



ESF Synthesis Report of 2022 AIRs

Written by Gert-Jan Lindeboom
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Unit G5 — Better Regulation

Contact: Gábor Tóth

E-mail: EMPL-G5-UNIT@ec.europa.eu

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

ESF Synthesis Report AIR2022

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Executive summary

The ESF is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all.

For the 2014-2020 programming period, it has an overall budget of EUR 146.9 billion (EU + national share), of which EUR 108.9 billion is financed by the EU. When the budget for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is added, the total is EUR 151.4 billion (EU + national). Since 2014, the fund has undergone several substantial changes, most recently in response to the COVID-19 crisis and the consequences of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. The above amounts include EUR 19.8 billion in fresh funding from REACT-EU, focussed on crisis recovery, fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and future-oriented investment. In 2022, the fund was also used to finance emergency support measures for Ukrainian refugees via Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE) and Flexible Assistance to Territories (FAST-CARE). It is too early to report on the specific approaches taken for this emergency support; by the end of 2022 four Member States had reported on the number of Ukrainian refugees who had been assisted at that time.

The report shows that overall implementation progressed at a similar pace to previous years, which means that most Member States still needed to declare considerable amounts of expenditure in the final year to avoid decommitment. By the end of 2022, overall implementation rates (share of declared expenditure against the allocated budgets) had reached 74% including the new REACT-EU funds and 83% without REACT-EU. Delays in implementation accumulated at the start of the programming period. Moreover, in the final years of implementation, with the launch of anti-crisis instruments, including the RRF, the catch-up rate was also slow, slower than for 2007-2013.

By 2022, Member States reported a total of 64.6 million participations across the various ESF/YEI interventions, including those supported by REACT-EU top-ups. No major implementation differences are evident between regions, with relatively balanced participation between more- and less-developed regions, in line with the shares of budget allocated. While COVID-19 had clear impacts on ESF/YEI programming and priorities, there are no indications that it had a negative impact on participation or shares of costs reported by managing authorities. Overall, participants benefiting from ESF/YEI measures had different backgrounds, but most were unemployed (34%) or inactive (39%) and 44% were under 25. A considerable proportion of participants were low-skilled (46%). The Youth Employment Initiative supported 3.9 million participants. The YEI was 'frontloaded', with a large number of interventions in 2015 and 2016; over time, Member States reported increasing difficulties in identifying, mobilising, and recruiting sufficient NEETs (young people not in employment, education or training) for the remaining interventions and financial support schemes. As a result, YEI participation has increased more slowly in recent years.

ESF and YEI helped 7.2 million participants to find a job, 10.3 million gained a qualification, 1.5 million were engaged in job searches, and 3.0 million were in education/training. Overall, 34% of recorded participations achieved one or more of these positive results, including 6.9 million disadvantaged participants.

Synthèse

Le Fonds social européen (FSE) est le principal instrument européen permettant de soutenir l'emploi, d'aider les personnes à trouver des emplois de meilleure qualité et d'offrir à tous des perspectives professionnelles plus équitables.

Pour la période de programmation 2014-2020, il a été doté d'un budget global de 146,9 milliards d'EUR (part de l'UE + part nationale), dont 108,9 milliards d'EUR financés par l'UE. Lorsqu'on ajoute le budget de l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes (IEJ), le total atteint 151,4 milliards d'EUR (part de l'UE + part nationale). Depuis 2014, le Fonds a subi plusieurs changements substantiels, en dernier lieu pour faire face à la crise de la COVID-19 et aux conséquences de la guerre d'agression menée par la Russie en Ukraine. Les montants mentionnés ci-dessus comprennent 19,8 milliards d'EUR de nouveaux financements au titre de REACT-EU, axés sur la relance après la crise, la lutte contre la pandémie de COVID-19 et les investissements tournés vers l'avenir. En 2022, le Fonds a également été utilisé pour financer des mesures d'aide d'urgence en faveur des réfugiés ukrainiens par l'intermédiaire de l'action de cohésion pour les réfugiés en Europe (CARE) et de l'assistance flexible aux territoires (FAST-CARE). Il est trop tôt pour rendre compte des approches spécifiques adoptées pour cette aide d'urgence; à la fin de l'année 2022, quatre États membres avaient fait état du nombre de réfugiés ukrainiens qui avaient bénéficié d'une aide à ce moment-là.

Le rapport montre que la mise en œuvre globale a progressé au même rythme que les années précédentes, ce qui signifie que la plupart des États membres devaient encore déclarer des montants considérables de dépenses au cours de la dernière année pour éviter les dégagements. À la fin de 2022, les taux d'exécution globaux (part des dépenses déclarées par rapport aux budgets alloués) avaient atteint 74 % si on inclut également les nouveaux fonds REACT-EU, et 83 % sans REACT-EU. Des retards dans la mise en œuvre se sont accumulés au début de la période de programmation. En outre, au cours des dernières années de mise en œuvre, avec le lancement d'instruments de lutte contre la crise, dont la facilité pour la reprise et la résilience (FRR), le taux de rattrapage a également été lent, davantage que pour la période 2007-2013.

En 2022, les États membres ont fait état d'un total de 64,6 millions de participations aux différentes interventions du FSE/de l'IEJ, y compris celles soutenues par des compléments au titre de REACT-EU. Aucune différence de mise en œuvre majeure n'apparaît entre les régions, avec une participation relativement équilibrée entre les régions les plus développées et les moins développées, conformément à la part du budget allouée. Si la pandémie de COVID-19 a eu des répercussions manifestes sur la programmation et les priorités du FSE/de l'IEJ, rien n'indique qu'elle ait eu une incidence négative sur la participation ou la part des coûts déclarés par les autorités de gestion. Dans l'ensemble, les participants bénéficiant des mesures du FSE/de l'IEJ avaient des origines différentes, mais la plupart étaient sans emploi (34 %) ou inactifs (39 %) et 44 % avaient moins de 25 ans. Une proportion considérable de participants étaient peu qualifiés (46 %). L'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes a soutenu 3,9 millions de participants. L'IEJ a été concentrée en début de période, avec un grand nombre d'interventions en 2015 et 2016; au fil du temps, les États membres ont fait état de difficultés croissantes pour identifier, mobiliser et recruter un nombre suffisant de NEET (jeunes ne travaillant pas, ne suivant pas d'études ou de formation) pour les interventions et les programmes de soutien financier restants. En conséquence, la participation à l'IEJ a augmenté plus lentement ces dernières années.

Le FSE et l'IEJ ont permis d'aider 7,2 millions de participants à trouver un emploi, tandis que 10,3 millions personnes ont obtenu une qualification, 1,5 million étaient à la recherche d'un emploi et 3,0 millions suivaient des études ou une formation. Au total, 34 % des participants enregistrés ont obtenu un ou plusieurs de ces résultats positifs, dont 6,9 millions de participants défavorisés.

Zusammenfassung

Der ESF ist Europas wichtigstes Instrument zur Förderung der Beschäftigung – er unterstützt die Menschen beim Zugang zu besseren Arbeitsplätzen und stellt fairere Berufsaussichten für alle sicher.

Für den Programmplanungszeitraum 2014-2020 beträgt die Gesamtausstattung 146,9 Mrd. EUR (EU- und nationaler Anteil), wovon 108,9 Mrd. EUR von der EU finanziert werden. Zählt man die Mittel für die Beschäftigungsinitiative für junge Menschen (YEI) dazu, so beläuft sich der Gesamtbetrag auf 151,4 Mrd. EUR (EU- und nationaler Anteil). Seit 2014 hat der Fonds mehrere wesentliche Änderungen erfahren, zuletzt als Reaktion auf die COVID-19-Krise und die Folgen des russischen Angriffskriegs gegen die Ukraine. Die oben genannten Beträge umfassen 19,8 Mrd. EUR an neuen REACT-EU-Mitteln für die Krisenbewältigung, die Bekämpfung der COVID-19-Pandemie und zukunftsorientierte Investitionen. Im Jahr 2022 wurde der Fonds auch zur Finanzierung von Soforthilfemaßnahmen für ukrainische Flüchtlinge im Rahmen von CARE (Einsatz von Kohäsionsmitteln zugunsten von Flüchtlingen in Europa) und FAST-CARE (Flexible Unterstützung der Gebiete) verwendet. Es ist noch zu früh, um über die spezifischen Ansätze für diese Soforthilfe zu berichten; Ende 2022 hatten vier Mitgliedstaaten die Zahl der ukrainischen Flüchtlinge gemeldet, die zu diesem Zeitpunkt unterstützt worden waren.

Aus dem Bericht geht hervor, dass die Umsetzung insgesamt in ähnlichem Tempo vorangekommen ist wie in den Vorjahren. Das heißt, dass die meisten Mitgliedstaaten im letzten Jahr noch erhebliche Ausgabenbeträge geltend machen mussten, um eine Aufhebung der Mittelbindung zu vermeiden. Bis Ende 2022 hatten die Gesamtausführungsraten (Anteil der geltend gemachten Ausgaben an den zugewiesenen Haushaltsmitteln) 74 % erreicht, einschließlich der neuen REACT-EU-Mittel; ohne REACT-EU beliefen sie sich auf 83 %. Zu Beginn des Programmplanungszeitraums lief die Ausführung schleppend. Hinzu kommt, dass die Verzögerungen in den letzten Jahren der Umsetzung durch die Einführung von Krisenbekämpfungsinstrumenten, einschließlich der Aufbau- und Resilienzfazilität, nur langsam abgebaut werden konnten, langsamer als im Zeitraum 2007-2013.

Bis 2022 meldeten die Mitgliedstaaten insgesamt 64,6 Millionen Teilnahmen an den verschiedenen ESF-/YEI-Maßnahmen, einschließlich derjenigen, die durch die zusätzlichen REACT-EU-Mittel unterstützt wurden. Zwischen den Regionen gibt es keine größeren Unterschiede in puncto Ausführung. In stärker und in weniger entwickelten Regionen gestaltet sich die Teilnahme relativ ausgewogen und steht im Einklang mit den zugewiesenen Haushaltsmitteln. Die COVID-19-Pandemie hatte zwar eindeutige Auswirkungen auf Programmplanung und Prioritäten von ESF/YEI, es gibt jedoch keine Hinweise darauf, dass sie sich negativ auf die Teilnahme oder die Kostenanteile ausgewirkt hätte, die von den Verwaltungsbehörden gemeldet wurden. Die Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer an ESF-/YEI-Maßnahmen hatten unterschiedliche Hintergründe. Die meisten waren arbeitslos (34 %) bzw. wirtschaftlich inaktiv (39 %); 44 % waren jünger als 25 Jahre. Ein erheblicher Teil der Teilnehmenden war gering qualifiziert (46 %). Im Rahmen von YEI wurden 3,9 Millionen Personen unterstützt. Eine große Zahl der YEI-Maßnahmen wurde auf die Jahre 2015 und 2016 vorgezogen; im weiteren Verlauf berichteten die Mitgliedstaaten über zunehmende Schwierigkeiten bei der Ermittlung, Mobilisierung und Anwerbung von NEETs (jungen Menschen, die weder eine Arbeit haben noch eine schulische oder berufliche Ausbildung absolvieren) für die verbleibenden Maßnahmen und Programme zur finanziellen Unterstützung. Infolgedessen hat die YEI-Teilnahme in den letzten Jahren langsamer zugenommen.

ESF und YEI haben 7,2 Millionen Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer dabei unterstützt, einen Arbeitsplatz zu finden, 10,3 Millionen haben eine Qualifikation erworben, 1,5 Millionen nahmen aktiv die Suche nach einem Arbeitsplatz auf und 3 Millionen absolvierten eine schulische/berufliche Ausbildung. Insgesamt konnte bei 34 % der registrierten Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer, darunter 6,9 Millionen aus benachteiligten Verhältnissen, mindestens eines dieser positiven Ergebnisse verzeichnet werden.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The present summary report is prepared as part of Task 4 of the ESF+ Data Support Centre, which provides 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 2022 – this is the last synthesis before the final implementation reports are submitted by early 2025. The contents of this synthesis report are based on the 2022 Annual Implementation Reports (AIR2022), which were due to be submitted by Member States to the European Commission by June 30, 2023. It covers both the measures implemented under the ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), including additional allocations in the framework of REACT-EU.

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 2022.

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 7, 2023**. Most AIRs had been submitted by that date and were in the approval process. Table 1 lists the status of all AIR included in this review and shows that at that time only 38 AIRs were formally approved. This means that the contents of the other AIRs may have been (slightly) adjusted since their publication. Such adjustments are not included in this report, except for the addition of six of the seven AIRs in France that had been submitted in the fall of 2023¹. The table below summarises the status of each of the AIRs used as input for this report.

¹ See annex I for an overview of the versions and dates of AIR analysed).

Table 1. Number of AIRs by status

MS	Total OP	Not formally submitted / not admissible	AIRs returned for modification	AIRs admissible	Accepted by EC
AT	1			1	
BE	4		1	1	2
BG	3			1	2
CY	1				1
CZ	3			2	1
DE	18		2	8	8
DK	1			1	
EE	1			1	
ES	23			18	5
FI	2				2
FR	33	9*	10	14	
GR	17			17	
HR	1			1	
HU	5			5	
IE	1			1	
IT	29		1	19	9
LT	1		1		
LU	1				1
LV	1		1		
MT	1			1	
NL	1				1
PL	17		1	15	1
PT	10		1	9	
RO	2			2	
SE	2			1	1
SI	1			1	
SK	2			1	1
UK	6	2		1	3
EU 28	188	11	18	121	38

* Of the nine French annual implementation reports that were not submitted / not admissible by July 2023, a total of six (including for two national programmes) had been submitted by November 2023. These additional six are included in all figures and tables of this report, as if these were submitted by July 2023. See annex I for a full overview of the AIR used.

Source: SFC2014, AIRs 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

This year's summary report of the AIRs follows a similar methodological approach as the reports from previous years and brings together an analysis of all financial expenditure and progress indicators from the 188 programmes². The monitoring data obtained for all programmes from data extracts provided by the European Commission was quality checked and, in some cases, revised to account for inconsistencies in data input in SFC2014. More details on the methodological approach and considerations can be found in reports from earlier years³.

² 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.

³ 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, submitted by the 27 Member States and the United Kingdom⁴. The current value of the total EU budget for the ESF is EUR 108.9 billion. This total consists of the original ESF allocation (EUR 84.6 billion), the allocations to ESF from REACT-EU (EUR 19.9 billion) and also 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 113.4 billion. Table 2 below only presents the EU amounts; the amounts when taking national co-financing into account are presented in table 3. The EU budgets per type of region 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 specified by type of regions and are presented separately.

Table 2. Allocated ESF/YEI budgets – EU amounts only (in € million)

MS	ESF (EU amount)			YEI	ESF+YEI Total	
	ESF – base	Contribution to YEI	Top-up by REACT-EU			Total ESF
AT	442.1	-	114.2	556.3	-	556.3
BE	973.4	64.4	159.2	1 197.0	64.4	1 261.4
BG	1 476.8	55.3	266.0	1 798.2	55.3	1 853.4
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	-	873.7	8 385.1	-	8 385.1
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	5 888.0	14 367.3	1 392.3	15 759.6
FI	518.3	-	51.6	569.9	-	569.9
FR	5 458.4	483.7	1 190.7	7 132.8	480.9	7 613.6
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	346.5	5 073.8	49.8	5 123.6
IE	416.4	68.1	141.6	626.1	68.1	694.3
IT	10 265.9	940.1	8 006.1	19 212.1	940.1	20 152.2
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	22.5	699.2	29.0	728.2
MT	134.6	-	111.2	245.8	-	245.8
NL	510.3	-	280.8	791.1	-	791.1
PL	12 874.3	269.7	79.8	13 223.8	269.7	13 493.5
PT	7 176.4	225.2	431.8	7 833.3	225.2	8 058.5
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	486.5	3 044.3	86.1	3 130.4
UK	4 706.2	185.3	-	4 891.5	185.3	5 076.8
Total	84 540.0	4 476.7	19 872.1	108 888.8	4 473.9	113 362.7
Less dev	49 260.8	1 707.9	-	50 968.7	-	50 968.7
More dev	23 602.9	1 772.4	-	25 375.3	-	25 375.3
Transition	11 676.2	996.4	-	12 672.7	-	12 672.7
Not specified	-	-	19 872.1	19 872.1	4 473.9	24 346.0

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

⁴ 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 for ESF. 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 (these 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 146.9 billion, which includes the recent allocation to ESF of EUR 20.2 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 151.4 billion is available. This amounts to a co-financing rate of 75 %, meaning that 75 % of the total budget is financed by the EU, and 25 % by national contributions.

