758
Labour market institutions (8vii)	12 221	23 304	227 378	38 349
Thematic Objective 8	3 825	3 535	5 759	4 532
Active inclusion (9i)	4 718	3 813	8 291	4 987
Integrating marginalised communities (9ii)	11 705	2 174	8 001	7 581
Combating discrimination (9iii)	3 928	5 856	27 028	6 017
Access to social services (9iv)	82 621	148 238	57 676	66 329
Promoting social economy (9v)	6 152	7 640	37 553	23 445
Local development strategies (9vi)	12 799	20 506	13 756	14 305
Thematic Objective 9	5 682	4 213	14 024	6 899
Early school leaving (10i)	3 507	2 638	5 741	4 140
Access to higher education (10ii)	6 142	12 400	16 216	12 321
Access to lifelong learning (10iii)	3 587	1 185	2 180	2 300
LM relevance of education (10iv)	4 175	2 556	4 322	3 869

Thematic Objective 10	3 816	1 971	4 488	3 589
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Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Similarly to unit costs, the development of cost per result was also compared over time. It shows a similar upward trend of costs per result, except for the YEI, since AIR2019. Possibly, this different trend for YEI can be explained by a possible scaling down of the intensity of interventions. Section 3.5 already highlighted that some programmes experienced difficulties in reaching the anticipated number of beneficiaries due to improving labour market conditions. Possibly, the content of intervention have also been adjusted to account for this. Section 4.1 already shows how the costs per output in social inclusion interventions (TO9) increased consistently over time, and this trend seems even stronger when looking at the costs per result, from just under EUR 4 000 per result in 2016, to almost EUR 7 000 in 2021. The increasing trend also shows that this cannot only be related to specific interventions during COVID-19 but shows a broader trend in more developed and transition regions (in less developed regions the trend has been going in the opposite direction – not presented here). Possibly, the results also increasingly consist of soft results, which are not fully covered by the common indicators because of their relativity or subjectivity<sup>36</sup>. Another explanation may be that the more structural measures in TO9 are also being finalised and reported upon towards the end of the programming period, which does not always lead to individual results.

Figure 14. Trend in cost per individual immediate result



Source: authors, based on extracts from AIR2015-AIR2021 (July 13, 2022).

<sup>36</sup> By soft results we mean the achievement of results that cannot readily be expressed in a quantitative indicator, for instance because these are not visible in the short term. Consider for instance improvements in self-confidence, intrapersonal skills, etc. A dedicated study of these types of indicators was published in 2022. See Applica/Alphametrics, Ockham IPS, FGB (2022), *Study on the pathways to enhance the use of programme-specific indicators in the ESF and ESF+*. Publications Office of the European Union.

## 5 ESF support to EU policy

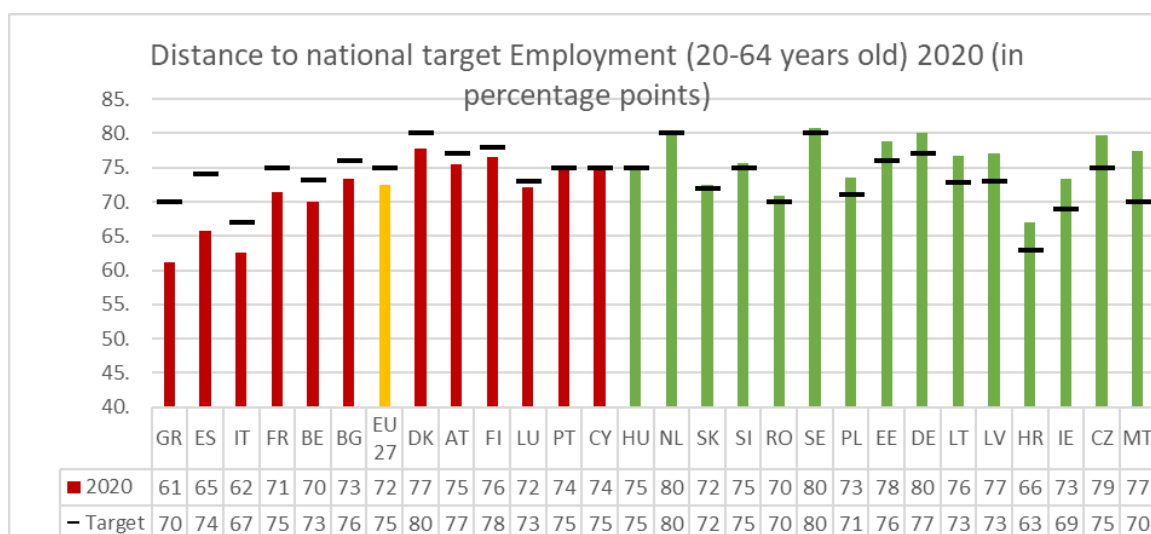
### 5.1 Thematic Objective 8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility

#### 5.1.1 Objectives

The ESF was designed to offer additional financial means to help implement interventions that contribute to the EU2020 headline target of bringing the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to 75 % by 2020, including the greater participation of youth, older workers and low-skilled workers, and the better integration of migrants. By promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility under thematic objective 8 (TO8), the ESF seeks to contribute to the EU 2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This section assesses the ESF contribution to this objective. As part of the EU2020 strategy, national targets have been set for individual Member States, who have the possibility of using the ESF to complement their national efforts towards meeting these targets.

When assessing performance on progress towards national targets for the employment rate (see figure 15), most Member States had closed in on their targets before 2020. With the sudden economic shocks related to the COVID-19 measures, some of this progress was reversed in 2020. In 2020, Greece, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, Bulgaria were still relatively far from reaching their national targets. The current EU average distance to target moved from 1 to 3 percentage points in 2020, around which Denmark, Austria, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal and Cyprus are close but below their national targets.

Figure 15. Headline national targets for Employment (20-64 years old) - 2020 - ranked by distance from national targets (%)



Source: Eurostat (LFSI\_EMP)

#### 5.1.2 Implementation of employment investments

The ESF can be used to complement national efforts in combatting unemployment, to attempt meeting national employment targets. The specific investment priorities defined under this thematic objective offer various groupings of interventions<sup>37</sup>. The total ESF investments allocated under thematic objective 8 amount to EUR 40.2 billion (EU +

<sup>37</sup> These have been discussed at length in the annual synthesis reports of earlier years and are not reported here. See for a review of the more specific objectives under thematic objective 8, as well as a review of types of measures for instance: European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre: final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021](#), Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.



national co-financing), of which 70% had already been declared as expenditure by the end of 2021<sup>38</sup>. Please note that REACT-EU investments under TO8 are not included in this overview (see section 5.5). The table below summarises key implementation figures of TO8 investments for each Member State. By the end of 2021, TO8 implementation in Austria, Italy, Spain, are slightly behind the EU average. Despite these lower-than-average implementation rates, managing authorities do not report any particular implementation challenges. At the same time, Cyprus has already declared more expenditure than allocated budget to this priority (103.5%).

Table 42. Overview of ESF Implementation under TO8 – by Member State, excl. YEI and REACT-EU

MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
AT	116.2	53.6%	7 098	105.0%	3 027	68.3%	43%
BE	762.5	66.4%	505 821	223.4%	192 118	125.0%	38%
BG	493.0	96.9%	204 662	84.4%	25 633	39.0%	13%
CY	27.2	103.5%	4 656	99.8%	2 777	98.9%	60%
CZ	1 834.8	73.4%	455 233	114.0%	292 989	134.9%	64%
DE	4 020.7	84.8%	907 226	108.1%	644 194	83.4%	71%
DK	187.8	69.8%	43 635	105.7%	8 168	34.8%	19%
EE	241.1	66.9%	110 995	77.6%	19 941	95.6%	18%
ES	3 888.5	59.7%	2 168 334	64.9%	828 130	31.3%	38%
FI	468.4	72.1%	150 559	81.8%	21 795	24.0%	14%
FR	2 836.0	73.4%	1 245 873	67.3%	561 066	51.7%	45%
GR	1 773.3	66.3%	474 671	67.2%	131 606	0.4%	28%
HR	430.0	65.9%	180 928	46.2%	30 662	70.2%	17%
HU	2 074.7	78.3%	675 821	102.7%	338 126	137.8%	50%
IE	274.0	84.3%	25 725	101.1%	22 202	40.9%	86%
IT	5 763.1	59.9%	3 538 254	97.1%	1 035 054	21.9%	29%
LT	438.7	92.9%	129 993	130.9%	110 345	153.0%	85%
LU	20.2	92.1%	11 736	135.1%	1 591	95.0%	14%
LV	124.1	83.6%	94 621	94.0%	42 825	119.2%	45%
MT	64.5	90.6%	13 071	181.9%	8 766	41.9%	67%
NL	253.5	75.0%	35 802	128.2%	7 499	109.0%	21%
PL	5 368.5	70.4%	2 850 224	101.2%	966 895	67.4%	34%
PT	1 968.1	66.1%	880 072	85.8%	161 544	85.1%	18%
RO	1 493.1	68.3%	513 970	17.7%	149 524	21.5%	29%
SE	616.4	67.1%	65 044	108.3%	27 508	80.7%	42%
SI	340.7	66.7%	73 270	107.5%	36 555	62.5%	50%
SK	1 606.1	81.4%	328 082	62.8%	6 022	6.1%	2%
UK	2 746.9	61.9%	889 980	70.1%	529 370	38.6%	59%
Total	40 232.1	70.0%	16 585 356	98.4%	6 205 932	56.0%	37%
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
Less dev.	20 278.2	68.9%	7 217 561	100.0%	2 417 562	67.9%	33%
More dev.	14 425.9	73.0%	7 048 190	97.3%	2 754 223	54.7%	39%
Transition	5 528.0	66.1%	2 319 605	80.8%	1 034 147	28.6%	45%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The median achievement of output indicators is considerably higher than what could be expected on the basis of implementation rates alone. However, the median target achievements in Croatia and Romania are considerably below the EU median

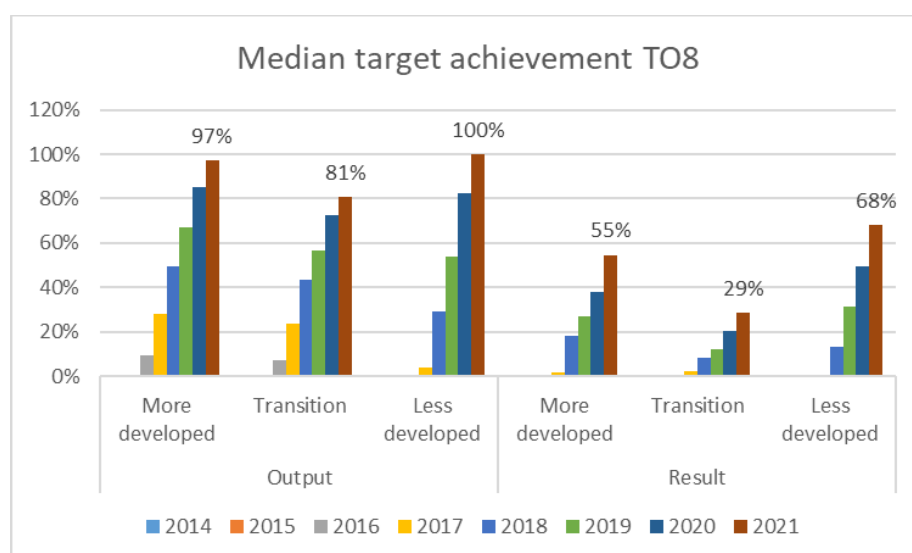
<sup>38</sup> **Expenditures declared** means that formal expenditure reports have been drawn up by project beneficiaries and submitted to the MA. These expenditures are declared only *after* completing the project cycle. Declared expenditures as share of the total allocated budget is presented as the implementation rate.

achievement for TO8, where particularly Romania stands out with more than half of its output indicators at or below 17 %. Most often, these Member States point at a cascade effect of delays in the first years, which contributed to lower target achievement of output indicators. Croatia specifically indicates that the speed with which calls were launched improved in comparison to earlier years, though the COVID-19 pandemic also caused different bottlenecks in the planning and publication of new calls later in the year. Croatia also specifies that it continues to require additional strengthening of its management capacities, as the process of preparing calls for proposals is an extensive process with numerous steps and a high number of stakeholder consultations, which adds to their complexity. Romania highlights progress in implementation in most priority axes that focus on this thematic objective but does not mention any specific challenge in implementation. The annual implementation report mentions the flexibility measures in response to the adverse conditions created by the pandemic, for instance broadening the target group of active aging measures to cover employees affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Only for the measures focusing on youth unemployment, does Romania point to difficulties experienced by beneficiaries in meeting requirements included in the published calls regarding the target groups to be reached. The main challenge reported by beneficiaries is that the costs of reaching young NEETs are not eligible for ESF funding and thus need to be financed by beneficiaries themselves. As a result, less than anticipated projects were submitted.

The target achievement of result indicators is also advancing steadily, except in Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Slovakia. Slovakia reports that so far its reporting on common indicators is not complete due to technical issues; it is in contact with the relevant stakeholders to remove discrepancies and shortcomings.

Since 2015, the median target achievement rate has been steadily increasing. The median target achievement of output indicators now reaches 97 % in more developed and already 100 % in less developed regions. Transition regions are slightly behind with a median of 81 %. Particularly for less developed regions, a considerable improvement can be observed since 2018. For result indicators, achievement rates are lower, though rapidly improving particularly in less developed regions, where the median stands at 68 % at the end of 2021. In more developed and transition regions a considerable improvement can also be observed in 2021.

Figure 16. Evolution of median target achievement for TO8 – by category of region



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Overall progress under Thematic Objective 8 can be further analysed at the level of individual investment priorities. Table 43 below shows that interventions that support access to employment (8i) combine by far the largest financial allocations under this

thematic objective, and already report implementation rates above the average of the thematic objective (72.4 %). A total of more than 7.7 million participations were reported in interventions under this priority. The median target achievements for outputs (102.4 %) and results (80.8 %) are above the overall median target achievement rate reported for the entire thematic objective (98.4 % and 56 % respectively). This is a particularly relevant finding, because this priority IP is responsible for 40 % of the entire budget under this thematic objective.