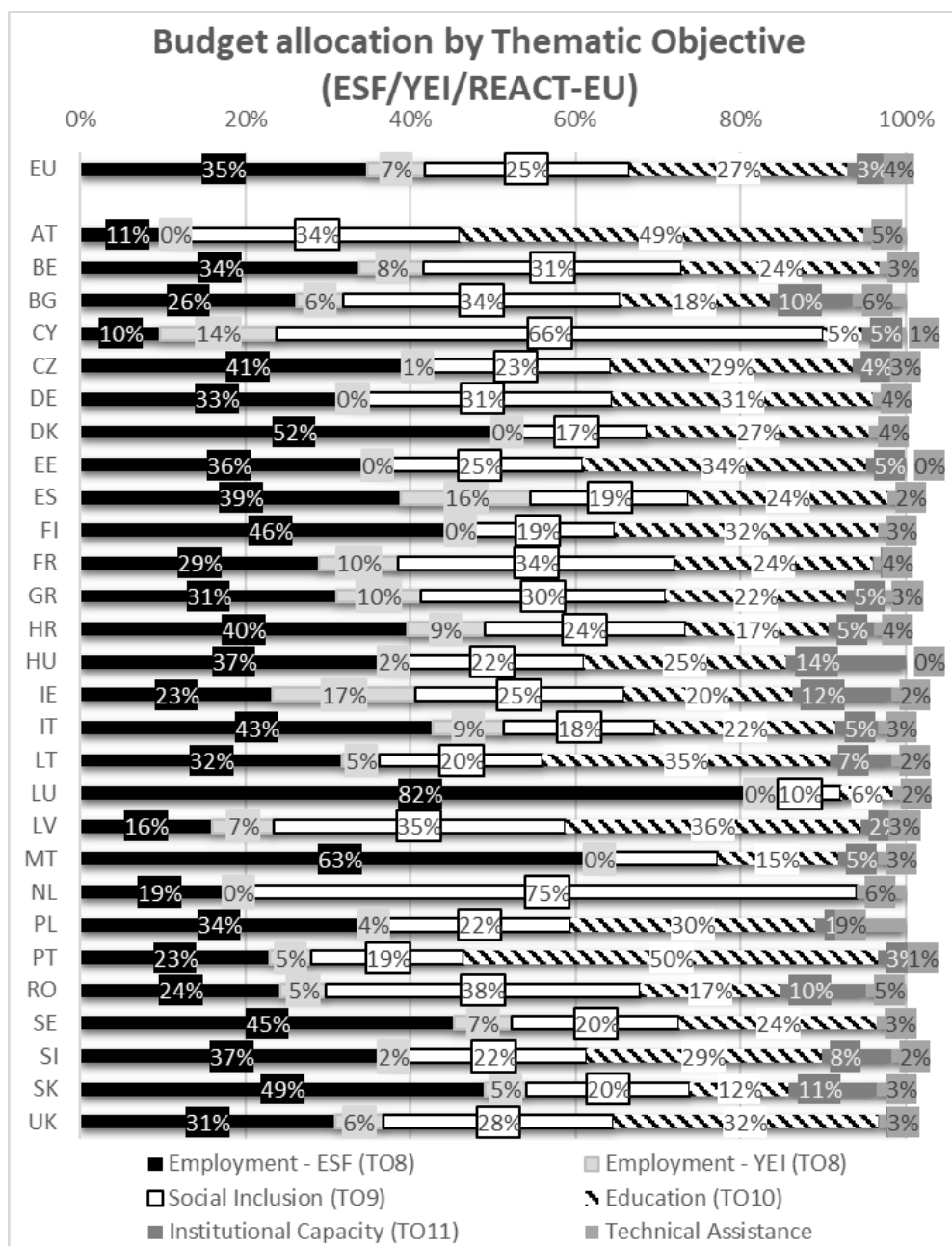
Table 3. Allocated ESF/YEI budgets – EU + national amounts (in € million)

MS	ESF (EU + national contribution)				YEI	ESF+YEI	
	ESF – base	Contribution to YEI	Top-up by REACT-EU	Total ESF		Total	% EU financing
AT	875.7	-	114.2	989.9	-	989.9	56%
BE	2 159.7	128.8	164.0	2 452.4	64.4	2 516.8	50%
BG	1 736.2	65.0	266.0	2 067.3	55.3	2 122.5	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	-	898.8	13 448.7	-	13 448.7	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	5 937.3	17 864.1	1 392.3	19 256.3	82%
FI	1 036.5	-	89.9	1 126.5	-	1 126.5	51%
FR	9 619.7	660.9	1 227.1	11 507.7	480.9	11 988.6	64%
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	346.5	6 128.7	49.8	6 178.4	83%
IE	832.7	136.3	141.6	1 110.6	68.1	1 178.8	59%
IT	16 969.8	1 422.3	8 117.9	26 510.1	940.1	27 450.2	73%
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	22.5	818.6	29.0	847.6	86%
MT	168.3	-	111.2	279.5	-	279.5	88%
NL	1 030.8	-	297.6	1 328.4	-	1 328.4	60%
PL	15 148.4	317.3	80.1	15 545.8	269.7	15 815.5	85%
PT	8 719.0	264.9	431.8	9 415.7	225.2	9 640.9	84%
RO	5 439.5	178.4	234.0	5 851.9	151.6	6 003.5	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	2 975.9	101.3	491.1	3 568.4	86.1	3 654.5	86%
UK	8 502.0	346.7	-	8 848.7	185.3	9 034.0	56%
Total	120 797.4	5 979.7	20 160.6	146 937.7	4 473.9	151 411.6	75%
Less dev	59 709.3	2 160.0	-	61 869.2	-	61 869.2	82%
More dev	44 635.8	2 503.5	-	47 139.3	-	47 139.3	54%
Transition	16 452.3	1 316.3	-	17 768.6	-	17 768.6	71%
Not specified	-	-	20 160.6	20 160.6	4 473.9	24 634.5	99%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

To better understand the priorities chosen by Member States within these overall budgets, the figure below summarises the distribution of these three funds across the four ESF-relevant Thematic Objectives per Member State.

Figure 2. Allocation to thematic objectives – by fund



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The figure shows how Member States have been able to direct their ESF programmes to specific national priorities. In the Netherlands, for instance, 75 % of the budget is dedicated to Social Inclusion (Thematic Objective 9), compared to 21 % in Lithuania, close to the legally required minimum of 20%⁵. In that regard, in Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg and Malta 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 measures⁶.

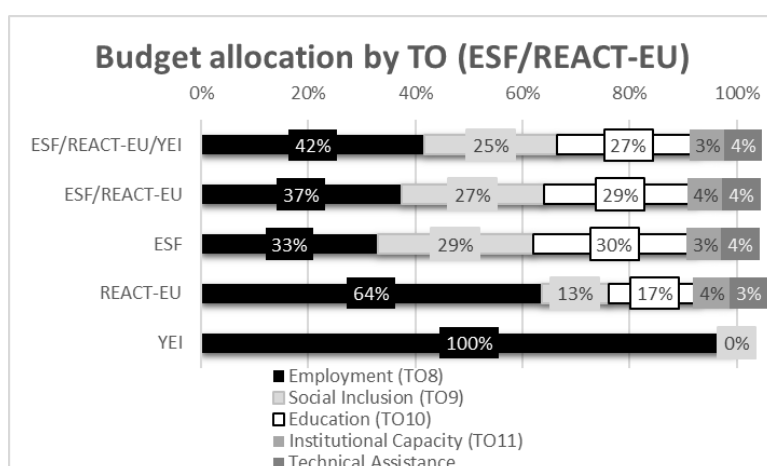
⁵ As required by Article 4 of the ESF Regulation (2013/1304).

⁶ 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%. This is particularly the case in smaller programmes with comparatively large REACT-EU top-ups such as Luxembourg and Malta.

The importance of employment objectives in Luxembourg (82 %), Malta (63 %), Denmark (52 %), Slovakia (52 %), and Sweden (49 %) also stands out, for instance in comparison to Cyprus (11 %), Austria (11 %), Latvia (17 %), and the Netherlands (19 %). This is mainly explained by the comparatively large REACT-EU top-ups in these smaller programmes that are invested in employment objectives.

Figure 3 reviews the allocated shares to these thematic objectives per fund and highlights how REACT-EU funds predominantly supported employment objectives (TO8 at 64 %, see section 5.5 for a more in-depth review), followed by education objectives (TO10 at 17 %) and social inclusion. Allocations in ESF are more balanced, with roughly one-third of the overall investments to each of the three larger thematic objectives (TO8, TO9 and TO10). YEI stands out by definition, as it only supports employment measures for young people (100 %). Taken together, it means that out of the total of EUR 151.4 billion investments (EU amount and national co-financing) for the three funds together, 42 % is reserved for employment objectives, 27 % for education and 25 % for social inclusion.

Figure 3. Allocation of investments to thematic objectives (ESF / REACT-EU)



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

2.2 ESF 2014-2020 and crisis response

The European Commission responded to the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent economic fallout with specific measures that introduced flexible rules for implementation and additional budgets for the ESF and the YEI. These measures are described in more detail in the synthesis report for 2020⁷. In summary, the first packages (**Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives – CRII and CRII+**) launched in the first half of 2020 introduced the opportunity of 100% EU co-financing for 2020 and 2021 and allowed the use of funds programmed in other Cohesion Policy funds for ESF (and vice-versa, depending on the local needs).⁸ 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 over these two years 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).

In 2022, further flexibility was introduced in the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy rules to allow Member States to reallocate funding in their programmes to emergency support for people fleeing from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The **CARE and FAST CARE**

⁷ 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.

⁸ On this first part of the crisis-response via ESF and FEAD see the 'Evaluation of the support provided by ESF and FEAD under the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII and CRII+)'.⁸

Regulations allows the use of REACT-EU funds for such emergency support to address the specific needs of Ukrainian refugees and extends the temporary possibility of 100% European co-financing into 2022 for that purpose⁹.

The variety and integrated way that these crisis response measures were launched means that these cannot be analysed and presented separately, nor in isolation from 'ordinary' programme amendments. Old and new ESF interventions can be financed by (reallocated) pre-existing ESF budgets, increased budgets due to increased flexibility, increased co-financing, cross-fund re-programming or additional resources from REACT-EU. In turn, each of these modalities can be used to support any of the eligible activities, including the original ESF focus, as well as COVID-response activities on healthcare, social inclusion, education or labour market policies, as well as CARE support for Ukrainian refugees. All of this means that the allocated budgets and targets may have changed in response to the crises but can also represent adjustments to budgets and targets that would have taken place irrespective of any crisis.

To estimate the financial scope of the ESF response to multiple crises, this report compares budget allocations before and after the period of programme amendments following the approval of REACT-EU¹⁰. Figure 4 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 place¹¹. The figure points to an overall increase in ESF/YEI funds of EUR 20.3 billion since 2020. This can be put in perspective against the increase to ESF that is financed by REACT-EU of EUR 19.8 billion (of programme amendments approved by July 2023, see table 3); it means that an additional EUR 0.5 billion relates to the flexibility of reprogramming funds from ERDF/CF to ESF under CRII/CRII+. This is a net amount, including reallocations from and to ESF/YEI, measured by summing the EU amounts and national co-financing.

⁹ Regulation (EU) 2022/562 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 April 2022 amending Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and (EU) No 223/2014 as regards Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE), OJ L 109, 8.4.2022, p. 1–5.

¹⁰ 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 since 2020 are assumed to be in relation to providing a response to COVID-19 or emergency support to Ukrainian refugees. 'Regular' programme amendments (i.e. those not related to these crises) since the start of the 2014–2020 programming period have also been documented in a previous analysis (cf. footnote 12).

¹¹ 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 7, 2023.

Figure 4. Development of financial allocations over time to ESF/ YEI (2020-2022), since REACT-EU (Adopted May 2020)

Comparing approved OP (at 31/5/2020) against OP versions used in AIR2022 (as of July 2023)									
(x€1,000)	Total ESF/YEI - OP 05/2020 (baseline)	TO08 - YEI	TO08 - ESF	TO09 - ESF	TO10 - ESF	TO11 - ESF	TA - ESF	Total changes - ESF/YEI	% change
AT	€ 875 739	€ -	€ -2 600.0	€ 69 224.5	€ 48 459.7	€ -	€ -910.0	€ 114 174.1	13%
BE	€ 2 366 799	€ 363.2	€ 91 795.9	€ 70 436.4	€ -21 989.9	€ -	€ 9 423.8	€ 150 029.4	6%
BG	€ 1 855 362	€ 188.3	€ 172 174.6	€ 171 400.1	€ 24 876.0	€ -80 488.5	€ -20 963.0	€ 267 187.5	14%
CY	€ 173 953	€ -	€ -5 454.1	€ 123 006.9	€ -6 724.7	€ -3 460.0	€ -	€ 107 368.0	62%
CZ	€ 4 232 156	€ -	€ 287 710.5	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 10 429.1	€ 298 139.6	7%
DE	€ 12 539 880	€ -	€ 436 636.3	€ 213 341.7	€ 217 324.4	€ -	€ 41 543.8	€ 908 846.2	7%
DK	€ 410 953	€ -	€ 55 715.9	€ -	€ -2 150.0	€ -	€ 1 933.5	€ 55 499.5	14%
EE	€ 682 235	€ -	€ 9 000.0	€ 3 760.0	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ 12 760.0	2%
ES	€ 13 288 030	€ 15 052.6	€ 3 697 393.7	€ 672 068.2	€ 1 497 434.3	€ -	€ 86 366.5	€ 5 968 315.3	45%
FI	€ 1 036 526	€ -	€ 47 154.7	€ 10 312.0	€ 25 951.8	€ -	€ 6 513.1	€ 89 931.6	9%
FR	€ 10 944 615	€ 3 435.1	€ 603 545.1	€ 614 337.3	€ -222 329.3	€ -484.2	€ 45 471.0	€ 1 043 975.1	10%
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	€ 188 974.4	€ -111 152.9	€ -77 821.5	€ -	€ 530 000.0	28%
HU	€ 5 707 720	€ -	€ 300 656.9	€ 127 820.7	€ 42 224.1	€ -	€ -	€ 470 701.7	8%
IE	€ 1 157 177	€ -	€ -120 000.0	€ -	€ -	€ 141 604.2	€ -	€ 21 604.2	2%
IT	€ 19 742 251	€ 10 519.3	€ 5 174 189.7	€ 1 308 608.1	€ 545 109.1	€ 437 396.9	€ 232 141.4	€ 7 707 964.5	39%
LT	€ 1 357 999	€ -	€ 189 683.7	€ 17 699.2	€ -18 743.3	€ -15 871.1	€ -3 404.5	€ 169 363.9	12%
LU	€ 40 112	€ -	€ 71 696.5	€ 2 100.0	€ -500.0	€ -	€ -100.0	€ 73 196.5	182%
LV	€ 775 198	€ -	€ 5 159.5	€ 37 468.3	€ 30 108.2	€ -310.0	€ -	€ 72 426.0	9%
MT	€ 132 367	€ -	€ 149 696.3	€ -	€ -6 500.0	€ 2 500.0	€ 1 437.5	€ 147 133.8	111%
NL	€ 1 030 771	€ -	€ -	€ 269 542.4	€ -	€ -	€ 28 077.3	€ 297 619.8	29%
PL*	€ 15 794 332	€ -	€ -189 512.3	€ 245 083.7	€ -28 483.4	€ -5 958.4	€ -4 329.9	€ 21 152.7	0%
PT	€ 9 287 641	€ 153.3	€ 323 950.3	€ -54 761.7	€ 195 065.1	€ -58 638.0	€ -52 529.4	€ 353 239.5	4%
RO	€ 5 762 876	€ 1 068.7	€ -208 227.5	€ 966 248.8	€ -469 692.7	€ 12 996.2	€ -61 767.0	€ 240 626.5	4%
SE	€ 1 569 091	€ -	€ 162 111.1	€ 67 000.0	€ 63 993.7	€ -	€ -	€ 293 104.8	19%
SI	€ 919 188	€ -	€ -9 042.3	€ 17 421.7	€ 4 825.6	€ -	€ -	€ 13 205.0	1%
SK	€ 2 708 807	€ -42 399.7	€ 714 286.1	€ 163 836.1	€ 23 906.8	€ 71 446.3	€ 14 603.5	€ 945 679.0	35%
UK	€ 9 232 271	€ -6 364.8	€ 28 947.6	€ 394 010.5	€ -562 375.1	€ -26 000.0	€ -26 482.3	€ -198 264.2	-2%
EU	€ 131 136 194	€ -15 537.3	€ 12 375 600.2	€ 6 209 794.5	€ 1 086 535.3	€ 333 521.5	€ 281 124.3	€ 20 275 391.4	15%

*the total changes reported for PL is EUR 4.5 million higher than individual TO; a recent CARE revision allocated ESF funds to non-ESF priorities

Source: authors calculations based on AIR2022 and related approved OP (data extracted on July 6, 2023). Amounts include EU + national co-financing¹².

Substantial increases in budget since 2020 can be seen in Italy (EUR 7.7 billion), Spain (EUR 6.0 billion), France (EUR 1.0 billion), Slovakia (EUR 0.9 billion), Germany (EUR 0.9 billion). The largest relative budget increases were observed in Luxembourg (an added EUR 73 million or 182 % of the original budget), Malta (EUR 147 million or 111 % of the original ESF budget) and Cyprus (62 %). Also, in relative terms larger programmes in Spain and Italy show substantial increases, with 45 % and 39 % of the original budgets respectively. Such increases include both fresh funds made available through REACT-EU but may also come from changes to ERDF budgets that may have shifted from or towards the ESF under the flexibility rules introduced by CRII+. Only the United Kingdom shows reduced budgets since 2020, it did not receive any additional funds under REACT-EU. In Poland, the overall budget has increased only marginally (EUR 21.2 million against a total budget of EUR 15.8 billion); flexibility rules of CRII+ allowed reprogramming ESF resources towards ERDF, also partially compensating the additional fresh funds of EUR 80.1 million allocated to ESF through REACT-EU¹³. Slovenia and Estonia have chosen to dedicate a relatively small share of their REACT-EU budget to ESF, leading to relatively small budget increases in comparison to 2020 (2% and 1%).

A review of the changes since 2020 allows charting the specific priorities selected by Member States in their crisis response. Over half of the increase in budget (EUR 12.4 billion) is allocated to employment objectives (TO8), for instance supporting short-time

¹² All YEI investments, by definition, take place in Thematic Objective 8 (Employment). Due to the different trends in employment investments for YEI (lower) and ESF (higher), these are presented separately in this figure. Like the other sections in this report, this section considers the mandatory corresponding ESF investments programmed as part of YEI interventions (as required by ESF Regulation article 22(1)) as an integral part of YEI investments and includes these in the YEI column.

¹³ The value of EUR 80.1 million is not visible in this figure, but can be consulted in table 3.

work schemes and other types of support to workers. Budgets for social inclusion objectives (TO9) also increased substantially (EUR 6.2 billion), with most support dedicated to entities that aim to combat the effects of COVID-19, as well as the provision of healthcare services, personal protective equipment and since 2022 emergency support measures for refugees fleeing the Russian aggression in Ukraine. Under thematic objective 10 (education objectives), an additional EUR 1.1 billion has been allocated, supporting the purchase of computers, other IT equipment, and software to facilitate distance learning. The more specific choices made for investing these funds are explored in chapter 5.

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, separate summaries are presented 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)¹⁴.