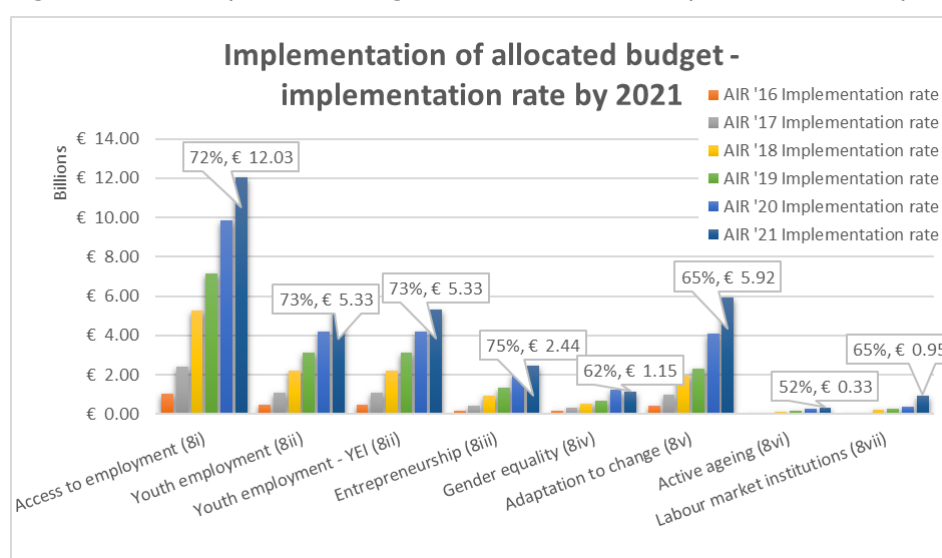
Table 43. Overview of TO8

Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Access to employment (8i)	16 624.6	72.4%	7 690 637	102.4%	3 313 563	80.8%
Youth employment (8ii)	7 320.3	72.9%	2 696 451	86.8%	1 250 134	55.4%
Entrepreneurship (8iii)	3 245.0	75.1%	1 271 045	83.4%	540 778	42.7%
Gender equality (8iv)	1 851.2	62.4%	776 877	100.0%	107 194	49.8%
Adaptation to change (8v)	9 110.4	65.0%	3 115 132	98.9%	949 792	42.4%
Active ageing (8vi)	628.9	52.5%	907 399	106.7%	19 691	40.9%
Labour market institutions (8vii)	1 451.7	65.5%	127 815	42.5%	24 780	4.5%
<b>Total – TO8</b>	<b>40 232.1</b>	<b>70.0%</b>	<b>16 585 356</b>	<b>98.4%</b>	<b>6 205 932</b>	<b>56.0%</b>

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Figure 17 and 18 below illustrate how implementation has developed over time and show how the implementation rate has steadily increased over the years. The implementation of smaller investment priorities, such as 8iv (Gender equality – 62 %), 8vi (Active ageing – 52 %), and 8vii (Modernisation of labour market institutions – 65 %) started later, but is currently actively catching up and has increased substantially in the last year.

Figure 17. Absorption of budget under investment priorities on employment (TO8)

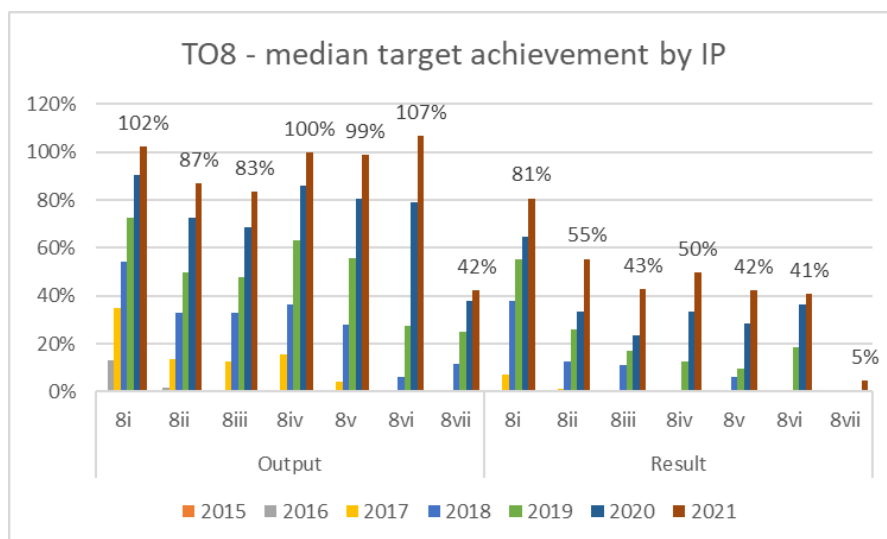


Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> YEI presented as separate funding for IP8ii. IP 8ii-YEI includes (1) the dedicated EU budget line, (2) mirrored by the ESF share dedicated to YEI, and (3) national co-financing to this ESF share. Investments reported under IP8ii (non-YEI) are not related to YEI, and only consist of ESF funding

When reviewing target achievement (Figure 18) for output and result indicators by IP, interventions that focus on modernising labour market institutions (IP8vii) progressed the least by the end of 2021. These interventions often do not focus on reaching individuals, but instead defined targets that are more likely to be only reported toward the end of the programming period (such as number of systems implemented, number of structures revised, etc.). However, this element alone does not explain the fact that implementation rates reported for this investment priority also reports are below the average. This therefore suggests that its implementation is lagging behind compared to other investment priorities.

Figure 18. Evolution of median target achievement under TO8 – by investment priority



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

So far, investments in this thematic objective supported almost 16.6 million participations, which led to more than 6.2 million positive results. These positive results consist of people that find a job, gain a qualification or are able to improve their labour market position thanks to ESF interventions. Such results are represented in table 44 below, which presents the key individual results measured by common indicators, as well as a selection of programme-specific indicators. Programme-specific indicators that measure individual results following ESF interventions in TO8 tend to closely follow the common indicators, particularly in investment priorities 8i, 8ii, and 8iii, where the expected results are generally measured in common categories, such as employment / jobs created, qualifications gained, or labour market positions improved.

Investment priorities with smaller financial allocations report lower participation and result figures for individuals. For these priorities, it is therefore insightful to take a closer look at progress and results as measured by programme-specific indicators. Under IP8iv (gender equality), for instance, results are measured in terms of successful projects, or the number of equality measures implemented. No less than 26 627 projects seeking to improve gender equality across nine different Member States can be counted. Interventions in investment priority 8v and 8vi (adaptation of workers and active ageing) across various Member States often measure output and results not only in terms of participations, but also for instance in terms of the number of (small- / medium-sized) companies supported. Positive results were reported for a total of 130 675 enterprises. These can vary from concluding training sessions, developing a strategic action plan or put in place specific gender equality measures. Such results can be found across 15 Member States.

Table 44. Overview of key result indicators under T08 (common / programme specific)

Categorising key results employment investments as measured by Common indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
<b>Individual results</b>	6 213 934	152	28
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	234 222	152	28
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	460 248	152	28
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	2 062 159	152	28
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	3 457 305	152	28
A selection of key results in employment investments as measured by Programme-specific indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
Achievements: Projects on gender equality completed	26 627	16	9
		DE, CZ, ES, FI, FR, LT, PL, SK, UK	
Entities – number of enterprises with positive results <sup>40</sup>	130 675	53	15
		AT, BG, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HU, IT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SK	
Of which defined explicitly as SME	85 121	27	6
		AT, DE, GR, LV, PL, SK	
Individual results: other positive result after intervention: Number of people supported through preventive health examinations	605 771	16	1
			PL
Entities – number of Labour Market Institutions with positive results	3 160	18	7
		BG, DK, ES, GR, HR, IT, PL	

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

One specific result that is highlighted in the table is for Polish operational programmes, where active aging projects encouraged older workers to participate in preventive health examinations. A total of 605 771 individuals were reached across the various Polish regional programmes. Note that these projects were set up before COVID-19, and consist of health programmes covering prevention, diagnostics and health promotion provided to individuals in order to maintain good health and extend the age of professional activity, with a particular focus on citizens over 50 years old. They include prevention of a wide variety of possible diseases, including various types of cancer, respiratory diseases as well as mental disorders. A number of regions have started to use these investments to also include COVID-19 tests, but most of such investments are found under Thematic Objective 9 (access to healthcare services).

Investments that focus on modernising labour market institutions (IP8vii) are also not adequately measured by common indicators. A total of 3 160 labour market institutions were reported to have some type of positive result (upgraded systems, key staff members trained, new tools deployed, knowledge exchanged), from across seven Member States. In Spain for instance, the ESF supported improvements to the online portal of the public employment service, to optimise the support provided to local agents. This newly-developed portal serves as a central space for relations between its actors, while enhancing the capacities of professionals, providing them with adequate methodologies, technical assistance and support tools to boost local socio-economic support projects.

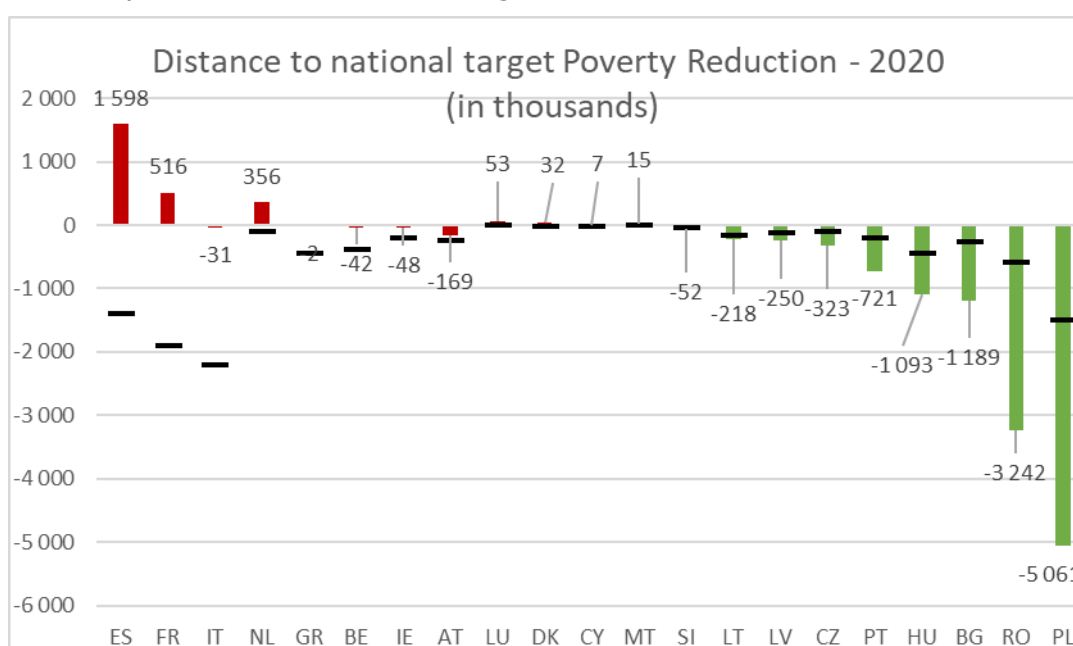
<sup>40</sup> Excluding number of enterprises in France reported for IP8vii (2014FR05SFOP001), due to unrealistically high fluctuations (4.6 million enterprises reported in 2015, 200 in 2017).

## 5.2 Thematic Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty, and any discrimination

### 5.2.1 Objectives

In order to reduce poverty in the EU, the EU 2020 headline target aimed to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million compared to the year 2008. The flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including the Social Investment Package and the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, support efforts to achieve these targets. In addition, the European Commission underlined the importance of addressing child poverty in order to break the cycle of disadvantage at an early stage. For all these policy initiatives, the ESF is an important pillar for implementation. At least 20 % of ESF resources shall be allocated to the promotion of social inclusion. This section assesses the ESF contribution to this objective.

Figure 19. Distance to national poverty reduction targets (2020, in thousands) – ranked by distance from national targets



Source: Eurostat (ilc\_peps01)

Progress towards the national headline targets has been varied, particularly as the economic and financial crisis posed challenges towards meeting these targets, as shown in figure 19. Slightly under half of EU Member States met their target, while the other half still has some distance to cover. In Slovenia, Lithuania, Latvia, Czechia, Portugal, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland targets were met, showing that particularly in Romania and Poland the national target has been significantly overachieved. So far, Spain, France and Italy show the largest distance to target, with together over 6.4 million individuals still to be lifted out of poverty. In Spain the number of individuals at risk of poverty has not decreased, but in fact increased by almost 1.6 million compared to 2008. The Netherlands, Greece, Belgium, Ireland, Austria, Luxembourg, Denmark, Cyprus, and Malta have not yet reached their targets either, but are considerably closer (in absolute terms). At EU level, the aggregated target of lifting 20 million persons out of poverty remains distant. In 2017 the number of persons in poverty for the first time reached below the number measured in 2008 (7.53 million less than in 2008). In 2020 the number of people lifted out of poverty had further improved (8.85 million less than in 2008), though it remains far from the target defined for 2020<sup>41</sup>. It also represents a considerable setback from its 2019 value (when for the EU27 a total of 11.95 million

<sup>41</sup> Note that the total target set for the EU is not equal to the sum of national targets.

persons less than in 2008 were at risk of poverty or social inclusion), which is the direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Against this background, the need for additional efforts to ensure the effectiveness of social protection systems is clear. This is key to countering the effects of the crisis, promoting social inclusion and preventing poverty by activating inclusion strategies (including efficient and adequate income support, measures to tackle poverty, as well as broad access to social services). EU Member States spend varying shares of GDP on social protection, and also achieve different results in terms of reducing poverty.