Table 4. Progress in financial implementation by end-2022 of ESF/REACT-EU/YEI combined

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	Implementation rate	
			2022	Δ2021		2022	Δ2021
AT	989.9	952.0	96%	8	701.0	71%	13
BE	2 516.8	2 810.3	112%	8	1 779.9	71%	12
BG	2 122.5	2 148.4	101%	1	1 805.1	85%	14
CY	281.3	362.9	129%	29	286.5	102%	28
CZ	4 530.3	5 120.4	113%	3	4 047.5	89%	18
DE	13 448.7	14 513.7	108%	3	12 367.9	92%	13
DK	466.5	503.5	108%	6	371.4	80%	18
EE	695.0	708.0	102%	1	596.2	86%	17
ES	19 256.3	22 992.2	119%	14	10 479.5	54%	11
FI	1 126.5	1 253.0	111%	4	966.8	86%	13
FR	11 988.6	14 968.1	125%	11	10 723.0	89%	14
GR	5 723.6	8 062.2	141%	18	4 874.0	85%	14
HR	2 418.9	2 311.5	96%	2	1 503.1	62%	11
HU	6 178.4	6 081.1	98%	-5	5 020.6	81%	9
IE	1 178.8	1 178.8	100%	5	870.9	74%	-0
IT	27 450.2	26 848.0	98%	15	14 932.9	54%	9
LT	1 527.4	1 608.9	105%	-4	1 372.3	90%	12
LU	113.3	123.1	109%	3	110.2	97%	6
LV	847.6	867.1	102%	4	664.2	78%	16
MT	279.5	287.8	103%	1	381.6	137%	64
NL	1 328.4	1 607.1	121%	-1	1 024.8	77%	8
PL	15 815.5	15 743.1	100%	3	12 235.8	77%	12
PT	9 640.9	11 515.9	119%	5	8 637.3	90%	18
RO	6 003.5	6 871.9	114%	8	4 103.5	68%	14
SE	1 862.2	1 613.5	87%	6	1 358.6	73%	15

¹⁴ **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.

SI	932.4	960.3	103%	-0	857.6	92%	23
SK	3 654.5	4 139.1	113%	7	2 899.6	79%	12
UK	9 034.0	9 573.6	106%	-2	6 812.7	75%	15
Total	151 411.6	165 725.4	109%	8	111 784.4	74%	13
MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	% expenditure declared	
			2022	Δ2021		2022	Δ2021
ESF - Less	59 709.3	65 936.5	110%	1	48 114.7	81%	13
ESF - More	44 635.8	51 761.8	116%	3	38 322.3	86%	13
ESF - Transition	16 452.3	20 060.5	122%	2	13 925.7	85%	14
ESF - Total	120 797.4	137 758.9	114%	2	100 362.7	83%	13
REACT-EU	20 160.6	15 374.8	76%	33	3 151.1	16%	13
YEI	10 453.7	12 591.7	120%	5	8 270.6	79%	6

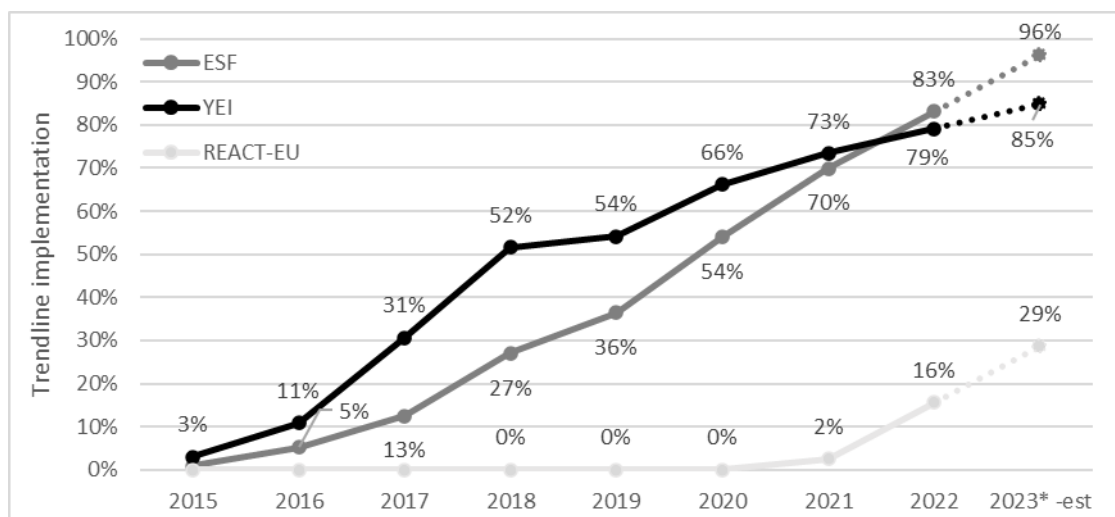
Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The table shows that the project selection rates have passed 100% all but a handful of Member States (Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, and Sweden). 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. At the EU-level these are advanced, at 74 %, which represents a decent 13 percentage point increase from 2021, while remaining considerably below 100%. Malta and Cyprus stand out, with implementation rates above 100%; both indicate in their annual implementation report that they follow a deliberate overbooking strategy to ensure maximum absorption by the end of 2023. Effectively, it helps build in a margin against future corrections that may follow from audits or other eligibility reviews and is a practice that also underlies the project selection rates above 100% in most Member States.

At the other end of the scale, implementation rates in Spain and Italy are at 54% and remain considerably behind the EU average. A particularly pertinent explanation for these two Member is that REACT-EU enabled the allocation of considerable new budgets in 2021 and 2022. The progress towards 'regular' implementation of ESF (i.e. without REACT-EU), for which 2023 will be the final opportunity to declare expenditures is therefore discussed separately in section 3.3. Regardless, the scope of remaining implementation in Member States with REACT-EU funds allocated to ESF remains ambitious.

To assess the likelihood with which ESF programmes will declare all expenditures by the end of 2023, the most recent change in implementation rates was extrapolated to estimate the progress towards next year, as presented in Figure 5 below. It shows that the current rate of growth for implementation rates of ESF would result in using 96 % of the funds by the end of 2023, even if REACT-EU implementation is excluded. Figure 5 also shows how the implementation's growth rate in YEI has been decreasing since 2020. On its current trajectory, it is expected to reach 85 % by the end of 2023. The trajectory for REACT-EU is also extrapolated against the current rate of growth, but here an increase in the final years is more likely. Firstly, because ESF and YEI also have shown the ability to increase declared expenditures in the first three years after their start. Secondly, the absolute increase in declared expenditures required to declare all allocated funds within the timeframe of the fund is practically similar to the current absolute expenditures declared for ESF in 2022 (EUR 15.9 billion).

Figure 5. Trajectory of implementation rates for ESF/YEI/REACT-EU since 2015



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

3.2.2 Outputs – ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined

This section summarises the outputs achieved at EU level and aims to present the number and type of individuals that were reached by ESF, YEI and the part of REACT-EU dedicated to ESF at the end of 2022. With all three funds combined, a total of 68.2 million participations¹⁵ were recorded, among which sufficient information on background characteristics (such as employment status) has been collected for 64.6 million¹⁶. Table 5 highlights that Greece (74 %) and Hungary (77 %) show the lowest shares of participations for which the required individuals' core characteristics were collected. 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. DG EMPL's audit methodology uses 10 % as an acceptable 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 Ireland.

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	236 629	61 667	-	298 296	313 054	95%
BE	1 416 205	43 581	199 349	1 659 135	1 664 981	100%
BG	2 013 602	212 361	86 778	2 312 741	2 313 308	100%
CY	73 641	70 724	7 206	151 571	151 571	100%
CZ	884 281	-	6 151	890 432	890 474	100%
DE	3 351 315	87 031	-	3 438 346	3 446 951	100%
DK	121 831	3 596	-	125 427	125 427	100%

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ Please note that figures for "Grand total" reported in the AIRs are insufficiently detailed for the analysis in this chapter. Therefore, the synthesis report conducts all analyses on the basis of the total of the reported 64.6 million participations.

EE	253 453	-	-	253 453	263 103	96%
ES	6 800 907	697 256	1 297 355	8 795 518	9 886 393	89%
FI	420 072	15 981	-	436 053	451 796	97%
FR	5 237 157	421 112	727 187	6 385 456	6 465 259	99%
GR	1 362 237	-	71 690	1 433 927	1 925 171	74%
HR	460 433	-	41 959	502 392	503 496	100%
HU	2 439 626	163 698	40 089	2 643 413	3 417 571	77%
IE	319 905	-	10 284	330 189	383 443	86%
IT	11 648 379	341 469	623 047	12 612 895	13 353 288	94%
LT	1 057 648	17 423	61 826	1 136 897	1 136 897	100%
LU	25 067	45 167	-	70 234	70 234	100%
LV	418 114	10 263	29 571	457 948	461 766	99%
MT	142 251	72 553	-	214 804	214 804	100%
NL	611 395	245 897	-	857 292	857 648	100%
PL	8 955 710	1	285 865	9 241 576	9 245 049	100%
PT	3 595 722	11 744	86 389	3 693 855	3 705 310	100%
RO	1 923 671	9 109	34 094	1 966 874	1 967 317	100%
SE	364 725	64 672	37 017	466 414	485 360	96%
SI	284 819	-	2 950	287 769	287 771	100%
SK	1 176 611	19 212	119 566	1 315 389	1 392 673	94%
UK	2 464 957	-	119 393	2 584 350	2 786 009	93%
Total	58 060 363	2 614 517	3 887 766	64 562 646	68 166 124	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: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 6.3 million participations recorded in the year 2022, reaching a cumulative total of 64.6 million. The pace at which participations have been recorded has increased consistently since 2017 but has particularly increased in Cyprus (almost doubled the number of participations in 2021) and Romania (from 1.3 million to almost 2.0 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, other than the fact that both reported limited participation in the first four years of implementation. In Italy and Poland, a considerable increase in absolute numbers can also be observed (1.9 million in Italy, and slightly under 1.0 million in Poland). The reported number of participations for Ireland has been stable since 2019 as its activities were fully booked by then. The reporting on the finalisation of these activities is ongoing, with increasing expenditures to a current implementation rate of 74 %. In its AIR, additional participation figures are expected due to implementation of REACT-EU and CARE, which will be reported in its final implementation report due in 2025¹⁷.

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

MS	Cumulative until 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021	Cumulative until 2022
AT	107 442	151 733	197 607	220 228	284 748	298 296
BE	699 895	952 635	1 212 787	1 420 219	1 578 651	1 659 135
BG	709 499	1 074 495	1 289 023	1 840 707	2 103 589	2 312 741
CY	10 084	11 883	13 407	15 117	79 369	151 571

¹⁷ The cumulative figures presented here for Ireland are slightly lower than in previous synthesis reports. All Member States revise the numbers reported for indicators, not only for reporting year 2022, but also for previous years in response to, for instance, new or adjusted monitoring data received from IB / beneficiaries, completed checks for eligibility or new projects completed. In most cases, such adjustments lead to higher numbers; in comparison to the values reported in AIR2021, Ireland is the only case where the figures were adjusted in a downward direction. This reduction is also explained by the fact that all budgets had been committed; when the COVID response package allowed co-financing to cover up to 100 %, a number of smaller operations were no longer booked under the ESF programme, leading to slightly lower participation figures.

CZ	98 120	304 453	465 264	610 509	758 870	890 432
DE	1 538 222	2 048 616	2 532 108	2 885 113	3 227 927	3 438 346
DK	18 601	38 256	62 143	84 726	107 752	125 427
EE	75 732	117 457	155 136	193 218	230 945	253 453
ES	3 300 280	4 760 528	6 118 806	7 356 679	8 356 986	8 795 518
FI	138 369	204 148	266 221	314 078	361 001	436 053
FR	2 903 227	3 885 873	4 662 486	5 369 772	6 141 441	6 385 456
GR	547 095	713 367	877 201	1 026 303	1 325 978	1 433 927
HR	116 993	184 620	231 954	405 100	464 257	502 392
HU	435 568	1 038 466	1 571 670	2 197 536	2 502 608	2 643 413
IE	182 153	267 094	330 189	330 189	330 189	330 189
IT	2 768 812	5 300 635	7 839 964	9 077 089	10 667 672	12 612 895
LT	264 904	500 328	750 375	897 858	1 033 881	1 136 897
LU	8 590	13 883	18 373	66 232	68 577	70 234
LV	122 403	220 235	307 382	355 307	406 559	457 948
MT	9 264	18 258	33 655	168 703	185 642	214 804
NL	436 091	517 143	572 842	704 415	832 276	857 292
PL	1 710 133	3 479 514	5 212 211	6 862 025	8 266 346	9 241 576
PT	1 370 794	1 977 563	2 484 407	2 973 264	3 497 767	3 693 855
RO	328	383 235	653 848	834 120	1 328 031	1 966 874
SE	102 030	165 336	235 504	291 080	361 140	466 414
SI	60 243	126 737	182 199	216 422	254 731	287 769
SK	260 142	466 996	742 878	957 852	1 172 598	1 315 389
UK	1 031 082	1 436 403	1 815 603	2 067 597	2 393 921	2 584 350
Total	19 026 096	30 359 895	40 835 248	49 741 463	58 323 457	64 562 646

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 reported for type of common indicator. It shows that the share of unemployed and that of inactive persons is comparable (overall 34 % against 39 % respectively). This is also where the funds differentiate in scope; REACT-EU reached 43 % of persons in employment, whereas the YEI does not target persons in employment at all. The largest age group of all funds combined is persons below 25 years old (44 %), closely followed by 25- to 54-year-olds (42 %). The data underlines the substantial effect of YEI 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 (46 %), followed by ISCED level 3 or 4 (30 %). ESF tends to be focused on participants at ISCED levels 1 and 2, while YEI and REACT-EU relatively more often reached participants with higher qualifications.

Table 7. Total common outputs for participations (all 3 funds combined), cumulative by end-2022, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Total ESF	Total REACT-EU	Total YEI	Overall
Employment status				
CO01 Unemployed	18 290 880 32%	767 449 29%	3 176 431 82%	18 290 880 32%
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	6 445 689 11%	274 056 10%	870 942 22%	6 445 689 11%
CO03 Inactive	23 531 008 41%	729 363 28%	711 335 18%	23 531 008 41%
CO04 of which not in education or training	3 949 006 7%	192 436 7%	703 219 18%	3 949 006 7%
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	16 238 475 28%	1 117 705 43%	- 0%	16 238 475 28%
Total CO1+CO3+CO5	58 060 363	2 614 517	3 887 766	58 060 363
Age				
CO06 Below 25 years of age	24 642 741 42%	848 098 32%	2 785 082 72%	24 642 741 42%

CO06a Between 25-54 years of age	27 593 077	48%	1 447 046	55%	1 102 657	28%	27 593 077	48%
CO07 Above 54 years of age	5 822 742	10%	319 373	12%	-	0%	5 822 742	10%
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	2 764 665	5%	133 778	5%	-	0%	2 764 665	5%
Education								
CO09 With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	27 623 314	48%	919 757	35%	1 331 018	34%	27 623 314	48%
CO10 With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	16 903 887	29%	972 831	37%	1 607 191	41%	16 903 887	29%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	10 281 231	18%	532 740	20%	777 200	20%	10 281 231	18%
CO11a Other / unknown ISCED	3 251 833	6%	189 189	7%	172 343	4%	3 251 833	6%
Other background characteristics								
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	8 162 048	14%	492 061	19%	492 799	13%	8 162 048	14%
CO16 Participants with disabilities	3 798 830	7%	177 027	7%	195 039	5%	3 798 830	7%
CO17 Other disadvantaged	11 068 261	19%	305 865	12%	585 530	15%	11 068 261	19%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	596 842	1%	31 579	1%	33 091	1%	596 842	1%
CO19 From rural areas	12 061 715	21%	271 714	10%	602 490	15%	12 061 715	21%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 64.6 million participations, a total of 118 730 projects by social partners or non-governmental organisations were reported. Moreover, Member States reported to have supported 58 291 projects dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment. Another 81 221 projects targeted public administration / public services. The ESF has supported a total of 2 030 733 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. This is explained by the fact that some Italian OPs count individual vouchers for employment or inclusion measures as separate projects¹⁸. Germany and Poland are responsible for most projects dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in the labour market. Well over two-thirds of the projects targeting public administrations are found in Italy (70.8 %). 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 2014-2019 total	Sum of 2020	Sum of 2021	Sum of 2022	Sum of cumulative progress
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¹⁸ Clarification provided by DG EMPL geographical desk in January 2024.

Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or NGOs	93 014	9 826	5 881	10 009	118 730
Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment;	39 085	9 312	6 518	3 376	58 291
Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	52 619	8 990	11 412	8 200	81 221
Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative /social enterprises)	1 518 561	182 148	230 907	99 117	2 030 733

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

3.2.3 Results – ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined

Table 9 below the results as measured in common result indicators and shows the highest number of immediate results 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 85 % in the Netherlands and 57 % in France, to 3 % in Slovenia, 6 % in Cyprus, 7 % in Lithuania.

Table 9. Overview of common indicators for immediate results by Member State until 2022 (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	14 412	16 091	93 789	22 515	146 807	71 377	49%
BE	11 606	148 523	142 325	225 704	528 158	157 213	30%
BG	18 470	502 622	219 549	36 791	777 432	148 370	19%
CY	23	735	2 282	5 558	8 598	549	6%
CZ	3 899	21 305	247 063	131 053	403 320	86 212	21%
DE	64 705	335 032	1 594 554	272 269	2 266 560	582 968	26%
DK	1 133	2 149	9 400	3 739	16 421	6 881	42%
EE	1 319	19 108	60 676	18 120	99 223	37 840	38%
ES	307 807	398 777	2 742 729	1 506 625	4 955 938	1 205 600	24%
FI	2 220	10 855	7 073	21 387	41 535	14 800	36%
FR	536 238	393 609	601 288	1 423 012	2 954 147	1 695 494	57%
GR	44 084	48 135	361 900	74 615	528 734	77 707	15%
HR	5 172	3 478	31 156	43 606	83 412	13 554	16%
HU	13 244	45 997	631 419	415 540	1 106 200	113 472	10%
IE	4 785	81 563	116 862	25 761	228 971	73 734	32%
IT	195 138	324 953	527 807	801 370	1 849 268	244 234	13%
LT	5 995	27 556	159 897	115 923	309 371	22 352	7%
LU	247	-	1 465	826	2 538	222	9%
LV	1 635	19 861	42 512	39 284	103 292	33 401	32%
MT	362	3 814	15 362	3 888	23 426	3 811	16%
NL	16 342	16 922	25 034	160 234	218 532	184 750	85%
PL	110 748	66 518	1 211 027	1 146 398	2 534 691	1 117 241	44%
PT	75 131	81 565	365 887	351 099	873 682	28 505	3%
RO	36 453	101 742	133 651	150 164	422 010	154 643	37%
SE	3 582	24 645	44 885	36 808	109 920	51 667	47%
SI	172	4 835	51 152	40 074	96 233	3 088	3%
SK	750	125 744	26 745	56 246	209 485	57 405	27%
UK	73 602	209 190	825 110	313 073	1 420 975	764 917	54%

Total	1 549 556	3 035 551	10 292 640	7 442 482	22 320 229	6 952 335	31%
Results immediately after the intervention							
	All results				Disadvantaged		
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment	Total	Any result	% of all results
ESF – Less dev	331 994	1 222 666	3 483 696	2 350 763	7 389 119	1 755 490	24%
ESF – More dev.	756 803	1 071 794	3 683 741	2 622 754	8 135 092	3 223 091	40%
ESF - Transition	283 476	432 914	2 422 016	1 120 769	4 259 175	1 220 807	29%
REACT-EU	70 330	63 387	244 097	257 485	635 299	228 737	36%
YEI	106 953	244 790	459 058	1 090 711	1 901 512	524 210	28%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Table 10 presents the aggregated results achieved for a period of six months after interventions are completed. These figures need to be reviewed with caution because updates of these indicators can be reported every year but are only mandatory for AIR2019 and the final implementation report due by 2025. A total of 6.9 million participants are reported to have found a job six months after participation (of which 1.2 million were achieved in YEI programmes), and another 1.4 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 results reported for REACT-EU funded interventions is increasing, but remain relatively low; as these interventions were first included in 2021 more time may be necessary to achieve its full potential.

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

MS	Six months after intervention						
	All groups		Total	Above 54 years of age		Disadvantaged	
	Entered employment	Better LM position		Entered employment	% of all that entered employment	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
AT	29 067	3 044	32 111	2 872	10%	25 451	88%
BE	435 898	57 774	493 672	4 661	1%	100 006	23%
BG	74 612	244 240	318 852	7 499	10%	19 262	26%
CY	4 498	1 957	6 455	257	6%	222	5%
CZ	113 961	16 431	130 392	13 660	12%	38 576	34%
DE	119 595	117 594	237 189	4 618	4%	47 542	40%
DK	39 453	3 679	43 132	846	2%	16 310	41%
EE	22 329	4 380	26 709	4 605	21%	13 387	60%
ES	516 559	30 662	547 221	14 395	3%	176 741	34%
FI	24 779	19 502	44 281	1 937	8%	11 622	47%
FR	2 158 854	278 635	2 437 489	97 066	4%	1 109 545	51%
GR	184 154	35 200	219 354	6 113	3%	29 704	16%
HR	77 749	59 945	137 694	3 935	5%	10 070	13%
HU	116 042	72 284	188 326	7 895	7%	20 213	17%
IE	14 120	5 225	19 345	881	6%	9 146	65%
IT	1 405 332	100 873	1 506 205	94 033	7%	271 021	19%
LT	33 931	11 426	45 357	8 674	26%	4 376	13%
LU	2 566	-	2 566	78	3%	450	18%
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	151 192	77 995	229 187	7 718	5%	138 578	92%
PL	763 389	70 035	833 424	34 644	5%	324 704	43%
PT	176 063	44 033	220 096	3 360	2%	4 381	2%
RO	20 773	1 670	22 443	444	2%	1 843	9%
SE	34 695	91 003	125 698	1 622	5%	25 922	75%

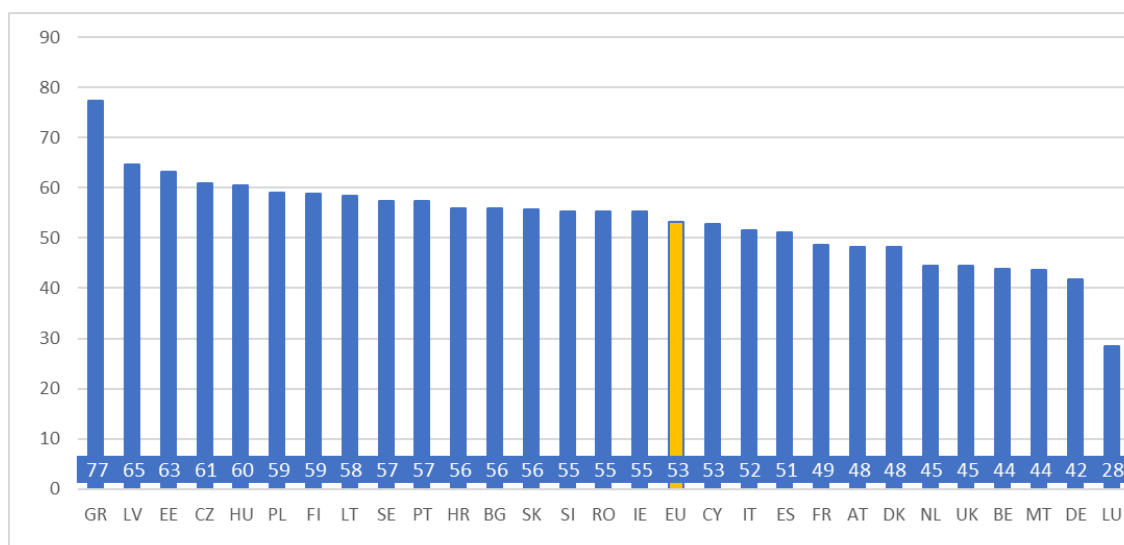
SI	34	-	34	-	0%	-	0%
SK	138 729	2 101	140 830	10 132	7%	97 132	70%
UK	156 554	70 866	227 420	11 649	7%	90 131	58%
Total	6 855 254	1 436 935	8 292 189	348 109	5%	2 602 262	38%
		All results		Above 54 years of age		Disadvantaged	
	Entered employment	Better LM position	Total	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
Less	1 401 921	496 779	1 898 700	110 418	8%	348 552	25%
More	3 120 118	592 459	3 712 577	189 645	6%	1 388 540	45%
Transition	884 887	212 367	1 097 254	39 299	4%	396 220	45%
REACT-EU	200 484	129 009	329 493	8 664	4%	80 304	40%
YEI	1 247 844	6 321	1 254 165	83	0%	388 646	31%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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, 77 % of participations are female, against 28 % in Luxembourg. In Greece, this can be explained by the relatively large size of ESF 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 as part of social inclusion intervention (9i) in 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 in Greece. 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 6. Relative share (%) of female participation across Member States (ESF/YEI/REACT-EU combined)

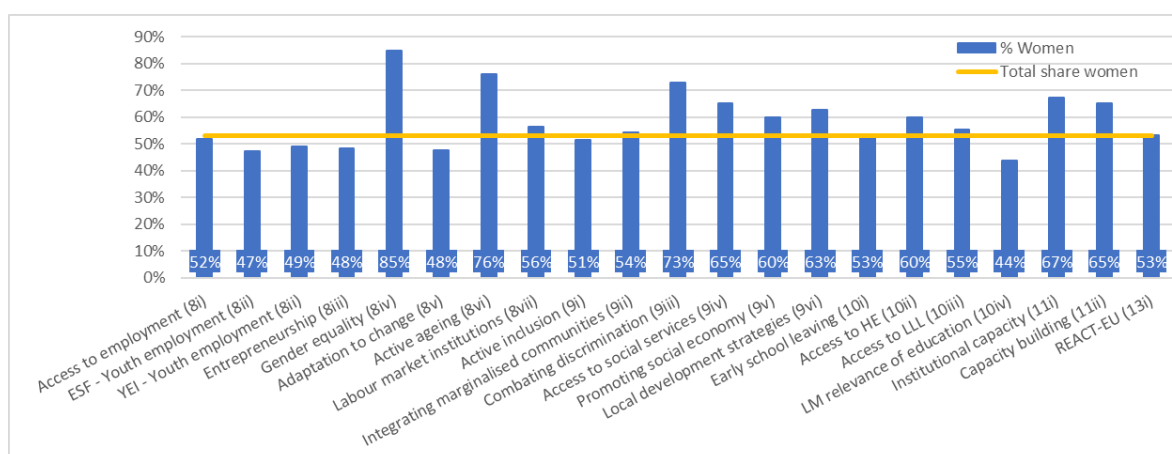


Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The distribution of men and women also varies 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 7 also shows high shares of women among recorded participations in investment priorities where this is not immediately obvious, such as among active ageing measures (76 %). 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 1.2 million). These check-ups were mostly focused on women (over 859 thousand participations). In other investment priorities the differences in gender balance are less pronounced, such as in local development strategies (63 %: 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 18 %- 44 % across the different regions. The annual implementation reports for these regional programmes do not provide specific explanations for these lower shares; possibly the measures focus on (vocational) education programmes in male-dominated sectors.

Figure 7. Relative share (%) of female participation – by investment priority

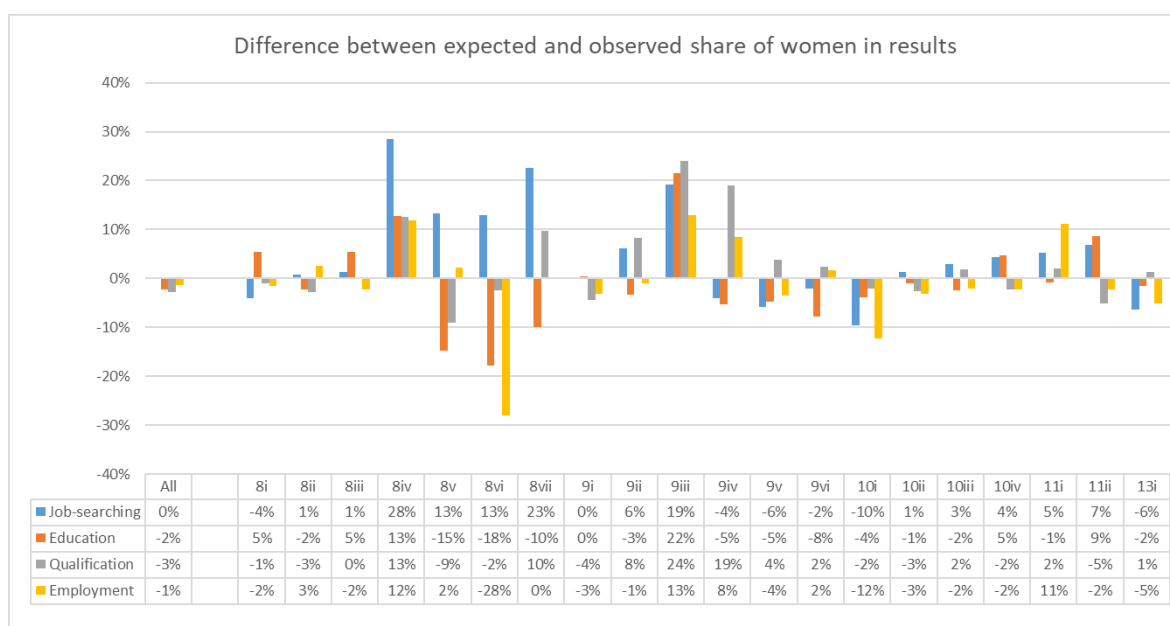


Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 together¹⁹. With all investment priorities taken together, the number of women that were activated into job searching appear quite in balance to the reference population. Other types of results show slightly less women among the results than what could be expected based on their participation in the interventions. Women counted around 51% of all participants that entered education (51.0 %) or obtained a qualification (50.5 %) were female, while women made up 53.3 % of all reported participations (hence -2 % and -3 % in figure 8, under 'all'). A share of 51.7 % of recorded participations by unemployed and inactive persons were women, while the share of women among those that found employment was 50.3 %, resulting in a rounded difference of 1 percentage point. 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.

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



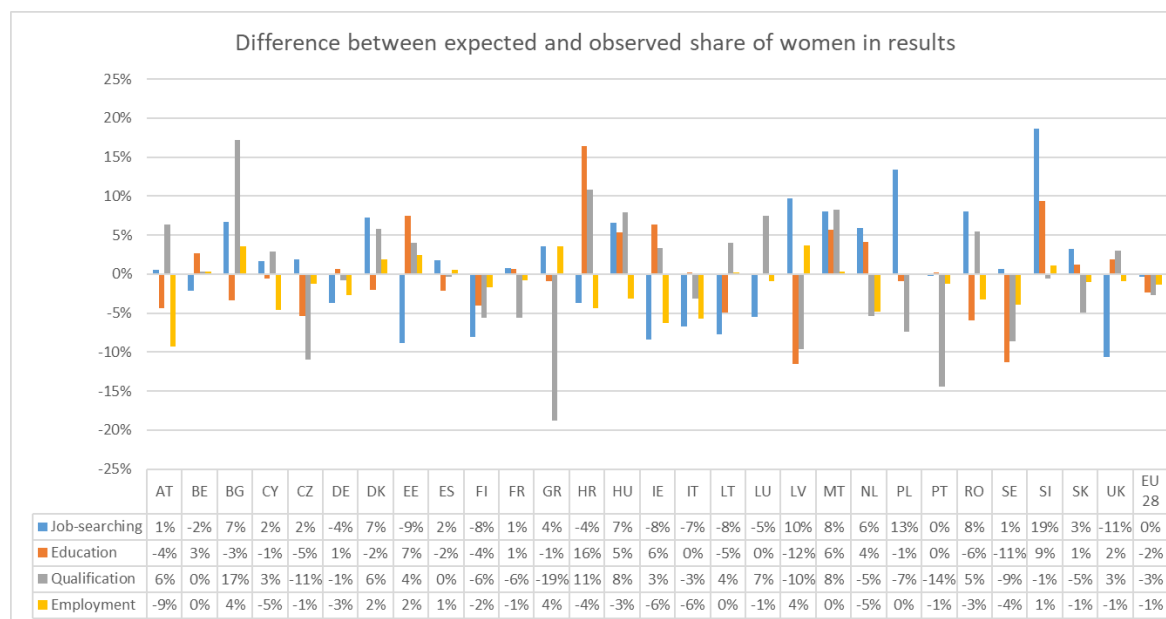
Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The figure shows how there is considerable variation across the different types of investment priorities. 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 (85 % and 73 % of all participations in these investment priorities), but figure 8 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' 70 % of the inactive participations reported (hence the reported difference of 28 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 (8vi) also calls for attention. While women make up the vast majority of participations of these measures (76 %), the share of women in this investment priority that entered education is considerably lower (58 %, a difference that is rounded off at 18 p.p.). This is mainly related to the types of measures chosen in Poland, where health checkups were focused primarily to women, while these measures did not seek to improve labour market status or moving towards education. The possible results achieved among women in these interventions in Poland (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 9. Several 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, Hungary, Malta, 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 the data does not point to *structural* differences in the share of women across different types of results.