### 5.2.2 Implementation of social inclusion investments

The ESF 2014-2020 represents an important contribution that helps complement national efforts in achieving the Europe 2020 poverty headline target. The specific investment priorities defined under this thematic objective consist of a substantial variety of implementation areas, for which the progress in implementation is discussed here<sup>42</sup>. Thematic Objective 9 has been allocated a total of EUR 34.3 billion (EU + national co-financing), of which 72.3 % had been declared as expenditures by the end of 2021<sup>43</sup>. Note that the investments in this thematic objective as part of REACT-EU are not included in this overview (see section 5.5 and 3.4 for a more detailed review of implementation). This advanced implementation rate suggests that progress is relatively well underway. Table 45 shows some differences between Member States, with Spain at the lower end (56.2 %) and Croatia on the higher end (101.2 %) of the scale.

Table 45. Overview of Implementation under TO9 – by Member State (REACT-EU excluded)

MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
AT	271.8	65.5%	97 528	169.2%	32 391	200.0%	33%
BE	742.8	69.9%	390 561	151.8%	136 491	72.3%	35%
BG	542.8	65.2%	470 432	119.1%	92 346	117.0%	20%
CY	121.6	99.1%	64 517	114.5%	539	100.0%	1%
CZ	1 050.8	68.5%	156 886	94.7%	22 757	66.7%	15%
DE	4 027.1	85.6%	767 445	112.6%	380 388	80.0%	50%
DK	78.3	75.0%	8 387	47.9%	1 624	29.4%	19%
EE	168.8	68.1%	39 350	118.2%	4 835	153.0%	12%
ES	2 876.7	56.2%	1 645 532	100.0%	668 585	5.4%	41%
FI	201.1	76.0%	55 239	110.1%	5 336	51.1%	10%
FR	3 656.8	97.4%	2 928 408	58.4%	1 219 261	74.7%	42%
GR	1 599.8	83.2%	285 339	96.7%	29 023	25.0%	10%
HR	400.2	101.2%	91 202	93.7%	12 209	19.6%	13%
HU	1 239.9	69.9%	426 492	142.0%	86 429	45.1%	20%
IE	297.6	67.5%	68 290	37.3%	36 207	31.8%	53%
IT	4 850.0	63.2%	1 681 873	99.9%	116 692	3.8%	7%
LT	283.6	92.5%	353 688	140.9%	27 871	26.3%	8%
LU	11.0	74.6%	2 853	79.3%	251	3.2%	9%
LV	294.5	54.0%	157 788	79.3%	10 501	77.4%	7%
MT	40.0	72.8%	12 349	111.2%	5 671	32.5%	46%
NL	726.3	98.8%	555 257	244.9%	150 763	102.0%	27%
PL	3 425.3	62.8%	1 150 080	100.0%	289 627	57.7%	25%
PT	1 758.6	66.1%	471 685	80.0%	37 384	83.7%	8%

<sup>42</sup> These have been discussed at length in the annual synthesis reports of earlier years and are not reported here. See for a review of the more specific objectives under thematic objective 9, as well as a review of types of measures for instance: European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre](#): final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

<sup>43</sup> **Expenditures declared** means that formal expenditure reports have been drawn up by project beneficiaries and submitted to the MA. These expenditures are declared only *after* completing the project cycle. Declared expenditures as share of the total allocated budget is presented as the implementation rate.

RO	2 039.6	68.7%	231 513	9.1%	32 858	0.1%	14%
SE	309.5	79.8%	27 259	93.4%	10 924	86.0%	40%
SI	197.0	74.4%	12 265	99.7%	3 278	46.4%	27%
SK	563.7	66.7%	284 517	93.5%	3 360	96.4%	1%
UK	2 508.7	56.9%	537 506	57.3%	177 341	22.2%	33%
Total	34 283.9	72.3%	12 974 241	100.0%	3 594 942	39.5%	28%
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
Less dev.	14 462.6	66.0%	4 799 263	99.6%	681 022	45.0%	14%
More dev.	14 814.5	77.6%	5 977 772	100.0%	2 023 223	39.9%	34%
Transition	5 006.7	74.9%	2 197 206	100.0%	890 697	26.7%	41%

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

In terms of individual results achieved, less developed regions reached only around one-third of the number of results achieved in more developed regions (0.7 million in less developed against 2.0 million in more developed regions). When looking at this data, one must take into account that the EU2020 poverty headline target draws attention to the considerable effort needed in more developed regions, where particular attention to pockets of poverty continues to require policy action. However, the differences in number of participations and results are worth noting; while similar budgets are allocated and spent, considerably more participations and results are reported in more developed regions and transition regions. While it is hard to pinpoint specific reasons for this trend, it is conceivable that Member States with less developed regions more often dedicated social inclusion investments towards entities, services and support structures, which are not counted in participation, nor in immediate individual results.

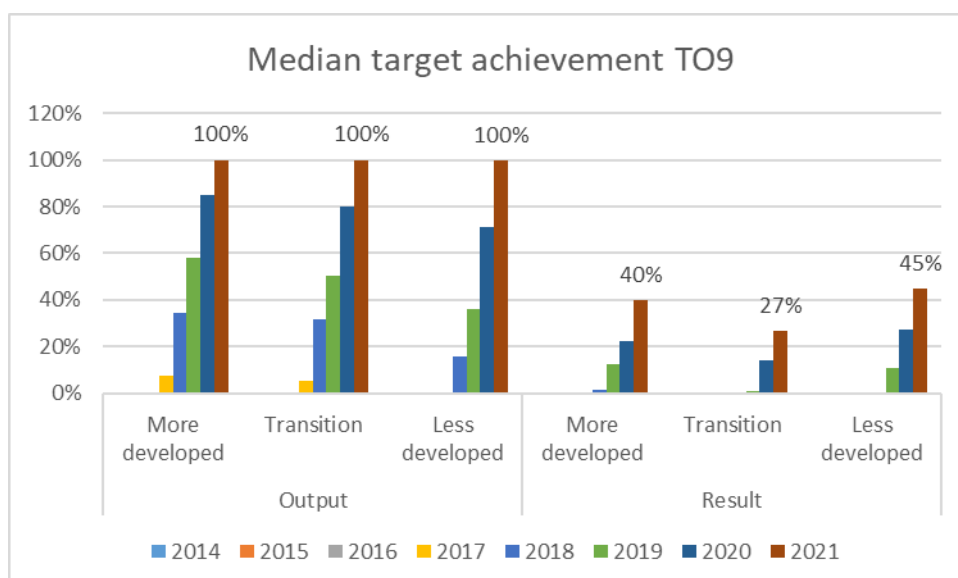
When reviewing target achievement of result indicators, the median achievement in Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and Romania lags considerably behind the EU median of 39.5 %. The final column of table 45 shows that the number of results reported so far in Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia remains low, when compared against the number of participations reached (less than 10 %, compared against an EU average of 28 %). Particularly in Member States where this is combined with a relatively low achievement rate of result indicators (in Italy Luxembourg), this suggests that considerable improvements in results achievement need to materialize in the final years of implementation. Luxembourg confirms there is high demand for the remaining projects in the area of social inclusion and expects increased results.

For all figures on implementation (project selection, outputs, results or target achievement rates) it is important to highlight that these are still moving targets. At the time of writing this report, COVID-19 related reprogramming of operational programmes is still ongoing for a considerable share of the operational programmes. The large majority of reprogramming efforts are taking place under Thematic Objective 9, and particularly under the investment priority (9iv) which supports enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care. As these (re)programming efforts are going to be finalised in the course of 2022, new targets, with different target achievement rates, can be expected.

Figure 20 shows relatively comparable target achievement rates by the end of 2021 across different types of region, with a median target achievement for output indicators of 100 % in all types of regions. For result indicators, median target achievement rates remain lower, but can be expected to increase towards the final years. In more developed regions the first progress in the median was reported in 2018, with the median target achievement now reaching 40 %, slightly behind that of less developed regions (45 %), and above that of transition regions (27 %).



Figure 20. Evolution of median target achievement under TO9 – by category of region



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The progress in implementation was further analysed at the level of individual investment priorities. At this level, it is reassuring that the dominant investment priority (9i) also shows the highest implementation rate (78.6 %) and produced a considerable number of observable results towards the EU poverty-reduction objectives (3.3 million). Investment in the area of community-led local development (9vi) continues to be the investment priority with the lowest progress in implementation, both in terms of implementation rate (34.1 %), as well as output and result target achievement. However, due to its relatively small size, it has only a marginal effect on the overall figures for the overall thematic objective.

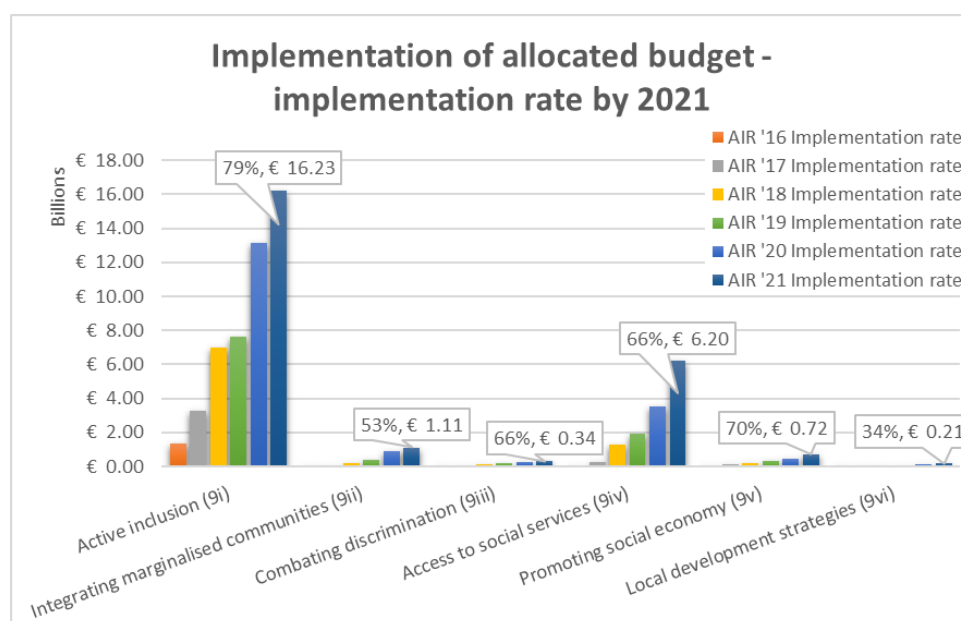
Table 46. Overview of TO9

Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Active inclusion (9i)	20 642.5	78.6%	9 390 373	102.5%	3 253 626	52.6%
Integrating marginalised communities (9ii)	2 088.7	53.3%	691 381	89.6%	146 919	16.0%
Combating discrimination (9iii)	506.2	66.2%	303 956	100.0%	55 712	42.7%
Access to social services (9iv)	9 410.1	65.9%	2 243 294	95.5%	93 448	33.6%
Promoting social economy (9v)	1 024.8	70.1%	202 586	100.0%	30 647	24.0%
Local development strategies (9vi)	611.6	34.1%	142 651	46.0%	14 590	5.2%
<b>TO9</b>	<b>34 283.9</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>12 974 241</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3 594 942</b>	<b>39.5%</b>

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Figure 21 confirms the overall increasing trend for implementation rates. Under Thematic Objective 9, implementation efforts by Member States are predominantly focused around active inclusion (9i). Member States allocated a variety of interventions to this broad investment priority, also evidenced by its highest allocated budget.

Figure 21. Absorption of budget under investment priorities with a social inclusion objective (TO9)

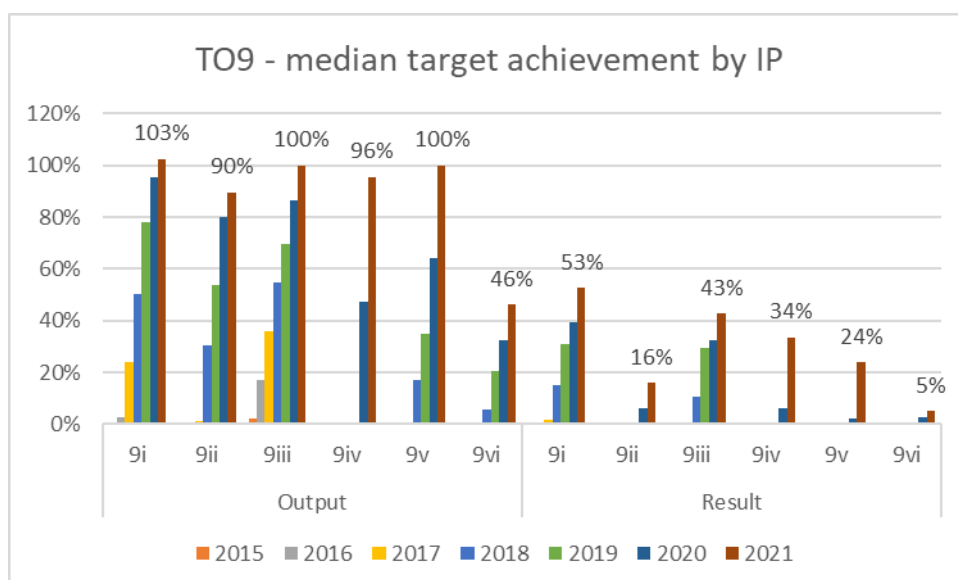


Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Target achievement rates for output indicators have been substantially improving since 2018, and further increased in 2021. The median output target achievement rate in the area of active inclusion already lies above the target (9i - 103%), followed by combating discrimination (9iii - 100%) and promoting social economy (9v - 100%). As already noted above, the progress towards result targets under this thematic objective continues to be relatively low, with at least half of indicators in four investment priorities below 35% of their target achievement. Possibly, this lag in progress for result indicators is related to the more structural indicators defined for these investment priorities (welfare services, social enterprises, local development plans, etc.), where results may only be achieved some time after concluding the interventions, much unlike employment initiatives, where an effect is measured soon after concluding the intervention<sup>44</sup>. For investments in enhancing access to services (9iv), the additional programming of new indicators associated with REACT-EU reprogramming (see section 2.2) is likely to influence target achievement rates in the coming years. This calls for careful monitoring of progress in this area towards the final years of implementation.