Figure 9. Difference in percentage points between observed share of women per result and share of women in reference population – by Member State



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 2022. 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 2022 ESF (EU + national share)

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	Implementation rate	
			2022	Δ2021		2022	Δ2021
AT	875.7	862.6	98%	2	700.7	80%	14
BE	2 159.7	2 444.6	113%	5	1 623.2	75%	13
BG	1 736.2	1 768.4	102%	1	1 500.9	86%	13
CY	176.8	243.5	138%	0	176.6	100%	-0
CZ	4 500.7	5 086.4	113%	3	4 017.7	89%	18
DE	12 549.9	13 769.5	110%	0	12 021.2	96%	11
DK	410.8	425.5	104%	-2	364.4	89%	18
EE	682.2	695.2	102%	1	594.2	87%	17
ES	10 288.8	15 253.5	148%	5	7 283.9	71%	11
FI	1 036.5	1 161.3	112%	2	948.1	91%	12
FR	9 619.7	12 326.6	128%	3	9 533.5	99%	17

GR	5 036.2	7 165.3	142%	15	4 544.5	90%	15
HR	1 664.4	2 088.0	125%	3	1 309.5	79%	16
HU	5 723.6	5 679.6	99%	-10	4 707.6	82%	6
IE	832.7	832.7	100%	-	682.4	82%	-0
IT	16 969.8	17 435.5	103%	2	12 780.2	75%	12
LT	1 412.2	1 493.2	106%	-5	1 275.7	90%	11
LU	40.1	49.9	124%	-	37.0	92%	7
LV	762.0	769.9	101%	0	595.7	78%	17
MT	168.3	176.6	105%	2	179.0	106%	29
NL	1 030.8	1 302.3	126%	-0	986.8	96%	8
PL	15 148.4	15 092.5	100%	2	11 686.3	77%	13
PT	8 719.0	10 661.5	122%	3	7 945.2	91%	18
RO	5 439.5	6 271.2	115%	2	3 988.4	73%	14
SE	1 436.6	1 255.1	87%	-1	1 132.8	79%	13
SI	898.5	936.4	104%	-1	839.0	93%	24
SK	2 975.9	3 382.4	114%	6	2 471.5	83%	11
UK	8 502.0	9 129.8	107%	-2	6 436.3	76%	16
Total	120 797.4	137 758.9	114%	2	100 362.7	83%	13
MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	% expenditure declared	
			2022	Δ2021		2022	Δ2021
Less developed	59 709.3	65 936.5	110%	3	48 114.7	81%	13
More developed	44 635.8	51 761.8	116%	1	38 322.3	86%	13
Trans.	16 452.3	20 060.5	122%	2	13 925.7	85%	14
<i>Totals are based on latest approved version of operational programmes by July 6, 2023.</i>							
<i>Δ2021 shows the difference between 2022 and 2021 project selection rates, using this year's allocated budget as reference. For AT, for instance, 14 means that this year's implementation rate (80 %) increased by 14 percentage points in relation to the share of eligible expenditures in 2021 compared to this year's allocated budget (66 %).</i>							
<i>All values refer to the total ESF amount (EU + national share) and include TA but exclude YEI and REACT-EU allocations.</i>							
<i>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</i>							

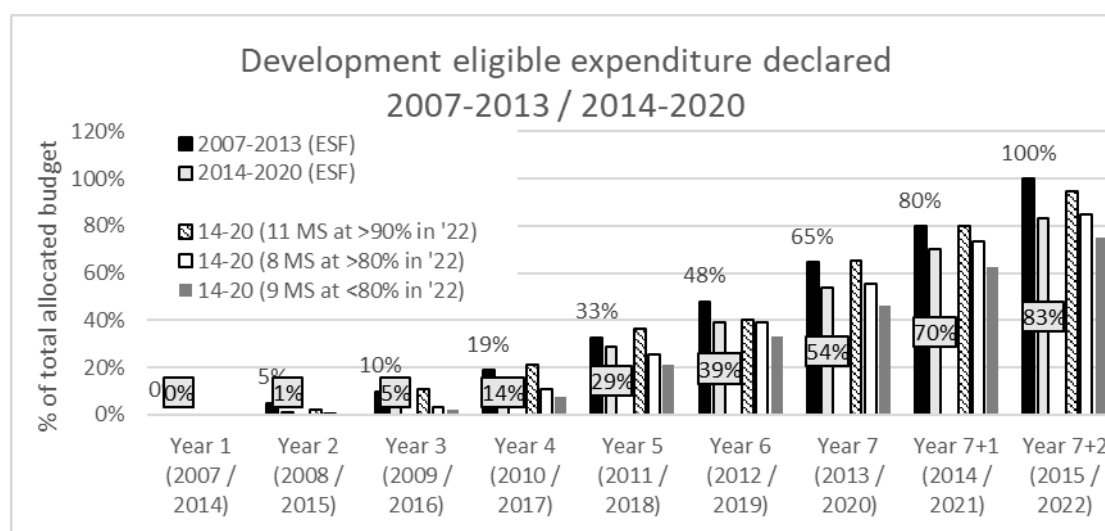
Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The table shows full implementation in Cyprus and Malta, and implementation rates close to the allocated budgets for the ESF in France (99%), the Netherlands (96 %), Germany (96 %), and Slovenia (93 %). Implementation rates are considerably below average in Spain, (71 %), Romania (73 %), Italy (75 %), Belgium (75 %), United Kingdom (76 %) Poland (77 %), Latvia (78 %), Sweden and Croatia (both 79 %). 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 %). These implementation rates show a relatively similar increase across countries in comparison to last year, at around 13 percentage points.

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 throughout. Figure 10 compares the overall trend in implementation of ESF2007-2013 against ESF2014-2020 as a whole, and against three groups of Member States. It shows that the Member States that presently report implementation rates above 90 % (see table 11) are also the Member States that remained relatively close to the pattern of implementation of the 2007-2013 programming period, and even exceeding it in years three to five (2009/2016 to 2011/2018 respectively). The nine Member States that reported implementation rates below 80 % in 2022 have also consistently reported lower implementation rates over time, particularly when compared against the 2007-2013 programming period. Overall,

implementation of ESF 2014-2020 started later than in 2007-2013, and advanced less from year-to-year in all implementation years of 2007-2013 except year 4 and 7.

Figure 10. Expenditure declared to the European Commission (implementation rate): 2007-2013 (ESF) / 2014-2020 (ESF)



Source: authors' calculations based on AIRs up to 2022 – Ex Post synthesis evaluation ESF 2007-2013 (SFC2007)²⁰

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 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021	Cumulative until 2022
AT	107 442	151 733	197 607	220 228	230 821	236 629
BE	610 149	817 591	1 049 676	1 225 946	1 346 930	1 416 205
BG	671 158	1 023 068	1 224 794	1 697 892	1 881 735	2 013 602
CY	6 063	6 751	7 756	8 886	72 574	73 641
CZ	95 776	300 394	459 782	604 799	752 948	884 281
DE	1 538 222	2 048 616	2 532 108	2 884 889	3 202 710	3 351 315
DK	18 601	38 256	62 143	84 726	107 524	121 831
EE	75 732	117 457	155 136	193 218	230 945	253 453
ES	2 671 228	3 899 529	5 102 798	6 105 492	6 555 853	6 800 907
FI	138 369	204 148	266 221	314 078	360 782	420 072
FR	2478230	3 327 745	4 028 651	4 664 660	5 170 549	5 237 157
GR	489 841	649 200	809 524	955 259	1 254 288	1 362 237
HR	82 930	144 396	190 388	363 534	422 524	460 433
HU	395 489	998 377	1 531 581	2 044 781	2 298 821	2 439 626
IE	172 908	256 836	319 905	319 905	319 905	319 905
IT	2 334 001	4 807 455	7 292 905	8 503 259	10 059 413	11 648 379
LT	220 668	438 746	688 549	836 032	967 313	1 057 648
LU	8 590	13 883	18 373	21 065	23 410	25 067
LV	97 115	191 067	277 836	325 736	376 988	418 114
MT	9 264	18 258	33 655	106 813	123 752	142 251
NL	436 091	517 143	572 842	601 433	611 395	611 395
PL	1 480 249	3 211 149	4 933 850	6 579 738	7 982 438	8 955 710

²⁰ Values for 2007-2013 based on ESF Ex-post Evaluation Synthesis 2007-2013 – EU synthesis report (2016). For 2014-2020, the group of MS at >90% consists of MT, CY, FR, DE, NL, SI, LU, FI, PT, LT, EL, the group >80% but lower than 90% of CZ, DK, EE, BG, SK, HU, IE, AT and the group below 80% is SE, HR, LV, PL, UK, IT, BE, RO, ES.

PT	1 304 214	1 902 892	2 399 560	2 883 833	3 399 634	3 595 722
RO	328	381 967	651 710	828 021	1 321 738	1 923 671
SE	75 187	136 297	203 679	256 533	322 464	364 725
SI	57 293	123 787	179 249	213 472	251 781	284 819
SK	215 445	381 502	631 048	838 474	1 049 866	1 176 611
UK	970 265	1 355 738	1 720 600	1 962 911	2 280 701	2 464 957
EU	16 760 848	27 463 981	37 541 926	45 645 613	52 979 802	58 060 363
MS	Cumulative until 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021	Cumulative until 2022
Less dev.	535 6798	10 923 974	16 268 848	20 769 045	25 069 201	28 613 375
More dev.	8 237 394	11 988 256	15 246 384	17 684 667	19 955 789	21 109 564
Transition	3 166 656	4 551 751	6 026 694	7 191 901	7 954 812	8 337 424

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The table above also shows the total number of ESF participations split by different category of region. The highest values are reported for less developed regions (28.6 million), followed by participation in more developed regions (21.1 million). The smallest number is recorded in transition regions (8.3 million)²¹. The comparatively low number of participations for transition regions is mainly explained by the fact that these are lower in number than the other types (compare for instance budget allocations to different types of regions in section 2.1). The table below presents the distribution of the common output indicators for the ESF across these three different types of regions in more detail and allows to appreciate the results of specific programming choices. For instance, the inactive population takes 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 2022, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Less developed	More developed	Transition			
Employment status						
CO01 Unemployed	6 108 702	21%	8 974 122	43%	3 208 056	38%
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	1 837 112	6%	3 404 847	16%	1 203 730	14%
CO03 Inactive	13 532 597	47%	6 795 449	32%	3 202 962	38%
CO04 of which not in education or training	1 440 934	5%	1 800 939	9%	707 133	8%
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	8 972 076	31%	5 339 993	25%	1 926 406	23%
Total CO1+CO3+CO5	28 613 375		21 109 564		8 337 424	14%
Age						
CO06 Below 25 years of age	13 140 433	46%	7 859 156	37%	3 643 152	44%
CO06a Between 25-54 years of age	12 109 791	42%	11 309 429	54%	3 235 149	39%
CO07 Above 54 years of age	3 361 351	12%	1 940 979	9%	520 412	6%
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	1 248 016	4%	1 188 717	6%	327 932	4%
Education						
CO09 With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	12 703 367	44%	10 178 459	48%	4 741 488	57%

²¹ While the numbers 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.

CO10 With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	8 817 885	31%	6 168 904	29%	1 917 098	23%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	5 603 448	20%	3 616 622	17%	1 061 161	13%
CO11a Other / unknown ISCED	1 488 582	5%	1 145 579	5%	617 672	7%
<u>Other background characteristics</u>						
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	1 810 685	22%	5 215 081	64%	1 136 282	14%
CO16 Participants with disabilities	1 324 238	35%	1 817 544	48%	657 048	17%
CO17 Other disadvantaged	4 911 484	44%	4 317 907	39%	1 838 870	17%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	122 640	21%	367 770	62%	106 432	18%
CO19 From rural areas	8 277 292	69%	2 641 722	22%	1 142 701	9%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 early school leaving (10i: 11.2 million), followed by active inclusion (9i: 10.4 million) and access to employment (8i: 8.3 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. Cumulative participations by Member State and investment priority

MS	Access to employment 8i	Youth employment (no YEI) 8ii	Entrepreneurs hip 8iii	Gender equality 8iv	Adaptation to change 8v	Active ageing 8vi	LM Institutions 8vii	Active inclusion 9i	Integration marginalised 9ii	Combating discrimination 9iii	Access to social services 9iv	Social economy 9v	Local development 9vi	Early school leaving 10i	Access to HE 10ii	Access to LLL 10iii	LM relevance education 10iv	Institutional capacity 11i	Capacity building 11i	Total ESF	%
AT	3 142	-	-	5 687	-	-	-	102 501	-	-	-	-	-	97 527	-	27 772	-	-	-	236 629	0%
BE	320 378	186 149	10 762	-	6 410	-	-	403 897	618	-	1 156	629	-	13 736	-	472 470	-	-	-	1 416 205	2%
BG	88 989	28 486	7 360	-	102 898	-	1 664	31 096	231 311	-	256 560	5 632	-	501 406	26 137	564 888	67 878	99 297	-	2 013 602	3%
CY	2 993	1 663	-	-	-	-	-	1 489	-	-	63 028	-	-	-	-	2 454	2 014	-	-	73 641	0%
CZ	229 464	-	-	114 168	174 594	-	3 468	80 358	11 041	1 416	40 515	-	56 238	138 957	14 937	-	-	19 125	-	884 281	2%
DE	25 147	170 541	83 562	68 898	641 049	-	-	815 206	-	481	-	-	-	600 457	18 389	285 579	642 006	-	-	3 351 315	6%
DK	-	-	33 256	-	19 627	-	-	10 678	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16 048	42 222	-	-	121 831	0%
EE	123 372	-	-	-	-	-	-	10 798	-	-	32 191	-	-	16 107	-	67 310	-	3 675	-	253 453	0%
ES	068 514	97 153	673 105	190 528	243 935	-	804	1 422 407	44 344	291 494	82 362	34 375	-	101 552	11 835	900 633	637 866	-	-	6 800 907	12%
FI	107 751	-	-	5 566	63 110	-	-	64 939	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	178 706	-	-	-	420 072	1%
FR	574 521	57 612	387 905	-	355 348	148	11 038	3 053 477	5 699	15 502	6 490	2 575	-	159 765	5 149	583 438	18 314	176	-	5 237 157	9%
GR	134 002	-	23 725	268 102	105 966	-	1 996	280 995	182	7 781	3 074	32	151	199 223	25 569	26 126	165 783	119 530	-	1 362 237	2%
HR	140 848	15 374	-	-	-	-	20 072	70 750	-	-	40 835	1 810	-	-	56 721	73 503	16 954	9 556	14 010	460 433	1%
HU	418 725	143 999	-	-	236 530	-	-	203 944	103 566	-	129 868	201	1 804	285 400	33 517	616 755	35 634	229 683	-	2 439 626	4%
IE	25 722	-	-	-	-	-	-	67 793	-	63	-	-	-	-	50 572	175 755	-	-	-	319 905	1%
IT	2 150 331	1 073 282	286	68 310	335 757	6 711	85 968	1 390 928	70 785	-	420 538	21 150	35 153	4 915 286	231 743	136 046	546 287	142 933	16 885	11 648 379	20%
LT	121 817	20 851	-	-	-	-	-	19 567	-	-	319 544	26 728	44 704	280 097	32 245	124 856	-	67 239	-	1 057 648	2%
LU	4 143	8 360	-	-	-	-	-	3 204	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9 360	-	-	-	25 067	0%
LV	95 345	-	-	-	487	-	-	52 677	-	-	120 471	-	-	24 522	3 409	69 767	25 024	26 412	-	418 114	1%
MT	10 416	5 713	-	-	72 553	-	-	10 619	-	-	4 169	-	-	3 563	1 304	29 968	-	3 733	213	142 251	0%
NL	49 223	-	-	-	-	-	-	562 172	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	611 395	1%
PL	959 258	715 187	57 742	89 929	369 463	1 124 730	4 663	391 588	-	-	866 757	117 570	43 376	1 876 323	734 008	513 277	975 449	115 297	1 093	8 955 710	15%
PT	178 781	-	2 279	497	970 485	-	-	585 699	-	11 818	67 241	55	5 371	213 135	223 516	826 404	498 192	12 249	-	3 595 722	6%
RO	253 913	184 451	87 846	-	50 589	-	77	-	110 116	-	392 308	15 461	33 162	358 773	24 593	267 636	99 818	44 928	-	1 923 671	3%
SE	52 353	22 757	-	-	-	-	-	28 789	-	-	-	-	2 553	-	-	258 273	-	-	-	364 725	1%
SI	44 157	23 869	-	-	-	12 175	-	13 143	-	-	-	1 041	-	-	136 012	32 522	21 788	112	284 819	0%	
SK	320 724	-	-	16 118	-	-	3 468	133 589	193 950	-	29 880	-	-	385 590	9 555	33 935	45 619	4 183	-	1 176 611	2%
UK	763 252	270 597	-	4 910	-	-	-	624 456	-	-	-	-	13 067	56 074	-	650 344	82 257	-	-	2 464 957	4%
Total	8 267 281	3 026 044	1 367 828	832 713	3 748 801	1 143 764	133 21810	436 759	771 612	328 555	2 876 987	227 259	235 57911	227 493	1 503 199	7 047 315	3 933 839	919 804	32 313	58 060 363	
%	14%	5%	2%	1%	6%	2%	0%	18%	1%	1%	5%	0%	0%	19%	3%	12%	7%	2%	0%		

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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, in absolute numbers and compared to the participation figures in that MS. In total 6.1 million participants who did not have a job entered employment, 9.6 million participants gained a qualification, 1.4 million participants became engaged in job searching, and 2.7 million persons entered education. Together this meant that almost 19.8 million of these positive results were achieved, which amounts to 34 % of all participants in ESF programmes. This does not automatically mean that these improvements are the direct consequence of ESF support²², but it does point to meaningful individual improvements after ESF interventions. Of these results, a total of more than 6.2 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 2022

MS	Results immediately after intervention						Disadvantaged	
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment	Total	% of participation	Any result	% of all results
AT	7 596	14 795	47 139	20 464	89 994	38%	63 597	71%
BE	8 970	130 803	132 153	215 388	487 314	34%	149 157	31%
BG	15 485	501 604	203 141	19 807	740 037	37%	141 533	19%
CY ²³	23	574	742	3 987	5 326	7%	354	7%
CZ	3 811	21 128	244 709	127 574	397 222	45%	85 032	21%
DE	61 559	331 270	1 555 978	267 848	2 216 655	66%	569 495	26%
DK	1 131	2 141	9 400	3 690	16 362	13%	6 871	42%
EE	1 319	19 108	60 676	18 120	99 223	39%	37 840	38%
ES	218 966	308 636	2 334 144	1 037 556	3 899 302	57%	971 238	25%
FI	2 196	10 571	6 925	21 271	40 963	10%	14 671	36%
FR	478 519	279 664	522 479	1 056 867	2 337 529	45%	1 450 081	62%
GR	43 821	46 471	344 498	66 929	501 719	37%	70 993	14%
HR	5 172	3 233	27 348	23 784	59 537	13%	13 022	22%
HU	13 101	45 122	625 147	388 280	1 071 650	44%	108 587	10%
IE	4 450	77 810	113 535	24 024	219 819	69%	71 091	32%
IT	195 138	324 953	527 807	801 370	1 849 268	16%	244 234	13%
LT	2 401	18 648	150 169	84 438	255 656	24%	21 764	9%
LU ²⁴	247	-	1 465	826	2 538	10%	222	9%
LV	1 183	19 270	32 774	31 732	84 959	20%	28 412	33%
MT	362	3 814	15 362	3 888	23 426	16%	3 811	16%
NL	12 384	15 641	21 465	116 114	165 604	27%	137 882	83%
PL	107 837	62 926	1 176 642	939 370	2 286 775	26%	998 316	44%
PT	75 054	80 166	365 887	293 885	814 992	23%	27 964	3%
RO	35 902	100 812	132 209	143 178	412 101	21%	153 247	37%
SE	2 966	16 773	42 979	21 103	83 821	23%	37 276	44%
SI	172	4 835	51 152	40 074	96 233	34%	3 088	3%
SK	713	94 284	26 579	34 422	155 998	13%	51 922	33%
UK	71 795	192 322	816 949	288 297	1 369 363	56%	737 688	54%
Total	1 372 273	2 727 374	9 589 453	6 094 286	19 783 386	34%	6 199 388	31%

²² See for instance for a review on causality of ESF support in the field of employment: European Commission (2023), *Meta-analysis of the ESF counterfactual impact evaluations – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union.

²³ In Cyprus, the comparatively low share of the total immediate common results out of the total participation (success rate) is explained by two compounding factors. First, CRII/CRII+ was targeted exclusively for participants in employment, who, by definition, did not achieve 'in employment' as a result. Second, participation in CRII/CRII+ was 6-times that in the rest of the programme (63 028 compared to a total participation figure of 10 613 before CRII/CRII+). Results for this target group were measured by the number of individuals who successfully retained employment (CVR1), which is not covered in the four main groups of individual results presented in this table. When excluding these CRII/CRII+ interventions, the total success rate for ESF interventions in Cyprus is 50 %.

²⁴ The comparatively low share of total immediate common results out of the total participation (success rate) in Luxembourg is explained by interpreting 'qualification' in the common indicator's definition stricter than necessary. The MA will adjust the achievement value for 'received qualification' in the final implementation report.

	Results immediately after intervention							Disadvantaged		
	All results						Total	% of participation	Any result	% of all results
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment						
Less dev	331 994	1 222 666	3 483 696	2 350 763	7 389 119	26%	1 755 490	24%		
More dev.	756 803	1 071 794	3 683 741	2 622 754	8 135 092	39%	3 223 091	40%		
Transition	283 476	432 914	2 422 016	1 120 769	4 259 175	51%	1 220 807	29%		

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 – 7 %, Lithuania – 9 %, Luxembourg – 9 %, Portugal – 3 %, Slovenia – 3 %), while in others these represent the largest part of the results achieved (France – 62 %, the Netherlands – 83 %, and the United Kingdom – 54 %). These differences also persist at the regional level, with 24% 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 six 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 AIR2022, this year's figures may not fully reflect the actual situation on the ground. So far, a total of 5.4 million participants are reported to have entered employment six months after leaving an ESF-supported operation, while 1.3 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 2.1 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 2022

MS	Six months after intervention						
	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
AT	29 067	3 044	32 111	2 872	10%	25 451	88%
BE	368 460	57 774	426 234	4 658	1%	90 685	25%
BG	40 241	173 318	213 559	7 013	17%	11 531	29%
CY	3 105	962	4 067	257	8%	182	6%
CZ	110 517	16 431	126 948	13 660	12%	37 776	34%
DE	119 013	116 190	235 203	4 610	4%	47 133	40%
DK	39 316	3 659	42 975	837	2%	16 288	41%
EE	22 329	4 380	26 709	4 605	21%	13 387	60%
ES	242 136	30 662	272 798	14 362	6%	102 607	42%
FI	24 770	19 502	44 272	1 937	8%	11 622	47%
FR	1 749 523	259 610	2 009 133	89 701	5%	956 578	55%
GR	165 067	35 200	200 267	6 113	4%	27 153	16%
HR	47 287	59 945	107 232	3 935	8%	8 336	18%
HU	89 264	40 827	130 091	7 895	9%	16 329	18%
IE	13 352	5 059	18 411	878	7%	8 975	67%
IT	1 208 841	100 873	1 309 714	94 033	8%	271 021	22%
LT	33 931	11 426	45 357	8 674	26%	4 376	13%
LU	2 566	-	2 566	78	3%	450	18%
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	137 067	68 662	205 729	7 003	5%	125 789	92%

PL	559 772	70 035	629 807	34 644	6%	187 315	33%
PT	121 346	44 033	165 379	3 360	3%	3 840	3%
RO	15 795	1 390	17 185	444	3%	1 723	11%
SE	19 995	91 003	110 998	1 523	8%	18 340	92%
SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SK	76 206	2 098	78 304	10 106	13%	54 214	71%
UK	140 914	70 866	211 780	11 649	8%	79 971	57%
EU28	5 406 926	1 301 605	6 708 531	339 362	6%	2 133 312	39%
	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
Less	1 402 180	496 779	1 898 959	110 418	8%	348 743	25%
More	3 120 118	592 459	3 712 577	189 645	6%	1 388 540	45%
Transition	884 887	212 367	1 097 254	39 299	4%	396 220	45%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 (5.8 million). ESF support through access to employment (thematic objective 8) most often resulted in participants entering a job (3.9 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 (1.7 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. 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
CR01 - Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	278 153	702 485	391 355	280
CR02 - Participants in education/training upon leaving	611 283	647 588	1 442 339	26 164
CR03 - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	2 357 432	1 086 213	5 820 247	325 561
CR04 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	3 899 524	1 681 137	511 148	2 477
Total (CR1-4)	7 146 392	4 117 423	8 165 089	354 482
CR05 - Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	1 968 931	2 804 054	1 416 274	10 129
	TO8	TO9	TO10	TO11
CR06 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2 892 496	1 830 943	682 575	912
CR07 - Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	484 598	302 897	443 666	70 444

	Total (CR6-7)	3 377 094	2 133 840	1 126 241	71 356
CR08 - Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving		211 332	111 593	16 381	56
CR09 – Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving		765 273	1 191 477	176 450	112

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 so²⁵. This report follows the same logic and primarily uses the median target achievement for most comparisons²⁶. 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 40 366 common output indicators and 5 389 programme specific output indicator records are reported. Targets are defined for a total of 1 562 common output indicator records (4 %). A total of 4 883 programme specific output indicators have a target (91 %)²⁷. 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 annual implementation reports point to a considerable increase in the number of indicators used compared to before the major re-programming in response to COVID-19; compare for instance the current over 5 thousand programme-specific indicators against the 3 715 in the programmes used in the annual implementation reports for 2019 – submitted in 2020. To underline the scope of this reprogramming, the additional indicators in REACT-EU dedicated priority axes are not even included in these totals (these are reported in section 3.4).

Figure 11 presents the range of output target achievement for each Member State graphically. The black line separating the two blue boxes shows the median values for each Member State and shows that practically all Member States report median target achievement above 100 %. The median means that half of the indicators with targets are below that value, and the other half of the targets in that Member State are above that achievement rate. The United Kingdom, Ireland and France show the lowest medians, at 84 %, 88 % and 88 % respectively, while the highest median target achievements are found in the Netherlands (223 %), Malta (168 %) and Belgium (167 %). At EU level, the median target achievement for all output indicators with a target is currently 106 % (rounded), and the median only varies to a small extent between 100 % in transition regions, 105 % in more developed regions and 108 % in less developed regions. The ceiling of the lowest quartiles is lowest in Spain, France,

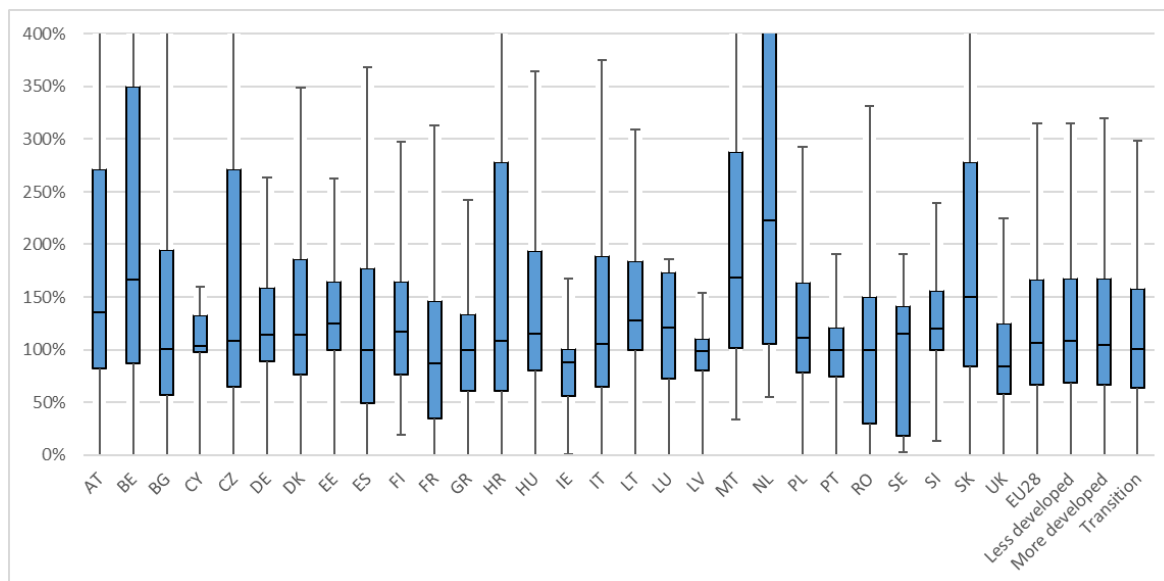
²⁵ See for instance European Commission, DG EMPL (2022), [ESF data support centre](#): final ESF synthesis report of annual implementation reports 2020 submitted in 2021, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ The target achievement analysis is based on the indicator targets in the latest approved programme version, and so influenced by revisions to indicator targets since the start of implementation. The target modifications are presented by Member States in proposed programme amendments and require the approval of the European Commission. Notably, in the case of indicators included in the performance framework, the modifications are only allowed if they are justified according to the criteria set out by the Regulations (e.g. there are justified changes in the assumptions underlying the estimation of the target).

Romania and Sweden, which indicates that a quarter of all output targets remains below achievement rates of 50 %.

Figure 11. Range and median of output target achievement – by Member State (ESF)



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)²⁸

The target achievements can also be compared across different types of indicators. When comparing similar types of indicators – regardless of how many of them – the average (weighed) target achievement value can also be insightful as a measure. Each of the categories presented contain both common and programme-specific indicators²⁹.

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.	495	131	269	479	161	773	303	715
Indicator								
AT	143%	133%	294%	92%		134%		292%
BE	373%	93%	99%	136%	326%	350%	72%	210%
BG	92%		225%	145%	101%	162%	112%	85%
CY	100%			110%		115%		92%
CZ	109%	223%		105%	85%	572%	813%	147%
DE	136%	81%	133%	115%	116%	128%	76%	102%
DK								132%
EE			104%	113%		172%	163%	168%
ES	155%	110%	96%	220%		153%	121%	46%
FI	115%	130%		106%	128%	134%	117%	188%
FR	105%	119%	107%	79%	31%	214%	8%	119%
GR	93%		146%	197%		44%	162%	122%
HR	68%		1988%	103%	249%	297%	169%	242%
HU	167%	86%		366%		73%	227%	256%
IE	91%			55%		79%		
IT	119%	147%	72%	106%	280%	109%	177%	119%
LT	180%		164%	114%	122%	279%	203%	138%
LU			134%	157%	87%	121%		93%

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

LV	104%		79%	88%	109%	89%	107%	133%
MT				244%	772%	33%		205%
NL						275%		692%
PL	120%	152%	128%	178%	180%	168%	144%	96%
PT	104%		111%	114%		117%	94%	89%
RO	2419%		70%	183%		64%	54%	68%
SE	3%		124%	62%		2%		167%
SI			194%	116%	122%	84%	169%	143%
SK	66%		93%	259%	151%	124%	119%	121%
UK	109%	64%	93%	62%	111%	114%	0%	95%
Total	119%	113%	110%	129%	134%	120%	134%	120%
Less	101%	121%	107%	147%	151%	108%	131%	129%
More	128%	119%	114%	110%	120%	136%	138%	121%
Trans	138%	94%	108%	106%	107%	127%	164%	86%

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: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 119 %, with some differences observed between less developed regions (101 %) and more developed and transition regions (128 % and 138 % respectively). The inverse relation is found for achieving targets of indicators that focus on age groups, with 147 % of the targeted young people and 151 % of the targeted old people reached in less developed regions, while this remained lower in more developed and transition regions.

Table 19 below shows the same for a second set of output indicators, those that measure number of 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 (150 % compared to 100 % 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 particularly high in comparison to other types.

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	336	244	123	535
AT	96%			416%			
BE		115%	103%	208%	173%	320%	113%
BG	213%	110%	63%	137%	208%		107%
CY		135%		108%	131%		43%
CZ	552%	656%		284%	45%		676%
DE	113%	174%	0%	102%	142%	75%	139%
DK	904%	762%					
EE		127%	100%	93%	135%		151%
ES	30%	92%		78%	115%	182%	157%
FI	156%	100%		296%			
FR	137%	38%		74%	6 258%	32%	159%
GR	139%	148%	77%	5561%	90%	89%	107%
HR	94%	259%	47%	98%	251%		194%

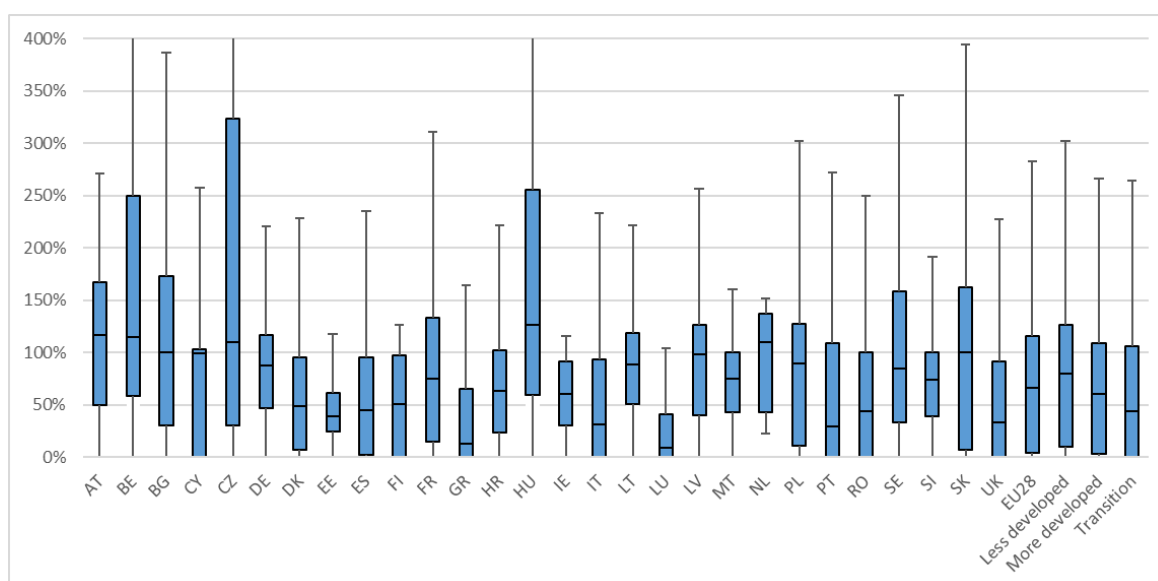
HU	107%	214%	193%	88%	79%		299%
IE					88%		
IT	120%	107%	714%	65%	63%	11%	79%
LT	1340%	141%	113%	145%	63%		142%
LU							
LV	51%	102%	168%	127%			110%
MT					122%		96%
NL	131%			55%			
PL	144%	134%	90%	102%	104%	107%	94%
PT	131%	84%		129%	140%		122%
RO	530%	8%	129%	184%	152%	322%	109%
SE				136%			
SI	108%	123%	365%	238%			141%
SK	199%	128%	98%	168%	175%	1400%	1047%
UK	113%	300%	370%	118%	125%		50%
Total	125%	143%	306%	205%	170%	90%	89%
Less	150%	140%	195%	154%	70%	106%	259%
More	121%	157%	692%	238%	227%	76%	83%
Trans	100%	129%	696%	188%	836%	135%	87%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The same assessment of progress towards targets can be conducted for result indicators. Across all programmes, a total of 16 337 common result indicator records and 4 294 programme specific indicator records are defined. Targets are defined for a total of 808 common results indicators (5 %) and for 4 056 programme-specific indicators (94%).

Figure 12 presents the identified range and median of result target achievement for each Member State and shows a wide range between Member States, generally from 9 % in Luxembourg to 127 % in Hungary, and everything in between. At EU level, the median target achievement for result indicators is currently 68 %, 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 (45 %) than those in more developed (62 %) and less developed regions (81 %). These differences observed in median target achievement of result indicators across types of regions contrast to the relatively comparable median target achievement for output indicators (see Figure 11 above).

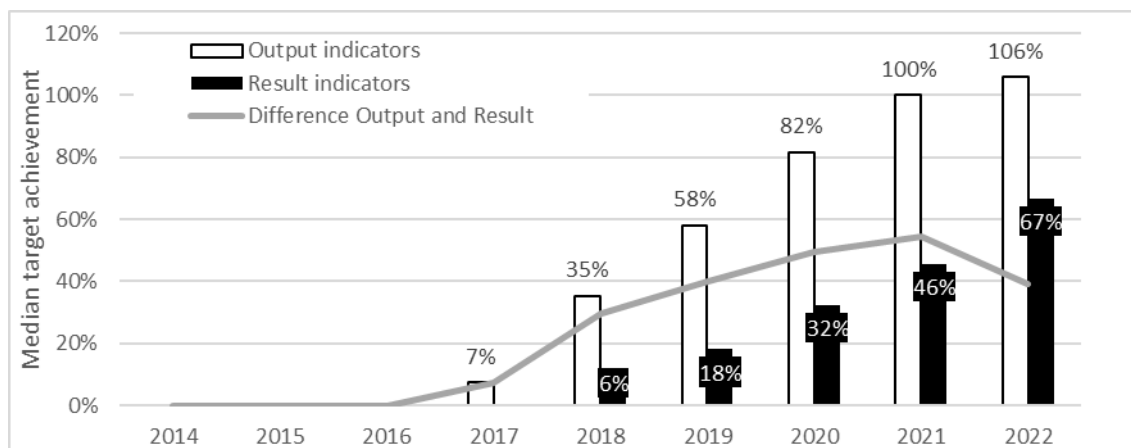
Figure 12. Range and median of result target achievement – by Member State



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)³⁰

Target achievement reported for result indicators remained quite considerably below those of output indicators. This is as expected, as outputs tend to be reported before results. In theory however, the difference between the median target achievements of output and result indicators should decrease towards the end of a programming period; if targets of outputs are achieved, they are not expected to increase much more, while the later reported results are expected to be reported towards the end. Figure 13 presents a first indication of this closing of the gap only in 2022 (from a difference of 54 % in 2021 to 39 % in 2022); the increase in target achievement of output indicators is decreasing, while an acceleration in the median target achievement of result indicators can be observed. This also means that (just as for the expenditures) a considerable increase in target achievement would be required in 2023 for the median (i.e. 50% of all result indicators) to approach or surpass the 100 % mark.