<sup>44</sup> A similar explanation was provided in section 4.2, which showed an upward trend of cost per result, which can be caused by the same phenomenon.

Figure 22. Evolution of median target achievement under TO9 – by investment priority



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Individual background characteristics (either economic status, education, or family backgrounds) are captured by the common indicators and show for instance how investments under thematic objective 9 target specific groups, such as low-skilled, (long-term) unemployed, elderly, disabled, and people with a migrant / foreign background. In addition, programme-specific indicators allow programmes to measure in greater detail characteristics that are more specific to certain interventions and show, for instance, how programmes also targeted prisoners and ex-offenders, drug users, people with mental disorders, individuals on specific social support programmes, children in vulnerable situations, specific ethnic minorities, and residents – and their children – from neighbourhoods with socio-economic disadvantages. By the end of 2021, a total of 3.6 million individual results were recorded by the ESF common indicators for these 13 million participations, among which the number of participants that found employment upon leaving the intervention is the largest (slightly under 1.5 million, see table 47 below). In addition to this aggregation of results in common categories, which are largely oriented towards the economic status of participants, investments in this area also achieved various other types of results. These are better captured by the programme-specific indicators, which are tailored to the specific objectives of each programme. A selection is presented in the table below.

Table 47. Overview of key result indicators under thematic objective 9 (common / programme specific)

Categorising key results social inclusion investments as measured by Common indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
<b>Individual results</b>	<b>3 594 956</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>28</b>
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	624 296	145	28
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	563 913	145	28
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	933 432	145	28
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	1 473 315	145	28
A selection of key results in social inclusion investments as measured by Programme-specific indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
	1 385 236	51	20

Individual result: other positive result after intervention: The number of people who benefited from new, innovative measures for the implementation of social inclusion	AT, BE, CY, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK		
Achievements: Capacity increased of health / social welfare	669 211	57	16
	BG, CZ, ES, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK		
Achievements: Capacity increased for childcare	49 087	22	6
	BE, BG, ES, IT, SK, UK		
Entity: enterprise / economic operator – Social enterprises	21 509	36	11
	BG, CZ, ES, GR, HU, IT, LT, NL, PL, RO, SI		
Achievement – jobs created in social enterprises	15 562	20	4
	CZ, FR, PL, UK		
Achievement – jobs preserved in social enterprises	7 797	5	2
	ES, LT		

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

As for programme-specific indicators, typical results achieved by investments in this area consist of a variety of positive effects for individuals (reported at more than 1.4 million), which can consist of increases in the quality of life, better life opportunities, reduction of dependence on certain services, or integration in communities. Such indicators can be found in 20 Member States, across 51 different operational programmes. These ESF programmes sometimes do not further define the positive effects of interventions, for instance where participation by itself is counted as a positive result of the intervention (i.e., reaching hard-to-reach target groups).

Another typical focus of many interventions supported in this area consisted in expanding the capacity of a variety of social services in the field of healthcare, social welfare, or childcare, for instance. Such services are an important means to address the multi-faceted character of poverty, and more specifically of child poverty in the EU. While a specific investment priority (9iv) is dedicated to access to services, various interventions across other investment priorities also contribute to this objective. There are interventions with a general focus on active inclusion (9i), or supporting marginalised communities (9ii), combating discrimination (9iii), and community-led local development (9vi). Each of these priorities can be achieved by improving the capacity of social services. So far, this type of investments has contributed to increasing the capacity of such services by almost 0.7 million users. For example, Slovakia launched a project focusing on the implementation of measures for the social protection of children, as well as another project focusing on the effective re-socialisation of drug users. Latvia concentrates its operations on access to health promotion and disease prevention services, in particular for people at risk of territorial, poverty and social exclusion at national and regional level. Already before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Latvian ESF operational programme facilitated the training of doctors, and financed measures to attract doctors to regions where these were most needed. In Bulgaria, the ESF supported improving access to services for more than 52 000 participants (elderly and with disabilities) that are not able to make use of automated (i.e. self-service) service provision.

Investment priority 9v brings together projects that focus on promoting the social economy. While the common result indicators on job status give some indication on the results of these interventions, assessing the programme-specific indicators allows a deeper understanding of ESF achievements in this area. By the end of 2021, 21 509 social enterprises benefited from ESF support, among a larger number of over 93 000 SME that were reached by investments in this area. A total of 15 562 jobs were created in social enterprises, while another 7 797 jobs were preserved in such entities with support from ESF. Moreover, a total of 21 388 projects were implemented at least partially by civil society organisations. Particularly in the development of community-led local development strategies (9vi) and interventions combating discrimination (9iii),

further increases in the number of such projects can be expected in the final years of ESF implementation.

### 5.3 Thematic Objective 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning

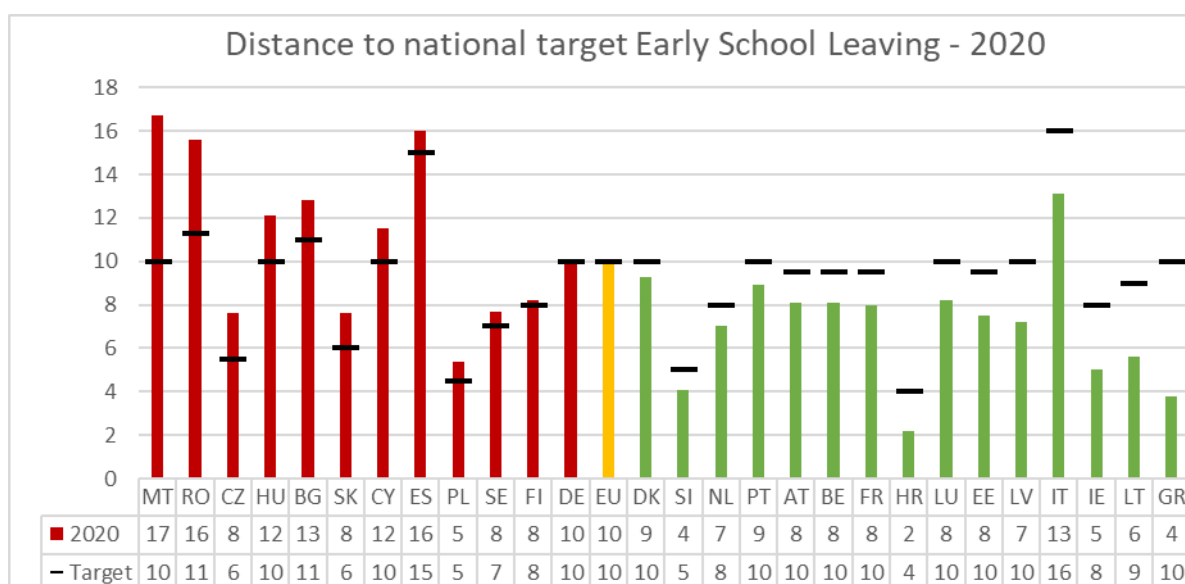
#### 5.3.1 Objectives

Education was considered one of the main pathways to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Europe 2020 strategy included a target for 'reducing the share of early leavers of education and training to less than 10 % and increasing the share of the population aged 30 to 34 having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40 %' by 2020.

In addition to the EU2020 goals on education (that remain the cornerstone of European strategy in this field), "Education and Training 2020" (ET 2020) provides complementary common strategic objectives for Member States, including a set of principles for achieving these objectives, as well as common working methods with priority areas for each periodic work cycle<sup>45</sup>. This strategy framework consists of European benchmarks in the fields of: participation in early childhood education; skills in reading, mathematics and science; the rate of early leavers from education and training; education attainment in higher education; higher education graduates spending some time studying or training abroad; and the share of employed graduates. The ESF contributes to these objectives through four dedicated investment priorities.

The EU 2020 target for reducing early school leaving has been met<sup>46</sup>. National targets were reached by Denmark, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria, Belgium, France, Croatia, Luxembourg, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, and Greece (see figure 23 below). Another group of Member States is made up of countries that did not reach the national targets, but came relatively close, such as Czechia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Cyprus, Spain, Poland, Sweden, Finland and Germany. Malta and Romania remained further away from their targets, with over 2 percentage points away from their national target.

Figure 23. Headline target on Early School Leaving – ranked by distance from national targets in 2020



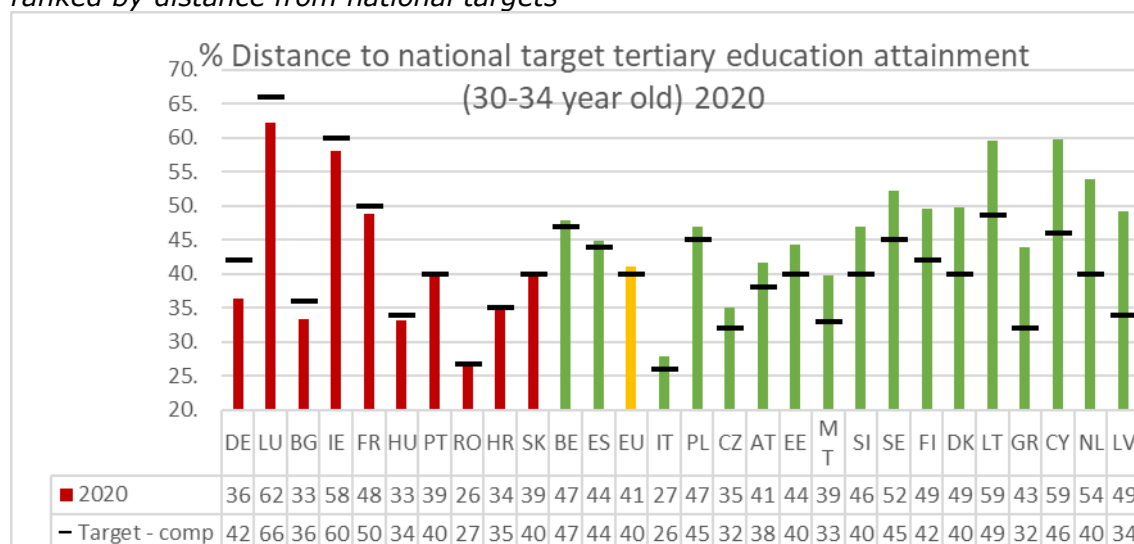
Source: Eurostat (EDAT\_LFSE\_14)

<sup>45</sup> It should be mentioned however that the CPR is not directly linked to the ET2020 strategy

<sup>46</sup> Early School Leaving is defined by the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with, at most, lower secondary education and who are not in further education or training;

The second EU2020 target for education refers to tertiary educational attainment for the 30-34 age group, which was also met at EU level in 2020. Two-thirds of EU Member States reached their national targets in time; a second group is very close to reaching their national targets (Portugal, Romania, Croatia). In Germany, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Ireland, France and Hungary increases in educational attainment were not enough to meet their national targets <sup>47</sup>.

Figure 24. Headline target on tertiary education attainment (30-34-year-old) 2020 – ranked by distance from national targets



Source: Eurostat (T2020\_41)

### 5.3.2 Implementation of education and training investments

National efforts to reach the EU headline targets in many Member States are substantially complemented by ESF funding, which is recognised as one of the crucial implementation mechanisms for the EU2020 objectives. This section reviews the implementation of these investment priorities in more detail<sup>48</sup>. A total of EUR 36.9 billion has been allocated to thematic objective 10 (EU + national co-financing), which makes it the second largest thematic objective under the ESF, only slightly lower than TO8. Table 48 below shows the advanced implementation rates for this thematic objective in most Member States, with an average EU level of 70.6 %<sup>49</sup>. In terms of participation and target achievement rates, the different types of region are remarkably similar; the only differences appear in the success rates, which show that the share of results per output is considerably lower in less developed regions (25 %) than elsewhere.

While all Member States with investments in education reported participations and results in 2021, there are some clear differences among individual Member States. Comparatively low numbers of results are observed in Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Croatia and Luxembourg. Particularly in Denmark, Croatia and Luxembourg the low numbers of results are also associated with low progress towards the targets set, showing considerable room for improvement in 2022 and 2023. In Denmark, this is

<sup>47</sup> Also note that Germany's national target includes post-secondary non-tertiary (ISCED 4) graduates, who however are not included in the attainment rate measured for 2016; Luxembourg set the highest national target in the EU (66%), also reflecting the high share of tertiary educated people in its young population, regardless of their place of study (its attainment rate in 2016 neared 55%).

<sup>48</sup> The objectives and types of measures of the specific investment priorities in this objective have been discussed at length in the annual synthesis reports of earlier years and are not repeated here. See for instance: European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre](#): final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

<sup>49</sup> Implementation rates are calculated by comparing the share of declared expenditures against the total allocated budget. **Expenditures declared** means that formal expenditure reports have been drawn up by project beneficiaries and submitted to the MA. These expenditures are declared only *after* completing the project cycle.

explained by a lower-than-expected demand for long-term education courses at the start of the programme, which led to lower-than-expected outputs by 2020, which resulted in lower results reported in 2021. These projects are still ongoing and have not reported any results yet. Luxembourg indicated that it had not been able to include all data related to all common indicators at this stage, which will be revised in the next AIR.