Figure 13. Development of median target achievement of output and result indicators - over time



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

To analyse differences in target achievement between different types of indicators, all common and programme-specific result indicators were classified into overarching categories and presented in the table below³¹. 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 (80 %), entering education (84 %), or obtaining a qualification (87 %) are at quite similar levels, also roughly in line with the ESF's overall implementation rate of 83 % (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 weighted target achievement of 100 %.

³⁰ Whiskers show 1.5 times interquartile range. Outliers beyond these marks exist and are not displayed. Excluding technical assistance.

³¹ 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 combine common indicators with targets in the same categories as programme-specific result indicators as targets.

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

	Employment	Employment LT	Improved LM	Qualification	Education	Skills	Other individual
No. indicators	656	195	122	817	201	237	594
AT	27%		0%	76%			179%
BE	79%	151%	460%	135%	704%		39%
BG	91%	478%	4173%	132%	173%	55%	104%
CY	162%			40%	0%		173%
CZ	135%	15%	151%	104%	170%	442%	125%
DE	55%	72%	152%	87%	66%	152%	69%
DK	21%	108%		18%	116%	69%	97%
EE	69%	126%		102%		124%	100%
ES	83%	2%	46%	70%	50%	45%	54%
FI	92%		0%	114%	52%		55%
FR	84%	123%	2%	119%	110%	14%	118%
GR	71%	7%	0%	60%	131%	394%	87%
HR	64%	43%	42%	84%	0%	23%	119%
HU	255%	218%		137%	197%	103%	159%
IE				67%			44%
IT	51%	101%	55%	28%	34%	52%	91%
LT	164%	154%	83%	114%	116%	115%	94%
LU		59%		0%			15%
LV	102%	152%	0%	124%		114%	144%
MT	18%			94%		0%	78%
NL	131%	142%					
PL	90%	61%	16%	122%	105%	77%	59%
PT		24%		58%	0%		52%
RO	74%			52%	326%		88%
SE	54%		126%		139%		82%
SI	58%			108%		99%	91%
SK	52%	6%		52%	145%	199%	181%
UK	42%	7%	25%	89%	63%	244%	122%
Total	80%	63%	60%	87%	84%	65%	100%
Less dev.	90%	110%	64%	94%	78%	71%	99%
More dev.	72%	63%	69%	78%	94%	49%	116%
Transition.	77%	4%	28%	84%	54%	60%	75%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 have relatively high target achievement rates (on average 219 % of target achieved). The average target achievement of indicators measuring positive results for companies and education providers lies somewhat between other types of indicators (117 % and 71 % 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	251	200	199	142	213	281	138	253
AT	96%			146%				

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BE	150%			43%		114%	116%	259%
BG	1%	66%	51%	256%		279%	55%	37%
CY		100%						
CZ	161%		200%		495%	190%	108%	2110%
DE	122%	89%	98%	47%	28%		178%	115%
DK		92%		0%			456%	105%
EE	96%	100%	109%					
ES	1%	0%	3%	56%	37%	3%	83%	88%
FI	50%		2%	0%				
FR	50%	118%		383%	133%	90%	118%	141%
GR	8%	10%	13%	0%	8%	8%	61%	
HR	80%	11%	69%		71%	101%		
HU	13%	164%		26%	112%	437%	108%	55%
IE								
IT	62%	58%	1302%	46%	203%	60%	63%	265%
LT	26%	60%	83%	0%	140%	74%	94%	78%
LU								
LV	38%		61%	236%	100%	86%		1138%
MT		77%	160%					138%
NL	127%							
PL	41%	73%	56%	140%	84%	121%	115%	126%
PT	61%		107%	71%	51%	74%		40%
RO	0%**	0%**	0%	340%	45%		195%	58%
SE	66%							
SI	99%	74%	12%		81%	0%		652%
SK	50%	108%	105%	105%	244%	29%		11%
UK	1%			120%	0%	0%	50%	54%
Total	25%	2%**	71%	117%	219%	84%	107%	171%
Less dev.	2%**	3%**	91%	132%	241%	84%	105%	187%
More dev.	68%	1%**	29%	99%	128%	85%	113%	228%
Transition	131%	53%	18%	45%	215%	12%	85%	130%

****Impacted by two similar indicators in Romania with a high target and no reported progress.**
If this indicator is excluded the average is 88% at EU level, 88% for less developed regions, and 89% in more developed regions. For Romania the average of this category would be 69% if excluding these two indicators.

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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. In theory this includes interventions that support participants who are granted temporary protection after fleeing the war in Ukraine under CARE amendments. Section 5.5 explores specific attention to this group in more detail.

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 20.2 billion of REACT-EU that was programmed for ESF/YEI programmes, a total of EUR 15.4 billion (76 %) has been selected for concrete projects. In around half of the Member States the budgets have been allocated to projects at least with 100%. Implementation rates, based on the declared expenditure are still relatively low, at 16 % overall.

Table 22. Progress financial implementation 2021-2022 REACT-EU funds

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	Implementation rate	
			2022	Δ2021		2022	Δ2021
AT	114.2	89.4	78%	48	0.3	0%	0
BE	164.0	146.0	89%	64	10.3	6%	3
BG	266.0	259.4	98%	-2	193.7	73%	22
CY	65.0	75.7	117%	117	75.7	116%	116
CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE	898.8	744.3	83%	42	346.7	39%	36
DK	55.6	78.1	140%	59	7.0	13%	12
EE	12.8	12.8	100%	16	1.9	15%	15
ES	5 937.3	3 139.2	53%	33	798.8	13%	13
FI	89.9	91.6	102%	34	18.7	21%	20
FR	1 227.1	1 130.2	92%	89	78.6	6%	6
GR	100.0	102.0	102%	1	45.4	45%	32
HR	530.0	-	0%	-	-	0%	-
HU	346.5	311.7	90%	90	221.6	64%	64
IE	141.6	141.6	100%	38	-	0%	-
IT	8 117.9	7 153.4	88%	45	421.4	5%	5
LT	46.0	46.0	100%	-	27.8	60%	59
LU	73.2	73.2	100%	5	73.2	100%	5
LV	22.5	30.7	136%	136	3.2	14%	14
MT	111.2	111.2	100%	-	202.6	182%	118
NL	297.6	304.9	102%	-2	38.0	13%	11
PL	80.1	65.9	82%	80	1.9	2%	2
PT	431.8	316.6	73%	43	190.8	44%	44
RO	234.0	249.4	107%	107	46.7	20%	20
SE	293.1	235.3	80%	42	103.7	35%	35
SI	13.2	3.0	23%	23	-	0%	-
SK	491.1	463.3	94%	13	243.1	49%	24
UK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	20 160.6	15 374.8	76%	42	3 151.1	16%	13

Totals are based on latest approved version of operational programmes by July 6, 2023. Δ2021 shows the difference between 2022 and 2021 project selection rates, using this year's allocated budget as reference. For BE, for instance, 3 means that this year's implementation rate (6 %) increased by 3 percentage points in relation to the share of eligible expenditures in 2021 compared to this year's allocated budget (3 %). Negative

values are possible due to increased budgets and retroactive adjustments to reported costs. Both factors are at work in the negative values for Bulgaria and the Netherlands. All values refer to the total amount reserved for REACT-EU (EU + national share) and include TA.

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: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

3.4.2 Outputs – REACT-EU dedicated priority axes

The total participation recorded under the priority axes dedicated to REACT-EU stands at 2.6 million. REACT-EU investments so far have predominantly reached persons in employment (43 % of participations), with lower shares of unemployed (29 %) and inactive persons (28 %). This contrasts with the target groups reached by 'regular' ESF interventions, where 32 % of participation are by unemployed individuals, 41 % inactive, and only 28 % employed (see section 3.2). This reflects the priority of the additional budgets in REACT-EU, which primarily provide investment to support job maintenance, including through short-time work schemes and support for the self-employed. REACT-EU also reached a smaller share of young people (32 % compared to 42 % in ESF).

Table 23. Total figures for participations (REACT-EU only), cumulative until 2022, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Total REACT-EU	
	Total	%
Employment status		
CO01 Unemployed	767 449	29%
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	274 056	10%
CO03 Inactive	729 363	28%
CO04 of which not in education or training	192 436	7%
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	1 117 705	43%
Total CO1+CO3+CO5	2 614 517	
Age		
CO06 Below 25 years of age	848 098	32%
CO06a Between 25-54 years of age	1 447 046	55%
CO07 Above 54 years of age	319 373	12%
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	133 778	5%
Education		
CO09 With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	919 757	35%
CO10 With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	972 831	37%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	532 740	20%
CO11a Other / unknown ISCED	189 189	7%
Other background characteristics		
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	492 061	19%
CO16 Participants with disabilities	177 027	7%
CO17 Other disadvantaged	305 865	12%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	31 579	1%
CO19 From rural areas	271 714	10%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The highest levels of participation recorded for REACT-EU so far can be found in Bulgaria, France, Spain and Italy, but also in Bulgaria, the Netherlands, and Hungary substantial numbers of participation are reported. While in general higher implementation rates

tend to move together with the participation figures, there are a number of exceptions. Austria and Italy report low implementation rates (i.e. limited declared expenditure) while the participation number is relatively high when compared to others. At the other end of the scale, Greece, Portugal and Slovakia all report comparatively high implementation rates, while their number of participations remains relatively low. No specific explanations are provided in the various OP of these countries. A possible generic explanation is that programmes in these Member States do not yet report participation of all REACT-EU intervention because these were still ongoing by the end of 2022.

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

MS	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Project selection % 2022	Implementation rate 2022	Total participation
AT	114.2	78%	0%	61 667
BE	164.0	89%	6%	43 581
BG	266.0	98%	73%	212 361
CY	65.0	117%	116%	70 724
CZ	-	-	-	-
DE	836.4	89%	41%	87 031
DK	55.6	140%	13%	3 596
EE	12.8	100%	15%	-
ES	5 677.3	55%	14%	697 256
FI	89.9	102%	21%	15 981
FR	1 212.1	93%	6%	421 112
GR	100.0	102%	45%	-
HR	530.0	0%	0%	-
HU	346.5	90%	64%	163 698
IE	88.3	100%	0%	-
IT	8 117.9	88%	5%	341 469
LT	46.0	100%	60%	17 423
LU	73.2	100%	100%	45 167
LV	22.5	136%	14%	10 263
MT	111.2	100%	182%	72 553
NL	297.6	102%	13%	245 897
PL	74.6	88%	3%	1
PT	431.8	73%	44%	11 744
RO	234.0	107%	20%	9 109
SE	293.1	80%	35%	64 672
SI	13.2	23%	0%	-
SK	491.1	94%	49%	19 212
UK	-	-	-	-
Total	19 764.4	78%	16%	2 614 517

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

3.4.3 Results – REACT-EU dedicated priority axes

The overall number of results reported for REACT-EU remain roughly stable as share of overall participation figures. A total of 0.6 million individual results have been reported so far, slightly over half of all Member States.

Table 25. Overview of common indicators for immediate results by Member State until 2022 (REACT-EU only)

MS	Results immediately after intervention						Disadvantaged	
	All results					Total	% of participation	Any result
Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment					

AT	6 816	1 296	46 650	2 051	56 813	92%	7 780	14%
BE	1 037	1 636	3 062	4 036	9 771	22%	3 097	32%
BG	-	199	-	438	637	0%	224	35%
CY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CZ	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DE	3 146	3 762	38 576	4 421	49 905	57%	13 473	27%
DK	2	8	-	49	59	2%	10	17%
EE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ES	38 823	25 406	119 073	30 141	213 443	31%	42 830	20%
FI	24	284	148	116	572	4%	129	23%
FR	16 436	28 159	31 563	153 762	229 920	55%	112 387	49%
GR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HR	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HU	-	309	-	-	309	0%	3	1%
IE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LT	-	-	-	10 080	10 080	58%	-	0%
LU	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LV	37	127	1 223	1 729	3 116	30%	1 317	42%
MT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NL	3 958	1 281	3 569	44 120	52 928	22%	46 868	89%
PL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PT	-	47	-	5 361	5 408	46%	32	1%
RO	2	1	180	99	282	3%	31	11%
SE	26	164	39	241	470	1%	283	60%
SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SK	23	708	14	841	1 586	8%	273	17%
UK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	70 330	63 387	244 097	257 485	635 299	24%	228 737	36%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

3.4.4 Achievement of targets – REACT-EU only

In a similar way to the indicators for 'regular' ESF implementation, indicators with targets used for operations in REACT-EU dedicated priority axes were categorised as well. Most indicators used for REACT-EU interventions fall within the category 'individuals supported', for which an average target achievement can be reported of 27 %.

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

MS	Individuals supported	Un-employed	Inactive	Employed	Young	Vulnerable groups	Professionals
No.	86	23	1	9	17	-	14
Indicator							
AT	128%				3252%		
BE	49%						
BG	31%			169%	1%		
CY	141%						
CZ							
DE	46%	57%		26%	90%		
DK	35%						
EE	46%						
ES	34%	69%		100%	18%		110%
FI	35%						
FR	20%	39%	30%	0%	0%		
GR							
HR	0%						
HU	195%				31%		

IE	0%				0%	
IT	8%					
LT		134%				
LU	100%					
LV	34%				57%	
MT	193%					
NL	137%					
PL						0%
PT	33%			0%	71%	
RO	8%					0%
SE	82%					0%
SI	0%					
SK	88%					
UK						
Total	27%	46%	30%	113%	56%	41%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Other types of indicators, related to a variety of organisations, such as companies, public purpose entities or authorities are used considerably less frequently for REACT-EU. In this category, indicators that target public purpose entities are seen the most often, including for the most part education providers. For this type, average target achievement has progressed to 52 % of the average targets.

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

	Company	Public purpose entity	Projects	Public administration project	Structures	Products
No. Indicator	2	24	11	8	1	5
AT						
BE		19%				
BG						
CY						
CZ						
DE		52%	143%		20%	175%
DK	74%					0%
EE						
ES	111%	71%	4%	0%		
FI						
FR		0%				
GR		100%				
HR						
HU						
IE						
IT		32%	76%	151%		
LT						
LU						
LV		0%				
MT						
NL						
PL			0%			
PT						
RO		19%				
SE						
SI						
SK						5%
UK						
Total	107%	52%	6%	91%	20%	21%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The results measured for REACT-EU investments are spread among individual results gaining employment (32 indicators), gaining employment after some time (35 indicators), and gaining a qualification (43). On average, target achievement of these indicators is progressing, and reached on average 36 %, 68 % and 33 % respectively.

Table 28. Average progress towards target achievement (weighed) 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	35	5	43	5	6	33
AT			0%	0%			
BE	241%	7%		63%		0%	177%
BG	95%	95%		0%	0%	27%	144%
CY							100%
CZ							
DE	61%	19%		43%	6%	43%	40%
DK				5%			
EE	0%	9%					
ES	12%	72%	63%	41%		0%	11%
FI	23%			0%			
FR	36%	0%		18%		0%	78%
GR							15%
HR		0%					
HU		351%					
IE							
IT		0%			175%		472%
LT	170%						
LU		87%					
LV	0%			17%			23%
MT	14%						
NL			80%				
PL						0%	
PT		0%			0%		0%
RO		0%					
SE	8%		0%		7%		
SI							
SK		99%		0%			0%
UK							
Total	36%	68%	74%	33%	7%	19%	16%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

As Table 29 shows, indicators that do not measure individual results are not used frequently for REACT-EU. All empty cells mean that that type is not used in that Member States. Only in Spain, regional programmes measure positive results achieved by education entities (achievement 68 %).

Table 29. Average progress towards target achievement (weighed) 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	6	4	4	4	9
AT								
BE			0%					
BG								
CY								
CZ								
DE	67%			23%		45%		400%
DK								

EE									
ES	0%	68%	0%	0%	15%		24%		
FI									
FR	0%				33%		75%		
GR									
HR									
HU									
IE					0%				
IT	50%		0%					0%	
LT									
LU									
LV		0%							
MT									
NL									
PL									
PT									98%
RO									
SE									
SI									
SK			0%						97%
UK									
Total	67%	22%	67%	11%	0%	95%	75%	40%	

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 level³². After a top-up in 2017, a total budget of EUR 10.5 billion (EU + national co-financing) has been available for YEI objectives, as shown in table 30 below³³.

Table 30. Progress of YEI financial implementation by end-2022

MS	Total EU amount (€ million)	Total allocated budget (€ million)	Eligible costs (€ million)	Project selection %		Expenditure declared (€ million)	% expenditure declared	
				2022	Δ2021		2022	Δ2021
BE	128.8	193.2	219.7	114%	-0	146.4	76%	14
BG	110.6	120.3	120.5	100%	0	110.5	92%	6
CY	36.3	39.5	43.7	111%	15	34.2	87%	10
CZ	27.2	29.6	34.1	115%	1	29.8	101%	3
ES	2 784.5	3 030.2	4 599.5	152%	8	2 396.8	79%	10
FR	964.5	1 141.8	1 511.3	132%	-7	1 110.8	97%	2
GR	512.4	587.4	794.8	135%	45	284.1	48%	6
HR	206.3	224.5	223.4	100%	1	193.6	86%	3
HU	99.5	108.3	89.8	83%	-6	91.4	84%	-9
IE	136.3	204.4	204.4	100%	-	188.5	92%	-0
IT	1 880.2	2 362.4	2 259.1	96%	5	1 731.2	73%	5
LT	63.6	69.2	69.7	101%	-	68.8	99%	-0
LV	58.0	63.1	66.5	105%	-	65.3	103%	-
PL	539.4	586.9	584.7	100%	-2	547.5	93%	-1
PT	450.3	490.0	537.8	110%	0	501.3	102%	1

³² Art. 16 ESF Regulation

³³ 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.

RO	303.2	330.0	351.3	106%	38	68.5	21%	14
SE	88.3	132.5	123.1	93%	-1	122.2	92%	2
SI	18.4	20.7	21.0	101%	-	18.6	90%	-
SK	172.3	187.5	293.4	156%	3	185.0	99%	0
UK	370.6	532.0	443.9	83%	-9	376.4	71%	6
Total	8 950.6	10 453.7	12 591.7	120%	20	8 270.6	79%	6

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- 2022– EU amount topped up with the national co-financing to ESF contributions allocated to the YEI.