Table 48. Overview of Implementation under TO10 - by Member State

MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
AT	435.6	72.9%	123 013	117.9%	41 732	108.6%	34%
BE	592.1	46.4%	451 238	156.2%	142 845	65.0%	32%
BG	328.6	60.1%	1 099 730	67.0%	544 789	89.2%	50%
CY	13.3	104.9%	3 239	107.5%	2 283	95.7%	70%
CZ	1 322.3	70.6%	125 033	132.4%	9 282	91.5%	7%
DE	4 001.9	86.3%	1 397 383	100.0%	927 845	80.6%	66%
DK	126.1	65.9%	54 146	176.7%	2 973	10.5%	5%
EE	239.0	73.0%	74 771	103.0%	63 186	89.9%	85%
ES	3 214.3	63.1%	2 440 332	98.6%	2 093 071	41.2%	86%
FI	332.8	87.4%	154 930	137.1%	7 219	46.0%	5%
FR	2 700.0	76.2%	747 719	89.4%	433 018	56.2%	58%
GR	1 250.7	82.6%	362 927	113.5%	165 725	14.3%	46%
HR	529.4	44.7%	102 510	105.7%	5 153	9.0%	5%
HU	1 516.5	73.1%	978 674	99.0%	426 206	67.3%	44%
IE	241.1	100.0%	241 138	78.9%	170 882	81.3%	71%
IT	4 829.0	73.5%	4 619 703	97.2%	500 356	30.1%	11%
LT	533.2	69.3%	406 604	104.8%	60 057	62.0%	15%
LU	7.2	89.0%	8 813	100.4%	73	0.0%	1%
LV	297.2	57.2%	96 672	100.0%	19 282	43.2%	20%
MT	40.9	74.9%	24 651	161.0%	3 817	56.8%	15%
NL							
PL	4 633.8	60.4%	3 480 396	104.5%	659 222	76.1%	19%
PT	4 639.5	81.4%	1 404 744	100.0%	442 399	0.0%	31%
RO	991.5	39.8%	542 045	23.1%	53 166	0.0%	10%
SE	446.1	54.5%	221 238	106.1%	25 870	30.4%	12%
SI	266.1	72.8%	154 229	112.7%	34 815	88.0%	23%
SK	419.1	51.9%	422 508	170.5%	18 788	75.9%	4%
UK	2 933.9	63.1%	644 828	63.0%	422 862	35.1%	66%
Total	36 881.2	70.6%	20 383 214	100.0%	7 276 916	52.0%	36%
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
Less dev.	18 663.0	69.3%	11 401 886	100.1%	2 879 075	56.3%	25%
More dev.	13 016.9	71.4%	5 896 036	98.9%	2 435 942	49.7%	41%
Transition	5 201.3	73.6%	3 085 292	100.5%	1 961 899	43.8%	64%

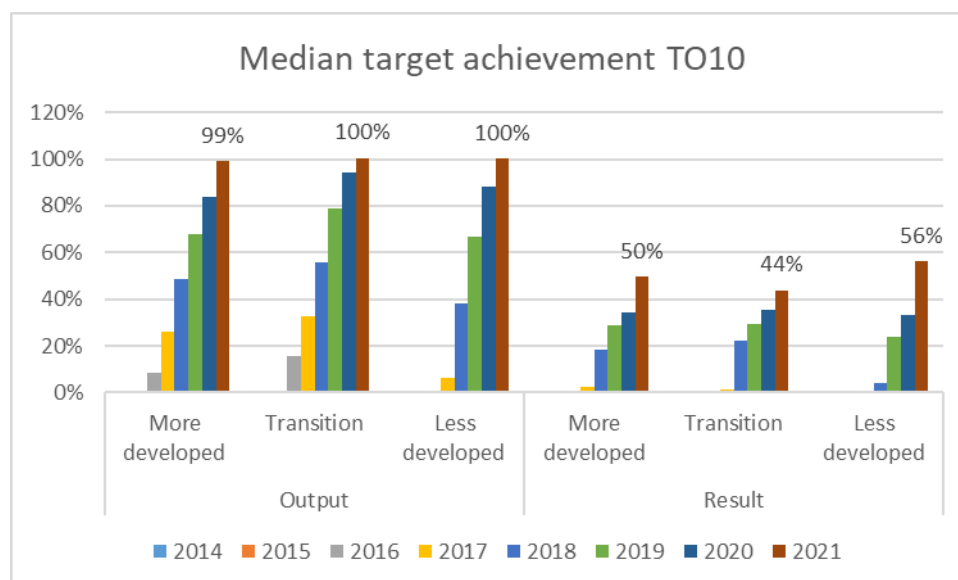
\*Empty cells mean that no investments in this thematic objective are programmed

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

All Member States indicate that COVID-19 measures had an impact on progress in implementation of education investments, but vary in the level of detail when describing how exactly investments in this thematic objective were impacted. Many education providers were unable to offer training, there were less face-to-face lessons and difficulties in the planning and execution of projects due to the multitude of unforeseen events. Member States also highlight how projects adapted to these consequences, for instance through adapting training offer and education programmes, introducing distance-learning, the design of e-learning modules and other responses. These are further highlighted in section 5.5.

Investments under thematic objective 10 have led to considerable increases in target achievement of output indicators, as shown by the median values reported across different regions in figure 25. Unlike most other thematic objectives, median output target achievement has been steadily increasing since 2016, and has now reached 99% in more developed regions and 100% in other types of regions. The median achievement rate of result indicators is also relatively comparable to the achievement rates under other thematic objectives, with 50% in more developed region, 56% in less developed regions and 44% in transition regions.

Figure 25. Evolution of median target achievement under TO10 –by category of region



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Table 49 below summarises the progress for each of the four investment priorities in terms of eligible costs reported, participations and short-term individual results achieved, and progress towards targets set for output and result indicators. It shows how implementation rate of investments focusing on the quality of higher education (10ii) remained behind other types of interventions (63.9% against overall rate of 70.6%). Declared expenditure for investments in early school leaving (10i) and improving labour market relevance (10iv) are above average with 71.9% and 76.5% respectively. This further confirms the substantial ESF contribution to the EU headline target on early school leaving, and the advanced state of implementation suggests that the ESF has significantly contributed to achieving this objective. ESF interventions (mostly found under investment priority 10ii) that support progress towards the other headline target (attainment of higher education) show considerably lower progress in terms of individual results than the other investment priorities under this thematic objective, even when accounting for the lower budget dedicated to such investments. To some extent, this is a reflection of the more structural nature of operations, which do not necessarily reach and count individuals, but focus on education providers and count the number of curricula and structural changes. Such broader achievements are not fully captured in quantitative indicators, even if these are tailored programme-specific indicators. However, the fact that the achievement rate of result indicators in this area is also comparatively low (a median target achievement of 28.6% is reported for this investment priority, compared to 52.0% for the entire thematic objective) suggests that this is not the full explanation, because the targets should be tailored to the specificity of the interventions.



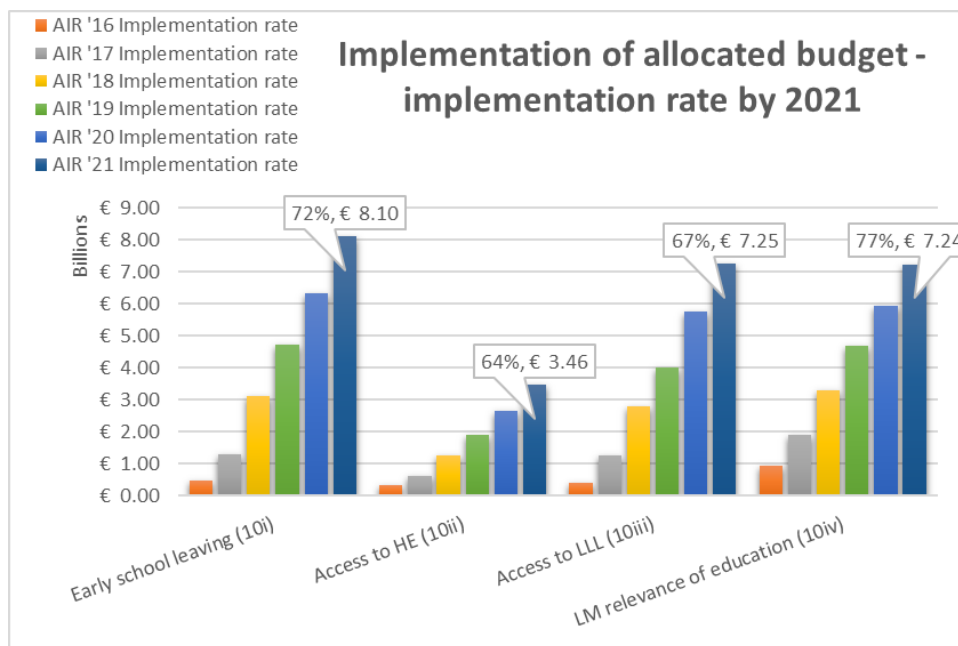
Table 49. Overview of TO10

Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Early school leaving (10i)	11 271.2	71.9%	9 291 603	102.0%	1 956 312	56.5%
Access to higher education (10ii)	5 417.6	63.9%	1 293 433	99.6%	281 187	28.6%
Access to lifelong learning (10iii)	10 737.3	67.5%	6 353 472	100.0%	3 169 256	63.3%
Labour market relevance of education (10iv)	9 455.1	76.5%	3 444 706	98.8%	1 870 161	51.3%
<b>Total TO10</b>	<b>36 881.2</b>	<b>70.6%</b>	<b>20 383 214</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7 276 916</b>	<b>52.0%</b>

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Figure 26 below shows how the project selection rate of TO10 investments has steadily improved over time for each of the investment priorities to the current levels.

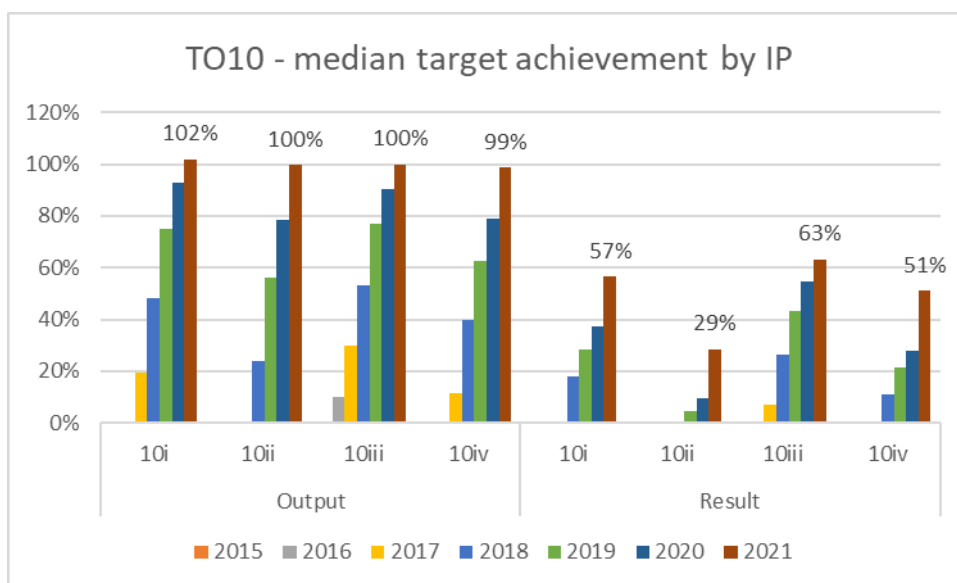
Figure 26. Absorption of budget under investment priorities with education objectives (TO10)



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Progress towards the indicator targets shows most improvements since 2018. The median target achievement for output indicators reached 102% for early school leaving, which means that half of the indicators under this investment priority are at or above 102 % of their initial targets. Other investment priorities also show similar target achievement rates. As can be expected and similar to that of other thematic objectives, the target achievement for result indicators is lower than that of output indicators and there is still considerable room for improvement in the coming years.

Figure 27. Evolution of median target achievement under TO10 - by investment priority



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

In total, 20.4 million participations are reported under this thematic objective, of which 7.3 million have reached an individual short-term result. For operations that seek to reduce early school leaving (10i) and increase access to lifelong learning (10iii) the common indicators for individual outputs and results provide an accurate picture of the results of these investments. At the end of 2021, 5.1 million participants gained a qualification with thanks to ESF support under this thematic objective, while another 1.4 million participants were in education / training upon leaving the intervention. As could be expected for operations that focus on education, these results are much higher than, for instance, the number of participants that engaged in job searching or entered employment (which are nonetheless not negligible). In addition to these figures, a relevant result that is recorded in various programmes is related to improved skills (without necessarily leading to a qualification, see table 50 below). Moreover, the number of children supported into some sort of pre-primary education is another relevant indicator for progress under this thematic objective, currently reaching 253 927 children, supported by 19 operational programmes in four Member States. Within the scope of combating early school leaving, the increased capacity of community learning centres is a relevant programme-specific indicator that illustrates the broader scope of these interventions as well.

Table 50. Overview of key result indicators under T010 (common / programme specific)

Categorising key results in education investments as measured by Common indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
<b>Individual results</b>	7 259 276	147	27
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	359 039	147	27
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	1 353 367	147	27
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	5 086 296	147	27
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	460 574	147	27
<b>A selection of key results in education investments as measured by Programme-specific indicators</b>	<b>Total achieved</b>	<b>Number of OPs covered</b>	<b>Number of MSs covered</b>
	4 274 655	33	12

<b>Individuals</b> – number of persons with skills improved after intervention	BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, IT, LV, PL, SI, SK, UK		
<b>Individuals</b> – number of children supported into pre-primary education	253 927	19	4
		DE, GR, PL, RO	
<b>Entities</b> – Education providers reached (outputs)	158 644	35	18
	BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, HR, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK		
<b>Entities</b> – Positive result for education providers	115 355	38	18
	BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, GR, HR, LT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK		
<b>Achievements:</b> Capacity increased for community learning centres	298 851	5	5
		CZ, HR, PL, PT, RO	
<b>Projects</b> – Number of successful projects	2 797	17	12
	BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, LV, PL, RO, SE, SK		

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

As already pointed out above, the more structural objectives related to investments in access to higher education (10ii) and increasing the labour market relevance of education (10iv) are best measured by more specific indicators, defined by programmes themselves. For instance, a total of 158 644 education providers were reached, of which a total of 115 355 institutions achieved additional positive results. The type and breadth of such 'positive results' vary substantially across programmes and consist for instance in the number of education providers that use new teaching approaches (Bulgaria, Slovakia), cooperation agreements (Germany), or the number of providers that start using new ICT equipment / laboratories (Croatia, Poland, Portugal). In other programmes reaching an education provider is already considered a result; in many cases no follow-up indicators measure the scope of change achieved. A good example of this is represented by education providers that participate in knowledge exchanges with labour market experts. Even though participation may not result in an immediate measurable result, on the longer run education providers can improve the labour market relevance of their courses because of their participation in such events. Likewise, the indicators counting positive results in education providers are often not accompanied by output indicators that track the actual number of education providers reached.

## 5.4 Thematic Objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration

### 5.4.1 Objectives

The quality of public administration significantly impacts the economic environment. Consequently, reforming public administrations has also been defined as a key priority for the successful implementation of the EU2020 Strategy towards smart and sustainable growth. The Annual Growth Surveys, the Economic Adjustment Programmes and other frameworks of Financial Assistance in EU Member States highlight the need to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, as well as the transparency and quality of public administrations and the judiciary.

"Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration" is included as a separate thematic objective (thematic objective 11 or "TO11") in the Common Provisions Regulation for the 2014-2020 programming period (Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, Art.9). Both the ESF and ERDF contribute to TO11, but their role is quite different. The ERDF has a relatively narrow scope on infrastructure, while the ESF focuses more on the (staff of the) institutions and procedures. Operations can target different levels of government, and in the majority of cases consist of training measures.

### 5.4.2 Implementation of institutional capacity investments

A total amount of EUR 4.3 billion is allocated to this Thematic Objective (EU + national share), which makes it considerably smaller in scope compared to the other thematic objectives. Overall, implementation has progressed to 55.9 % of the allocated budget. Lowest implementation rates can be observed in the United Kingdom (17 %), France (20.5 %), and Croatia (33.4 %). This remains lower than in other thematic objectives.

Table 51. Overview of Implementation under TO11 – by Member State

MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
AT							
BE							
BG	237.0	58.6%	79 156	97.3%	35 688	114.7%	45%
CY	13.1	96.1%	0	100.0%	0	99.7%	-
CZ	163.3	70.1%	15 797	49.8%	12 163	29.3%	77%
DE							
DK							
EE	33.4	72.7%	3 019	123.8%	662	100.0%	22%
ES							
FI							
FR	23.3	20.5%	0	0.0%	0	75.2%	
GR	260.9	50.4%	104 536	58.8%	79 243	0.0%	76%
HR	210.7	33.4%	21 480	43.4%	754	10.3%	4%
HU	892.5	84.3%	235 171	76.5%	89 688	100.9%	38%
IE							
IT	866.4	43.1%	137 939	100.0%	25 290	47.1%	18%
LT	126.4	52.6%	64 774	107.0%	26 577	70.8%	41%
LU							
LV	20.9	81.9%	21 837	137.0%	350	130.1%	2%
MT	13.5	62.5%	3 666	110.9%	678	61.4%	18%
NL							
PL	221.4	45.0%	98 127	66.7%	5 285	27.7%	5%
PT	247.2	50.5%	6 457	34.3%	0	71.7%	0%
RO	625.1	44.9%	34 210	100.0%	21 728	35.7%	64%
SE							
SI	78.6	60.4%	11 851	112.5%	20	81.0%	0%

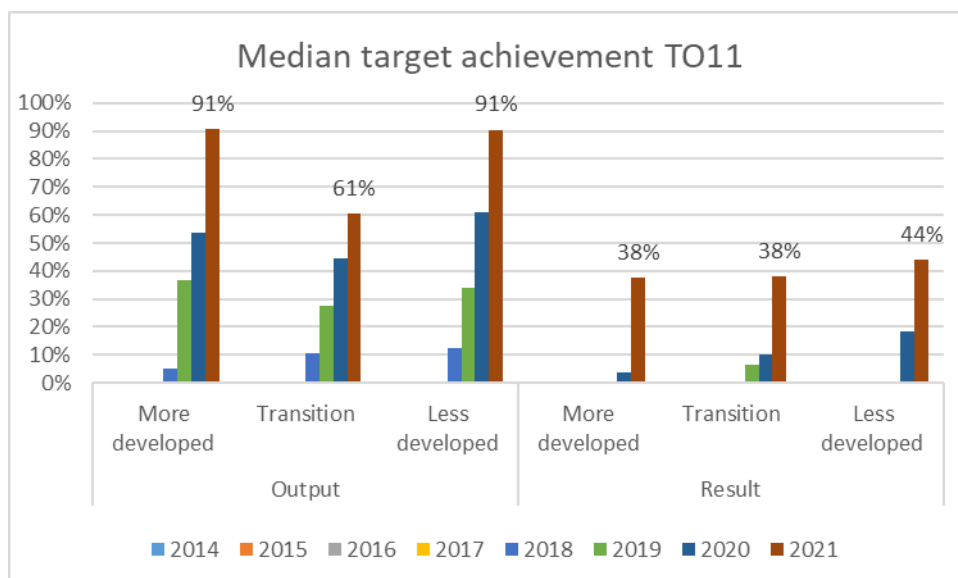
SK	287.8	54.1%	3 354	143.7%	0	105.0%	0%
UK	23.6	17.0%	0	62.5%	0	0.0%	-
Total	4 345.1	55.9%	841 374	85.4%	298 126	39.5%	35%
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
Less dev.	3 527.1	56.2%	530 647	90.5%	177 700	44.0%	33%
More dev.	690.4	56.0%	278 116	90.6%	105 486	37.5%	38%
Transition	127.7	46.8%	32 611	60.6%	14 940	38.1%	46%
<i>*Empty cells means that no investments in this thematic objective are programmed</i>							

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

So far, no participations nor individual results have been reported for Cyprus, France, and the United Kingdom. Of course, it is not unlikely that within this thematic objective Member States focus on entities and structure, and may not even count participations or individual results. Portugal and Slovakia for instance, reported no individual results. The United Kingdom only has a small budget and only fully defined the scope of its investments in this area in September 2018; reporting on the common indicators is foreseen in the final years of the programme implementation. In France, investments for this area are programmed only for its overseas territories (Guyane, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Mayotte). While considerable progress is already reported in Guyane and Martinique, implementation in Guadeloupe and Mayotte does not show substantial progress by the end of 2021. Cyprus does not mention any specific reason. In Slovakia, the lack of results reported so far should be temporary, as it does already count individual results among its programme-specific indicators (individual employees, public administration staff as well as judges were targeted and reached positive results under the programme). If one compares, for instance, its target achievement rate for all results indicators, this corresponds to a median of 105 %. For Portugal no individual results are reported for 80 programme-specific indicators either; instead, the first results reported concern the number of institutions where capacity development activities were conducted. Again, the lower target achievement rate for result indicators suggests that implementation is still ongoing.

Figure 28 shows how the median output and result indicators at EU level have started to edge towards their targets, particular since 2021 the median target achievement made a considerable improvement. Differences between regions are relatively small. However, it is worth remembering that almost all investments are conducted in less developed regions. For result indicators, progress towards targets remains more limited under this thematic objective, with a median target achievement of 44 % in less developed regions and slightly lower in other types of regions. A possible explanation for this is given by the more structural nature of interventions in this area. As a result, the expected results may suggest that progress towards such objectives cannot be observed until the very end of the programming period.

Figure 28. Evolution of median target achievement under TO11 – by category of region



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

A substantial difference in progress achieved can be observed between investments in the institutional capacity of public administrations (11i), compared to capacity building of stakeholders (11ii). The latter has reported less progress so far, with an implementation rate of 32.4 % so far, which is lower than that of other investment priorities. Its median target achievement for output indicators is however relatively comparable.

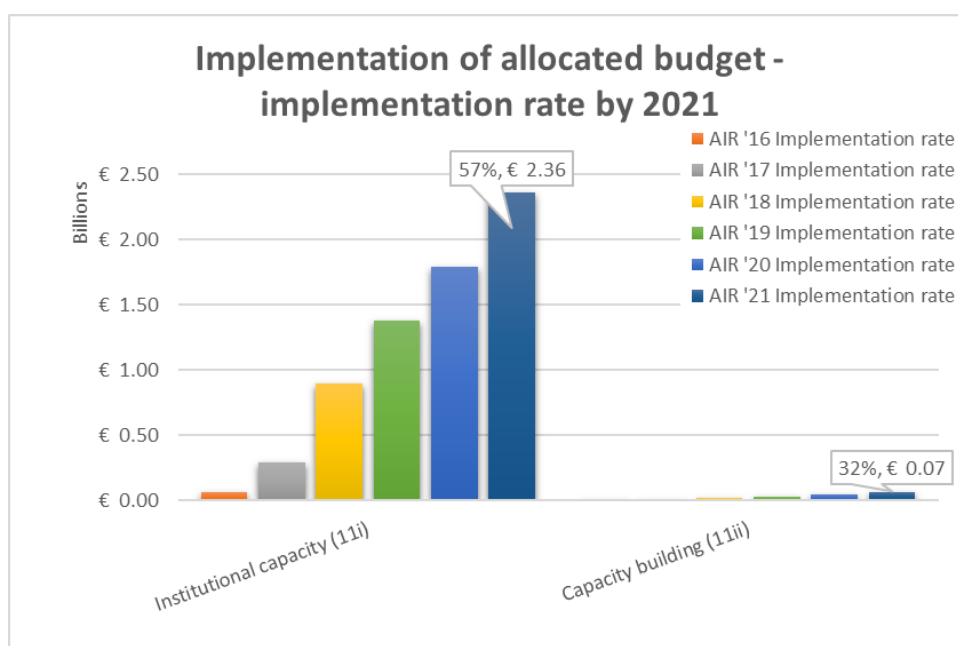
Table 52. Overview of TO11

Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Institutional capacity (11i)	4 135.2	57.1%	810 577	81.8%	295 768	39.8%
Capacity building (11ii)	209.9	32.4%	30 797	100.0%	2 358	29.9%
<b>Total TO11</b>	<b>4 345.1</b>	<b>55.9%</b>	<b>841 374</b>	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>298 126</b>	<b>39.5%</b>

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

The substantial difference in absolute participations and results also reflects the differences in budget; the budget allocated to measures supporting the capacity building of stakeholders (11ii) is considerably smaller. Progress in this area is therefore an important finding. In fact, as figure 29 shows below, the actual costs reported have been increasing steadily every year since 2016.

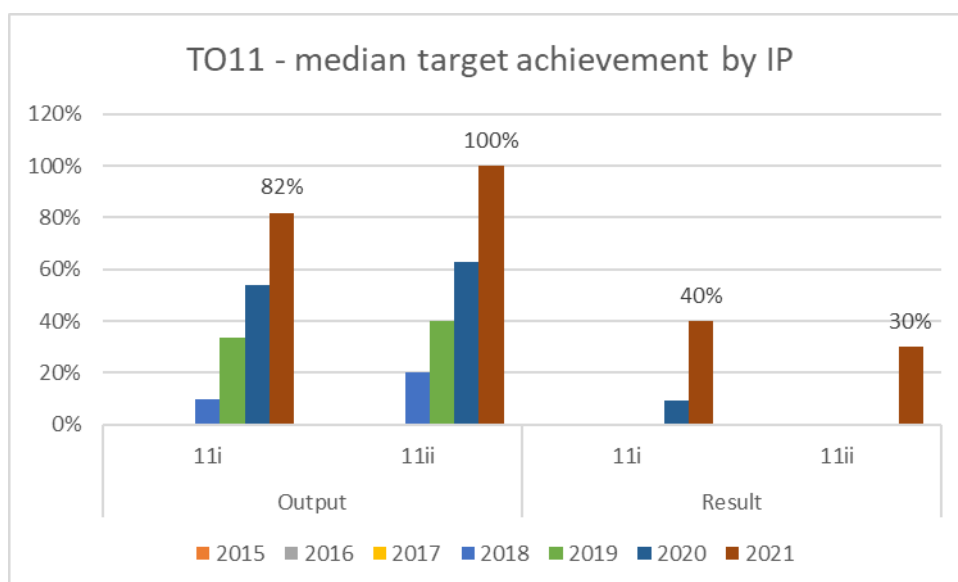
Figure 29. Absorption of budget under investment priorities with institutional capacity objectives (TO11)



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Since 2018, progress towards targets has been reported when measured by the median of target achievement of output indicators. For result indicators, in 2020 for the first time more than half of the result indicators reports progress towards their target for IP11i, which was reached for interventions in IP11ii in 2021 (currently at 30 %).

Figure 30. Evolution of median target achievement under TO11 by investment priority



Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

As the example of Slovakia already showed above, when determining progress of implementation in absolute numbers, it is important not to limit the analysis to common indicators. Individuals are not the main units targeted by these operations, and more attention is needed on other types of absolute outputs and results. In terms of results for instance, programmes often report on (the reduction of) administrative time required for certain operations, or specific positive results for organisations, public administrations, the judiciary, civil society organisations. These are operationalised by

measuring the number of institutions that implemented certain IT systems, revised and / or simplified procedures, increased regulatory scrutiny, etc.

Table 53. Overview of key result indicators under T011 (common / programme specific)

Categorising key results of institutional capacity investments as measured by Common indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
<b>Individual results</b>	298 126	<b>54</b>	<b>17</b>
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	264	54	17
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	18 546	54	17
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	276 615	54	17
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	2 701	54	17
A selection of key results in institutional capacity investments as measured by Programme-specific indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
Entities – Positive result for Authorities / Institutions / Organisations	27 804	27	16
	BG, CY, CZ, EE, GR, HR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK		
Of which Positive result for national public authorities	3 976	14	11
	BG, CY, EE, GR, IT, LT, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK		
Of which Positive result for judiciary	2 085	8	8
	HR, IT, LT, LV, PL, RO, SI, SK		
Of which Positive result for local / regional public authorities	16 359	9	7
	BG, EE, HU, IT, LT, PL, RO		
Of which Positive result for Civil society organisations	766	4	4
	HR, PL, RO, SI		
Of which other institutions / organisations	3 545	14	8
	CZ, GR, HR, IT, LT, PL, PT, SK		

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

Programme-specific indicators that measure positive results for organisations (public and private) aggregate to a total of 27 804 organisations that recorded positive results. Though such programme-specific indicators that measure results for institutions are indeed a better measure of success of the interventions than individual results, these are difficult to aggregate or even to compare. The introduction of the nation-wide rollout of a major IT improvement in all municipal bodies cannot easily be compared to the improved function of a specific public department or passing of a certain law. Comprehensive evaluations by Member States at the end of the programming period will be necessary to assess the implementation of such widely different operations.



## 5.5 Horizontal review of contribution to the EU COVID-19 response

### 5.5.1 Objectives

In response to COVID-19, REACT-EU is the most visible funding instrument for the ESF. REACT-EU offers additional funding for existing ERDF, FEAD, and ESF/YEI operational programmes. Member States can use these resources to support initiatives under a newly defined thematic objective that seeks to "foster crisis repair and integrate the green and digital transitions into the recovery strategy to increase the resilience of European economies". For the ESF, the additional resources are used to support job maintenance, including through short-time work schemes and support to self-employed, job creation, in particular for people in vulnerable situations, youth employment measures, skills development, in particular to support the twin green and digital transitions, and enhanced access to social services of general interest, including for children.

While the REACT-EU resources are designated and allocated as a new funding instrument, they are channelled through the existing investment priorities of the ESF. This means that all investments marked under the new 'Thematic Objective 13' are in fact a cross-cutting intervention that can be linked to the 'traditional' investments priorities of ESF/YEI.

### 5.5.2 ESF interventions under crisis repair

The changes to Operational Programmes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are not limited to budgets, as the new rules also permitted increases in the scope of measures and objectives of ESF. A wide variety of interventions can be identified across the ESF/YEI programmes, which are implemented in local contexts, depending on the more specific intervention logics, objectives and scope of operational programmes. It is up to individual Member States to define such interventions. Based on a review of the indicators and description of interventions, the following interventions can be identified:

- Support to workers through short-time working arrangements or similar support schemes<sup>50</sup>
- Support to self-employed and small businesses to retain staff/ maintain activity
- Support to employers and workers for setting up teleworking arrangements
- Support to employers and workers for putting in place occupational health and safety (OSH) measures in the context of reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus
- Support to self-employed and small businesses by using readily available IT solutions
- Supporting employers (with a focus on SMEs) to help them restart their activities and adapt to change.
- Support to hospital staff to treat COVID-19 patients and to ensure provision of other health assistance to other patients/ staff of other entities dealing with containing the spread of the virus
- Setting up temporary healthcare facilities to assist/test COVID-19 cases and provide other support to increase access to healthcare
- Support to people in vulnerable situations (exacerbated by Covid-19) with socio-educational services, health and care services, or proximity services
- Support to families, in particular single parent families, and families in socio-economic vulnerable situations (exacerbated by Covid-19) with socio-educational services, health and care services, or proximity services
- Support to distance learning education services

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<sup>50</sup> The EU defines short-term working arrangements as 'public programmes that allow firms experiencing economic difficulties to temporarily reduce the hours worked while providing their employees with income support from the State for the hours not worked'. (based on pre-ambule clause 7 of the Council Regulation 2020/672, on the establishment of a European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE) following the COVID-19 outbreak, OJ L 159, p. 1-7

- Additional investments in education programmes for medical/ social work personnel

Member States have amended their Operational Programmes extensively since early 2020, not only to accommodate the new funding line made available by REACT-EU, but also to re-programme resources from existing priorities towards crisis-repair, fighting the pandemic, as well as future-oriented investments in labour markets, social inclusion, education and institutional capacity building. These re-programming efforts are not always explicitly marked as COVID-19 related (or Thematic Objective 13), but instead involves the definition of new indicators, targets and priorities within the existing framework of ESF/YEI. While not clearly tagged as such, the use of certain types of indicators is a good hint for the scope of interventions in a particular investment priority, regardless of the more specific origin of the budget allocated to it.

As the original monitoring systems were not designed to track measures addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Commission proposed a list of possible COVID-19 related programme-specific indicators in May 2020 that Member States could use to monitor relevant support provided by the EU via the ESF or the ERDF<sup>51</sup>. Take-up of these indicators has been relatively high, which introduces some consistency in the monitoring approach to COVID-19 response measures in the variety of programme-specific indicators<sup>52</sup>. We use these indicators to gain a sense of the types of measures introduced.

Table 54 below presents which types of indicators were identified for each Member State. The mapping looked deliberately also beyond only REACT-EU priority axes, because, as we will show below, much of the COVID-19 response also takes place in 'regular' ESF investment priorities. First of all, the table shows that by July 2022 all Member States programmed at least some type of action under ESF/YEI in the context of combating the effects of COVID-19. Indicators counting the number of individuals are found in most Member States; only in Sweden and the United Kingdom these have not been explicitly measured so far. A number of Member States only use the more specific option of counting the number of healthcare workers benefitting from ESF support (Cyprus and Luxembourg). While Sweden does not use dedicated indicators to measure the number of individuals reached with COVID-response measures, it does measure the number of individuals that were able to preserve their jobs. Ireland and United Kingdom only use the COVID-indicator to measure the number of entities reached with ESF COVID-response measures. This is another measure, which is also found in Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Spain, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

Table 54. Use of specific COVID indicators

MS	ESF actions - other counts <sup>53</sup>	ESF actions – individuals	ESF actions – short time work	ESF actions – healthcare workers	ESF actions - entities	ESF actions – preserved job	ESF actions – qualification gained
AT		Yes					Yes
BE	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
BG	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
CY	Yes			Yes		Yes	
CZ	Yes	Yes					
DE	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
DK		Yes			Yes		Yes
EE	Yes	Yes				Yes	

<sup>51</sup> European Commission (2021), *Non-paper: List of programme specific indicators related to the cohesion policy direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic*, update February 2021.

<sup>52</sup> See for instance Applica/Alphametrics, Ockham IPS, FGB (2022), *Study on the pathways to enhance the use of programme-specific indicators in the ESF/ESF+*.

<sup>53</sup> This column refers to counts which do not count individuals, but are an indirect measure of individuals, such as number of personal protection equipment, testing capacity, medical equipment/beds.

ES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FI	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes
FR	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
GR	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	
HR		Yes				Yes	
HU	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
IE	Yes				Yes		
IT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
LU				Yes			Yes
LV	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
MT				Yes			
NL		Yes		Yes		Yes	
PL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
PT	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
RO		Yes			Yes	Yes	
SE						Yes	
SI	Yes	Yes		Yes			
SK	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
UK					Yes		

"Yes" indicates that at least one indicator of this type was selected in the Member State

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

### 5.5.3 Horizontal review of reporting on COVID-19 response

One might expect that most indicators monitoring the COVID-19 response would be found in dedicated priority axes supported by REACT-EU, but a mapping of these indicators shows that these are in fact more often found across the regular thematic objectives of the ESF. As shown in table 55 below, indicators measuring the value of personal protective and medical equipment are reported exclusively under thematic objective 9 by the end of 2021 and all IT investments in education have so far all been designated as ESF education investments (so reported under thematic objective 10), not as REACT-EU crisis repair measures.

Table 55. COVID-response across TO

Indicators	Cumulative value reported – by priority*				
	REACT-EU	TO8	TO9	TO10	TO11
Value of personal protective equipment purchased (CV1) (x€1 000)			44 864.4		
Value of medical equipment purchased (CV2) (x€1 000)			47 105.0		
Value of medicines purchased linked to the testing and treatment of COVID-19 (CV3) (x€1 000)	-				
Value of IT equipment and software – for education (CV4c) (x€1 000)	-			194 971.9	
Number of items personal protective equipment (CV6) (x€1 000)	-		68 609.8		
Testing capacity supported (CV10)					
Value of ESF actions (x €1 000) to combat or counteract the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (CV30)	194 915.81	120 638.62	752 323.2	211 866.6	99 547.4
Number of participants supported in combating or counteracting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (CV31)	532 058	1 567 758	29 690 141	449 853	4 840
Number of healthcare personnel who benefitted from ESF support (CVHC)	-		28 750		
Number of participants who benefitted from support in short-timework arrangements (CVST)	239 300	907 285	290 659		

Number of entities supported in combating or counteracting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (CV33)	5 985	25 373	46 986	17 945	608
Number of participants maintaining their job some time after the end of support (CVR1)	115 898		83 545		
Number of participants gaining a qualification upon leaving supported in actions combatting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (CVR2)	100 681	659 851	76 490		
Number of individuals supported in combating COVID-19 with a positive result	188 413				
Number of entities supported in combating COVID-19 with a positive result	4 268				

*\*Note that the cumulative values reported in this table are not common indicators. This means that values may contain overlaps and double counts. They should be considered as rough estimates of a certain order of size, not specific approximations of the value or number of outputs / results achieved.*

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2021 (data extracted on July 13, 2022)

When reviewing the more generic indicator that counts the value of ESF actions to combat or counteract the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (suggested label CV30), so far we see only a small share (EUR 0.2 billion) under REACT-EU, while the shares under the ESF thematic objectives are much more substantial (TO8: 1.1 billion, TO9: 2.8 billion, TO10 0.2 billion); only the investments marked under TO11 are lower. This is not so surprising, given that the implementation rate of REACT-EU funds by the end of 2021 was only at 3% (see section 3.4.1). The same is true when comparing the number of participants supported in combating or counteracting the effects of the pandemic. The same pattern is visible for the remaining indicators, including those on the number of healthcare staff, persons benefitting from short-time working arrangements, entities, or any of the programme specific results collected for measures combatting COVID-19.

The implication of this finding is that the actual budget allocated to COVID-19 measures is likely to be substantially higher than the new funding made available through REACT-EU, or in fact higher than then increased budgets allocated to ESF Operational Programmes compared to 2019 (see section 2.2). The above shows the extent to which all programmes have been fundamentally revised to support combatting COVID-19 or mitigating its economic and social effects.

## **6 Conclusions**

### **6.1 Scope of ESF/YEI and REACT-EU support**

By July 2022, the overall budget of ESF 2014-2020 is EUR 142.9 billion (EU + national share)<sup>54</sup>, of which EUR 104.8 billion is financed by the European Union. When adding the YEI-specific allocation, the total budget available is EUR 147.4 billion (EU + national share). The largest share of the budget is earmarked to support European employment objectives under Thematic Objective 8 (with a combined EU and national budget of EUR 40.2 billion focused on ESF interventions under TO8, and another EUR 5.99 billion topping up the dedicated YEI fund with ESF matching funds and national co-financing), followed by education and training under Thematic Objective 10 (EUR 36.9 billion of EU and national resources), and social inclusion under Thematic Objective 9 (EUR 34.3 billion of EU and national resources). Finally, a combined total of EU and national budgets of EUR 4.3 billion is allocated to institutional capacity building under Thematic Objective 11. REACT-EU complements these four ESF objectives with a total amount of EUR 16.1 billion, while the remaining EUR 5.1 billion (EU and national share) is allocated to technical assistance.

Since the start of the ESF programming period for 2014-2020, the fund has undergone a number of substantial changes, with the most profound ones more recently in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

- Three initiatives have been introduced in early 2020 seeking to increase flexibility of programming, adjust programmes to direct resources where these are most needed and introduce new priorities under the heading of fighting the pandemic. After the CRII and CRII+, the REACT-EU initiative was launched in May 2020 and approved by the Council and European Parliament in December 2020. Under REACT-EU a total of EUR 50.6 billion of additional resources was made available to existing cohesion policy programmes for the years 2021 and 2022. In response, Member States have initiated a substantial review of ESF/YEI operational programmes, including the shifting of budgets, applying new flexibility for co-financing rates and introducing new output and result indicators and targets. At this moment, the reprogramming has increased the available funding for ESF/YEI investments with an additional EUR 16.9 billion.
- Earlier in the programming period, budgets for fighting youth unemployment were already substantially raised as well. In June 2017, the European Parliament and Council approved the European Commission proposal to increase the YEI dedicated budget by EUR 1.2 billion to a total of EUR 4.47 billion, further topped up by a matching share of ESF funding and national ESF contributions. As such, by the end of 2021, a total of EUR 8.9 billion of the EU budget is available for YEI interventions, a total of EUR 10.4 billion if national co-financing is included.

Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and additional resources available under REACT-EU have contributed in particular towards investments in labour market (thematic objective 8) and social inclusion (thematic objective 9) objectives. While increased investments towards employment in the earlier years were most often financed by reducing budgets dedicated to investments in education (in 2019, thematic objective 10 had been reduced by roughly EUR 1.3 billion compared to the start of the programming period), the envelope of investments in education is now also larger than at the start of the programming period. Thanks to the REACT-EU investment package, investments in education (thematic objective 10) increased, for instance allowing additional support for the purchase of relevant IT equipment, software for distance learning, and additional skills training to use the newly-purchased tools.

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<sup>54</sup> This total of EUR 142.9 billion already includes the recent REACT-EU top-up of EUR 16.1 billion.

## 6.2 Progress in implementation

By the end of 2021, implementation advanced steadily. The implementation rates (the share of declared expenditure against the allocated budgets) have increased and already reached an average of 63 %. Though advanced, with only two years left to declare the remaining expenditure and considering the increased budget allocations that have been provided since 2020, most programmes will need to considerably increase their spending.

Member States currently report a total of 55.2 million participations across the various ESF/YEI interventions, including those supported by REACT-EU top-ups. No major differences can be observed in the implementation between different types of regions, with relatively balanced participations in more and less developed regions, in line with the shares of budget allocated. While COVID-19 had clear impacts on the programming and priorities of ESF/YEI programmes, so far there are no clear indications that it had a negative impact on the actual implementation, according to numbers of participations and shares of costs reported by Managing Authorities. Overall, participants benefitting from ESF / YEI measures have different backgrounds, but most participants were unemployed (36 %) or inactive (38 %) and 44 % of them were below 25 years old. Finally, with regards to the education level, a considerable level of participants were low-skilled (qualifications at ISCED 1/2 level accounting for 47 %). The participation of (wo)men is relatively balanced at EU level, but varies among Member States, depending on the local needs and types of interventions.

The totals of participations presented above include a total of 3.7 million participations that are supported by YEI interventions focusing on enhancing youth employment. In terms of YEI implementation, an increasing number of Member States reported difficulties in identifying, mobilizing and recruiting young NEETs for the remaining interventions. In 2021 the number of new participations under YEI interventions increased by 0.15 million (compared to an increase of 0.28 million in 2020, 0.4 million in 2019 and 0.6 million in 2018). This means the increase has been slightly lower compared to the previous year. It should however also be taken into consideration that YEI programmes have been slowly edging towards their targets (the median target achievement rate at EU level stands at 96 %), allowing the 'regular' ESF projects focusing on youth employment to catch up and support this target group.

In addition to the number of participants, Member States also reported on the number of projects and entities that have been supported. A total of 97 285 projects that targeted social partners or non-governmental organisations were supported, while 53 322 projects were dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment. Another 73 598 projects targeted public administration / public services at national, regional or local level. Finally, the ESF supported a total of 1.7 million SMEs between 2014 and 2021.

The substantial numbers of participation reached with ESF and YEI helped 6.4 million participants find a job, while another 8.8 million participants gained a qualification, 1.3 million are engaged in job-searching and 2.6 million are in education / training. Additionally, a total of 5.9 million disadvantaged participants achieved one of these positive results.

## 6.3 ESF support to EU policies

This report jointly analysed the objectives established in the Operational Programmes and the types of operations funded from the perspective of the national situation and strategies (as reported in the annual implementation reports) and the EU level strategies and headline targets.

### 6.3.1 Thematic objective 8 - employment

Operations that promote sustainable and quality employment (Thematic Objective 8) supported almost 16.6 million participations, which led to over 6.2 million positive

results. These positive results refer to people that either found a job, gained a qualification or otherwise were able to improve their labour market position thanks to ESF interventions.

Interventions that support access to employment (investment priority 8i) are most common and reach comparatively higher implementation rates than those of most other investment priorities under the thematic objective on employment (72.4 %), as well as higher numbers of participations (7.7 million) and the number of results achieved by individuals (3.3 million). As it receives more than 40 % of the entire budget dedicated to employment objectives, it is reassuring to find that implementation of this important investment priority continues to proceed towards its targets.

### **6.3.2 Thematic objective 9 – social inclusion**

Operations in the field of social inclusion are designed to contribute to the EU2020 headline target of reducing poverty in the EU. For the most part, these operations are designed around active inclusion (investment priority 9i). Member States allocated a variety of interventions to this broad investment priority, evidenced by its position as the priority with the highest allocated budget under this thematic objective. Individual background characteristics (either economic status, education, or family background) show how social inclusion investments target various specific groups, such as low-skilled, (long-term) unemployed, elderly, disabled, and people with a migrant / foreign background. Programme-specific indicators show that a certain level of attention is put on prisoners and ex-offenders, drug users, people with mental disorders, individuals benefitting from specific social support programmes, ethnic minorities, and residents in marginalised neighbourhoods. Under this thematic objective, investments supported almost 13.0 million participations, which led to 3.6 million positive results, such as finding a job, gaining a qualification or other improvements in terms of one's position on the labour market. This is a substantial figure in view of the headline target to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Investments under the investment priority on active inclusion (9i) also show the most progress in implementation rates under this thematic objective, with on average 78 % of the total allocated budget already declared as expenditures. Implementation rates of smaller investment priorities under this thematic objective are considerably lower, varying from 34.1 % for community-led local development strategies (9vi), to 53.3 % for marginalised communities (9ii). Finally the implementation rate of one of the key investment priorities for the ESF COVID response, access to healthcare and social services (9iv), stands at 65.9 %.

Progress towards the targets defined for output indicators has advanced consistently, with at the end of 2021 at least half of all indicators achieving 100 % of their defined output targets. On the other hand, it usually takes longer for progress towards results to materialize. As a consequence, the median result target achievement under this thematic objective has remained at 39.5 % so far. For the investment priority on active inclusion (9i), which has the largest financial envelope, a median target achieved of 52.6 % has already been reported.

### **6.3.3 Thematic objective 10 – education and training**

In the field of education and training, the implementation of the key investment priorities has steadily progressed each year. By the end of 2021, a total of 20.4 million participations are recorded for all operations in the field of education, of which 7.3 million have reached an individual short-term result. More than 5.0 million participants gained a qualification thanks to ESF investments with an education objective, while another 1.4 million participants were in education / training upon leaving the intervention. As could be expected for operations that focus on education, these results are higher than the results related to the number of participants that engaged in job searching or entered employment. In addition to these figures, a relevant result recorded in various programmes across education investments is related to improved

skills (not necessarily leading to a qualification)<sup>55</sup>, which is recorded by another 4.3 million participants.

The implementation rate reported for education investments is well around the average across all investment priorities. The highest implementation rates are seen in measures focusing on the labour market relevance of education (76.5 %), while those funding measures supporting access to higher education (10ii) are the lowest with 63.9 %. Here, the median target achievement for result indicators is also comparatively lower than in other investment priorities (28.6 % against overall median of 52.0 %).

#### **6.3.4 Thematic objective 11 – institutional capacity**

Institutional capacity investments receive the lowest budget allocation with an overall EUR 4.3 billion (EU and national share combined, which represents 4% of the ESF budget). The implementation of these investments is slightly behind that of the other thematic objectives, with an overall implementation rate of 55.9 %. More in particular, investments in capacity building (investment priority 11ii) have not progressed as much as others, with an implementation rate that stands at 32.4 % by the end of 2021. In terms of individual results, interventions under this thematic objective mainly contributed to public officials gaining a certain type of qualification (276 615). However, most meaningful results in this area are procedural in kind, such as shorter time required for certain procedures, or specific positive results for organisations, public administrations, the judiciary, and civil society organisations. Good examples for this are, for instance, the number of institutions that implemented certain IT systems, revised and / or simplified procedures, and increased regulatory scrutiny.

#### **6.3.5 Overall assessment**

Across all thematic objectives and investment priorities, the levels of implementation are relatively even across Member States and different types of regions. Member States that reported lower implementation and target achievement rates in the previous years have not fully caught up. However, they all now at least report to have committed their budgets at or close to their total allocated budgets. While this is no guarantee for successful implementation, it does suggest that the preparations for calls and new projects are progressing. Moreover, investments in employment and education objectives have led to considerably improved achievement of results, as measured by the median result target achievement rates.

Additional attention continues to be necessary in monitoring the relation between costs reported and participation and results, especially in less developed regions

Under the influence of the substantial impacts of COVID-19 on societies, the steady progress reported for 2021 for ESF/YEI is remarkable. The major reprogramming effort initiated in 2020 extended well into 2021, allowing Member States to make use of the increased flexibility in how ESF/YEI funds could be spent, revising priorities and adjusting interventions to the specific needs of the COVID-19 crisis, including also making use of the substantial opportunities for increasing ESF/YEI budgets under CRII/CRII+ and REACT-EU. This allowed adjusting ESF/YEI operational programmes to the changed economic conditions, as well as directing resources to increase access to healthcare services, and improve distance learning, to name a few areas that received additional attention. The challenge will now be committing all remaining REACT-EU resources in 2022 and declare these expenditures by the end of 2023 to ensure that these additional budgets reach end-beneficiaries.

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<sup>55</sup> This corresponds to programme-specific indicators



## Annex I Sources of data

### AIR versions used

Table 56. Overview AIR

CCI	AIR version	Status	Status date	OP version used for reference	Report approval date
2014AT05SFOP001	2021.0	Admissible	08-06-2022	6.0	26-05-2022
2014BE05M9OP001	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	22-06-2022	8.0	30-05-2022
2014BE05M9OP002	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	22-06-2022	7.1	24-05-2022
2014BE05SFOP001	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	08-07-2022	6.0	23-06-2022
2014BE05SFOP002	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	27-06-2022	9.1	10-05-2022
2014BG05M2OP001	2021.0	Admissible	01-06-2022	5.0	23-05-2022
2014BG05M9OP001	2021.0	Admissible	08-06-2022	6.0	26-05-2022
2014BG05SFOP001	2021.0	Admissible	08-06-2022	4.0	12-05-2022
2014CY05M9OP001	2021.0	Accepted by EC	30-06-2022	7.0	27-05-2022
2014CZ05M2OP001	2021.0	Accepted by EC	05-07-2022	5.0	05-05-2022
2014CZ05M9OP001	2021.0	Accepted by EC	22-06-2022	4.0	11-05-2022
2014CZ16M2OP001	2021.0	Accepted by EC	11-07-2022	9.0	03-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP001	2021.0	Admissible	31-05-2022	3.0	11-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP002	2021.0	Admissible	05-06-2022	4.0	20-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP003	2021.0	Accepted by EC	10-06-2022	2.1	18-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP004	2021.0	Accepted by EC	11-07-2022	6.0	13-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP005	2021.0	Accepted by EC	12-07-2022	4.0	30-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP006	2021.0	Accepted by EC	07-07-2022	4.1	19-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP007	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	07-07-2022	4.0	30-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP008	2021.0	Admissible	09-06-2022	2.0	24-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP009	2021.0	Accepted by EC	07-07-2022	3.0	25-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP010	2021.0	Accepted by EC	28-06-2022	3.2	06-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP011	2021.0	Admissible	09-06-2022	3.0	18-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP012	2021.0	Admissible	05-06-2022	7.0	10-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP013	2021.0	Accepted by EC	16-06-2022	4.0	24-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP014	2021.0	Accepted by EC	27-06-2022	3.0	27-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP015	2021.0	Admissible	31-05-2022	4.0	16-05-2022
2014DE05SFOP016	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	07-07-2022	3.0	11-05-2022
2014DE16M2OP001	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	30-06-2022	8.0	19-05-2022
2014DK05SFOP001	2021.0	Accepted by EC	07-07-2022	10.0	19-05-2022
2014EE16M3OP001	2021.0	Admissible	01-07-2022	8.0	18-05-2022
2014ES05M9OP001	2021.0	Admissible	03-06-2022	8.0	20-05-2022
2014ES05SFOP001	2021.0	Admissible	10-06-2022	4.1	05-05-2022
2014ES05SFOP002	2021.0	Admissible	03-06-2022	6.0	30-05-2022
2014ES05SFOP003	2021.0	Admissible	03-06-2022	4.0	03-05-2022
2014ES05SFOP004	2021.0	Admissible	03-06-2022	5.0	12-05-2022
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2014ES05SFOP015	2021.0	Admissible	03-06-2022	6.0	23-05-2022

*ESF Synthesis Report of 2021 AIRs*

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2014FI16M2OP001	2021.0	Accepted by EC	28-06-2022	7.0	11-05-2022
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2014FR05M9OP001		Draft SFC version			
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2014FR05SFOP003	2021.0	Returned for modification by EC	01-07-2022	5.1	31-05-2022
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*ESF Synthesis Report of 2021 AIRs*

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*ESF Synthesis Report of 2021 AIRs*

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2014UK05SFOP005	2021.0	Non-admissible	14-06-2022	4.1	19-05-2022
2020DE16M2RE017	2021.0	Accepted by EC	08-07-2022	1.0	25-05-2022

## **Annex II – Reference**

### **Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities**

#### **Thematic Objective 8: promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility**

- (8i / intervention field 102). Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility;
- (8ii / intervention field 103). Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee;
- (8iii / intervention field 104). Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises;
- (8iv / intervention field 105). Equality between men and women in all areas, including in access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life and promotion of equal pay for equal work;
- (8v / intervention field 106). Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change;
- (8vi / intervention field 107). Active and healthy ageing;
- (8vii / intervention field 108). Modernisation of labour market institutions, such as public and private employment services, and improving the matching of labour market needs, including through actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility schemes and better cooperation between institutions and relevant stakeholders.

#### **Thematic Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination**

- (9i / invention field 109). Active inclusion including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability;
- (9ii / invention field 110). Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, such as the Roma;
- (9iii / invention field 111). Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities;
- (9iv / invention field 112). Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest;
- (9v / invention field 113). Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment;
- (9vi / invention field 114). Community-led local development strategies.

#### **Thematic Objective 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning**

- (10i / intervention field 115). Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
- (10ii / intervention field 116). Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
- (10iii / intervention field 117). Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the

knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways, including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

- (10iv / intervention field 118). Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes

### **Thematic Objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration**

- (11i / intervention field 119). Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
- (11ii / intervention field 120). Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels.

## **Indicators**

### **Common output indicators ESF**

- CO01 Unemployed, including long-term unemployed
- CO02 of which Long-term unemployed
- CO03 Inactive
- CO04 of which not in education or training
- CO05 Employed, including self-employed
- CO06 Below 25 years of age
- CO07 Above 54 years of age
- CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including Long-term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training
- CO09 With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)
- CO10 With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary Education (ISCED 4)
- CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5-8)
- CO12 Participants who live in jobless households
- CO13 Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children
- CO14 Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children
- CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities
- CO16 Participants with disabilities
- CO17 Other disadvantaged
- CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion
- CO19 From rural areas
- CO20 Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations
- CO21 Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment;
- CO22 Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level
- CO23 Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)

### **Common result indicators ESF**

- CR01 - Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving

- CR02 - Participants in education/training upon leaving
- CR03 - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving
- CR04 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- CR05 - Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- CR06- Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving
- CR07 - Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving
- CR08 - Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving
- CR09 - Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving

### **Common result indicators YEI**

- YEI-CR01 – Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention
- YEI-CR02 – Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
- YEI-CR03 – Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- YEI-CR04 – Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention
- YEI-CR05 – Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
- YEI-CR06 – Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- YEI-CR07 – Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention
- YEI-CR08 – Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving
- YEI-CR09 – Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
- YEI-CR10 – Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving
- YEI-CR11 – Participants in employment six months after leaving
- YEI-CR12 – Participants in self-employment six months after leaving

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