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

While YEI started well ahead of progress in ESF implementation, with frontloaded investments in 2015 and 2016, the implementation rates of YEI by 2022 are now behind that of ESF overall (79 % against 83 %). So far, three Member States have declared expenditure at the level of their entire budget (Czechia, Latvia, and Portugal), while other Member States still have varying levels of implementation costs to declare. From this perspective particularly the low progress of implementation in Romania (21 %) and Greece (48 %) calls for attention.

Romania reports a variety of structural features that affected implementation of the YEI in the early years, in addition to a lower-than-expected target group during implementation. From 2020 onwards, interventions have broadened their scope to also include 25-29-year-olds, but it remains to be seen whether this is enough to declare the available budgets in the final year. 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 this can be addressed in the final year for reporting implementation of YEI.

3.5.2 Outputs – YEI

This section assesses the number of participations reached by the YEI by the end of 2022³⁴ and the participants' distribution by their personal characteristics. The table shows stagnating growth in participations, from 0.4 million from 2017 to 2018, to slightly over 0.1 million new participations in 2022. This is understandable given that most programmes are finalising implementation, reaching a total of 3.9 million by the end of 2022. 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 2017	Cumulative until 2018	Cumulative until 2019	Cumulative until 2020	Cumulative until 2021	Cumulative until 2022
BE	89 746	135 044	163 111	190 748	199 295	199 349
BG	38 341	51 427	64 229	75 424	82 563	86 778
CY	4 021	5 132	5 651	6 231	6 795	7 206
CZ	2 344	4 059	5 482	5 710	5 922	6 151
ES	629 052	860 999	1 015 569	1 137 731	1 227 496	1 297 355
FR	424 997	558 128	633 835	704 724	718 062	727 187
GR	57 254	64 167	67 677	71 044	71 690	71 690
HR	34 063	40 224	41 566	41 566	41 733	41 959
HU	40 079	40 089	40 089	40 089	40 089	40 089
IE	9 245	10 258	10 284	10 284	10 284	10 284
IT	434 811	493 185	547 064	573 835	608 264	623 047

³⁴ 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.

LT	44 236	61 582	61 826	61 826	61 826	61 826
LV	25 288	29 168	29 546	29 571	29 571	29 571
PL	229 884	268 365	278 361	282 287	283 908	285 865
PT	66 580	74 671	84 847	86 220	86 389	86 389
RO	-	1 268	2 138	6 099	6 293	34 094
SE	26 843	29 039	31 825	34 547	36 340	37 017
SI	2 950	2 950	2 950	2 950	2 950	2 950
SK	44 697	85 494	111 830	119 373	119 391	119 566
UK	60 817	80 665	95 003	104 686	113 220	119 393
Total	2 265 248	2 895 914	3 292 883	3 584 945	3 752 081	3 887 766

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The table below presents the aggregated 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 (65 % with at least ISCED 3/4). The share of persons with a particular disadvantage is relatively low, with 15 % of participants with disabilities.

Table 32. Total common outputs for participations (YEI only), cumulative by end-2022, by indicator

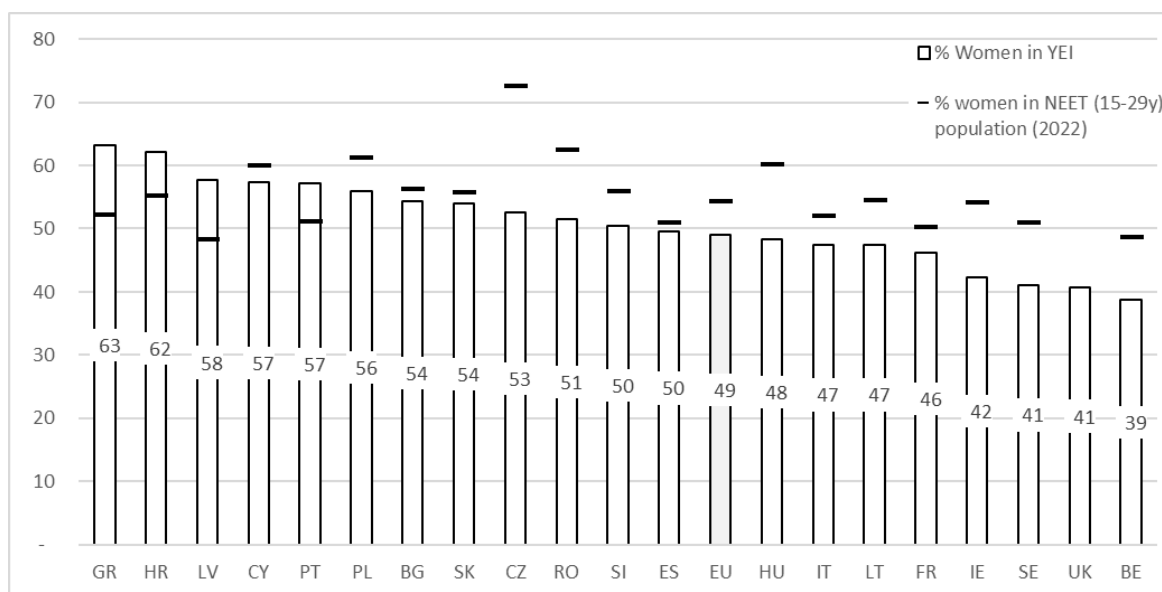
Description Common Output indicator	Total YEI
Employment status	
CO01 Unemployed	3 176 431 82%
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	870 942 22%
CO03 Inactive	711 335 18%
CO04 of which not in education or training	703 219 18%
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	- 0%
Total CO1+CO3+CO5	3 887 766
Age	
CO06 Below 25 years of age	2 785 082 72%
CO06a Between 25-54 years of age	1 062 539 27%
CO07 Above 54 years of age	- 0%
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive	- 0%
Education	
CO09 With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	1 331 018 34%
CO10 With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	1 607 191 41%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	777 200 20%
CO11a Other / unknown ISCED	165 742 4%
Other background characteristics	
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	492 799 13%
CO16 Participants with disabilities	195 039 5%
CO17 Other disadvantaged	585 530 15%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	33 091 1%
CO19 From rural areas	602 490 15%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 (54.4 % in 2022, 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); 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 Greece predominantly reached young women (64 % women, against 52.2 % in the young NEET population), as well as Croatia (62 %, against 55.3 % of young NEETs that are women). In Belgium, on the other end of the scale, youth unemployment initiatives reached the smallest share of women (39 %,

against 48.7 % 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.

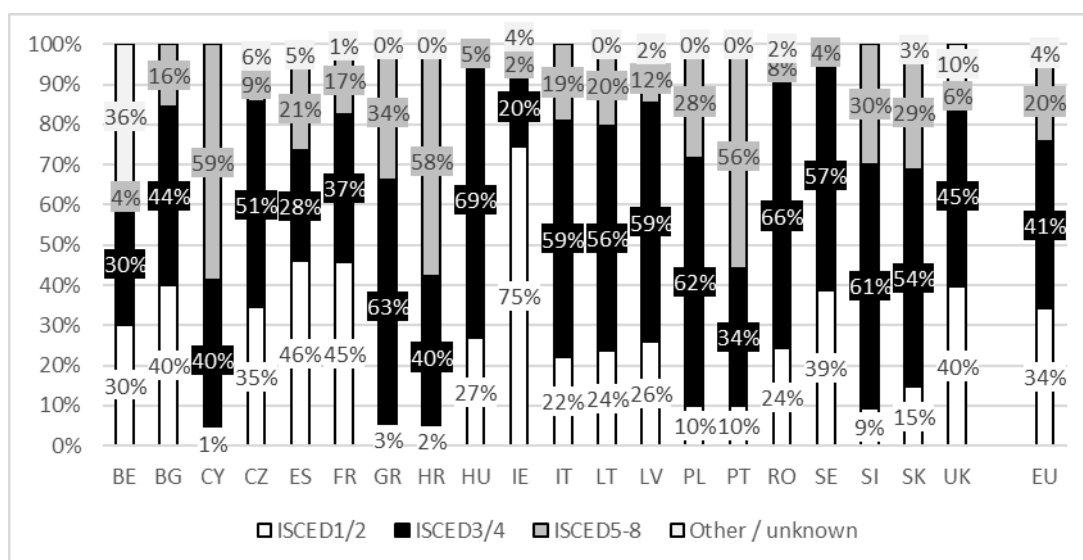
Figure 14. Relative share (%) of (fe)male participation across Member States - YEI only



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Figure 15 below shows the substantial differences in types of target groups addressed by YEI programmes in different Member States. The YEI reached predominantly youth with educational attainment at ISCED level 1 and 2 in Ireland (75 %), Spain (46 %) and France (45 %). 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 (59 %, 58 % and 56 % respectively).

Figure 15. Relative share (%) of participation in different ISCED levels across Member States - YEI



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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. No such results are reported in Italy and Slovenia³⁵.

Table 33. Overview of ESF common indicators for immediate results by Member State by end-2022 (YEI-funded interventions only)

MS	Results immediately after intervention							Disadvantaged	
	All results					Total	% of participation	Any result	% of all results
	Active job-searching	Entered education	Received qualification	Entered employment					
BE	1 881	16 311	7 151	7 080	32 423	16%	5 287	16%	
BG	2 985	819	16 408	16 546	36 758	42%	6 613	18%	
CY	-	161	1 540	1 571	3 272	45%	195	6%	
CZ	88	177	2 322	3 479	6 066	99%	1 180	19%	
ES	50 018	64 735	289 512	438 928	843 193	65%	191 532	23%	
FR	41 283	85 786	47 246	212 383	386 698	53%	133 026	34%	
GR	263	1 664	17 402	7 686	27 015	38%	6 714	25%	
HR	-	245	3 808	19 822	23 875	57%	532	2%	
HU	143	566	6 272	27 260	34 241	85%	4 882	14%	
IE	335	3 753	3 327	1 737	9 152	89%	2 643	29%	
IT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
LT	3 594	8 908	9 728	21 405	43 635	71%	588	1%	
LV	415	464	8 515	5 823	15 217	51%	3 672	24%	
PL	2 911	3 592	34 385	207 028	247 916	87%	118 925	48%	
PT	77	1 352	-	51 853	53 282	62%	509	1%	
RO	549	929	1 262	6 887	9 627	28%	1 365	14%	
SE	590	7 708	1 867	15 464	25 629	69%	14 108	55%	
SI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SK	14	30 752	152	20 983	51 901	43%	5 210	10%	
UK	1 807	16 868	8 161	24 776	51 612	43%	27 229	53%	
Total	106 953	244 790	459 058	1 090 711	1 901 512	49%	524 210	28%	

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 also points at some 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.

Table 34. Overview of ESF common indicators for long-term results by Member State by end-2022 (YEI only)

MS	Six months after intervention				
	All results			Disadvantaged	
	Entered employment	Better LM position	Total	Entered employment	% of all that entered employment
BE	66 636	-	66 636	9 072	14%
BG	32 805	-	32 805	6 652	20%

³⁵ In Slovenia, the overall budget and participation for YEI are relatively small (less than 3 000 participations by 2022, see table 31), and practically no results are reported in the YEI common indicators either (table 34). For Italy, however, the reported values in Table 33 (based on ESF common indicators - Annex I in the ESF Regulation) are inconsistent with the values reported in Table 34 (YEI common indicators - annex II in the ESF Regulation); no explanations are provided for this inconsistent reporting.

CY	1 393	995	2 388	40	3%
CZ	3 444	-	3 444	800	23%
ES	274 294	-	274 294	74 075	27%
FR	228 405	3 155	231 560	88 241	39%
GR	19 087	-	19 087	2 551	13%
HR	30 462	-	30 462	1 734	6%
HU	26 778	-	26 778	3 884	15%
IE	768	166	934	171	22%
IT	196 491	-	196 491	-	0%
LT	-	-	-	-	-
LV	12 531	1 725	14 256	3 669	29%
PL	203 617	-	203 617	137 389	67%
PT	54 717	-	54 717	541	1%
RO	4 977	280	5 257	120	2%
SE	13 436	-	13 436	6 650	49%
SI	34	-	34	-	0%
SK	62 329	-	62 329	42 897	69%
UK	15 640	-	15 640	10 160	65%
Total	1 247 844	6 321	1 254 165	388 646	31%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 2.2 million unemployed persons completed a YEI intervention, which amounts to over half the total YEI participations (3.9 million participations counted for YEI interventions, as reported in section 3.5.2 above). This equals on average 89 % of all the target values set for this indicator. A total of 1.0 million unemployed persons received an offer after completing the intervention (with an average target achievement of 72 %), while 1.6 million unemployed were in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (99 % of the target achievement). This last indicator was defined as EC core performance indicator for "promoting specific support to young NEETs", for which its target of 1.1 million was already reached in 2019.
- The **long-term young unemployed**: Over 0.6 million long-term unemployed completed the YEI intervention (84 % of target achievement), while 0.3 million received an offer (68 % 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	6 422	12 761	29 219	1 695	4 116
BG	29 840	1 658	30 351	8 339	250	4 791
CY	4 892	890	3 262	902	519	482
CZ	4 955	499	4 160	320	122	238
ES	677 703	213 989	602 916	111 316	37 605	108 798
FR	398 611	281 277	267 355	105 128	67 020	64 504
GR	50 929	13 600	23 694	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	2 118	57	2 121	927	3	1 011
IT	365 703	56 246	180 995	183 317	29 625	77 057
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	226 823	164 800	208 313	88 279	66 197	77 587
PT	75 709	57 033	52 566	6 253	4 864	4 611
RO	9 235	5 989	7 604	1 085	956	684
SE	6 312	1 372	20 540	1 944	415	4 902
SI	130	118	-	41	134	-
SK	119 401	30 985	31 173	5 035	4 848	4 884
UK	50 101	25 510	34 055	17 538	9 030	11 548
Total	2 194 835	956 178	1 575 215	622 589	251 972	397 018
Target achievement (weighed)	89%	72%	99%	84%	68%	90%
No. women	1 125 115	497 723	792 856	323 584	134 057	203 484
% of women	51%	52%	50%	52%	53%	51%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

- **Inactive young people:** A total of 0.4 million inactive persons completed the YEI intervention (89 % of target achievement), while 0.2 million of these received an offer (77 % of the target achievement), and 0.3 million are in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (96 % of OP target achievement). These 0.3 million are above the target set by the EC core performance indicator for promoting specific support to young NEETs, which was set at 260 thousand by 2020.
- Finally, a total of 0.4 million participants are reported to be in education or training after six months (target achievement of 40 %), 1.3 million are in employment after six months (109 % target achievement), and 0.08 million are in self-employment after six months (40 % 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	36 673	449	26 159	26 436	66 276	36
BG	21 018	15 763	3 422	1 117	32 805	1 356
CY	-	-	-	48	1 392	13
CZ	365	225	336	738	3 423	258
ES	67 053	27 898	51 488	112 680	274 294	19 361
FR	79 632	54 596	50 239	77 591	228 675	3 846
GR	-	-	-	1 705	19 087	1 150
HR	4	3	7	4 749	30 462	1 097
HU	666	872	630	506	26 101	677
IE	4 866	112	4 330	309	711	474
IT	177 554	32 602	108 148	116 999	206 055	-
LT	6 763	1 692	2 049	5 767	16 678	205
LV	6 474	2 745	3 206	2 214	11 511	86
PL	21 825	21 562	22 502	73 440	203 617	58 550
PT	469	66	266	2 216	54 741	875
RO	1	1	1	21	4 341	88
SE	1 654	572	3 097	6 825	13 389	47

SI	-	-	-	-	34	-
SK	111	58	12	4	62 330	499
UK	22 848	13 996	15 739	4 167	1 619	4
Total YEI	447 976	173 212	291 631	437 532	1 257 541	88 622
Target achievement (weighed)	89%	77%	96%	40%	109%	40%
No. women	203 309	81 400	128 899	210 874	606 557	41 185
% of women	45%	47%	44%	48%	48%	46%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 371 indicators. By the end of 2022, 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 a small number of indicators in Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, 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 in the final implementation report and may therefore not be monitored systematically everywhere in AIR2022. 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 presented (weighed) means.

When interpreting the target achievement as presented in Table 37, it is important to realise that most Member States programmed YEI in one Operational Programme (within a single 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, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia). In most cases this due to a single indicator, possibly with a conservative target setting. This is particularly visible in the targets for long-term result indicators; progress towards targets in Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia and Sweden for such indicators are comparatively high, when comparing to other types of indicators.

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*	173	159	124	260	173	39	45	714	1283	2169	227	862	100
BG	157	163	90	194	163	49	125	150	896	26	621	656	10437
CY	67	84	31	113	71	129	120	0	0	0	4	64	3
CZ	250	198	33	416	62	39	113	235	250	517	738	409	410
ES	48	74	40	80	64	40	74	62	45	58	17	48	19
FR*	111	103	98	102	105	80	127	98	162	187	121	154	52
GR	37	77	37	75	100	36	66	0	0	0	5	58	9
HR	63	96	165	210				1	8	20	63	211	53
HU	144	131		259	99		194	83		158		326	
IE	22	20	1	34	12	0	20	258	11	877	24	11	237
IT	77	88	35	77	84	37	62	77	37	83	71	142	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	85	116	92	85	129	86	141	110	64	135	98
PT	122	147	121	122	160	137	162	184	29	149	9	141	10
RO	14	14	20	18	8	16	8				0	15	20
SE	205	24	23	346	29	28	334	37	54	290	455	0040573	4700
SI	32	5	5		4	16						49	0
SK	87	239	174	87	60	158	111	8	14	2	0	349	23
UK*	94	152	111	203	110	84	139	88	77	94	59	31	0
Total	101	102	87	113	94	74	113	96	62	110	68	141	22

* More than one Operational Programme per Member State. All other Member States only have one OP for YEI and therefore 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.
 - means that no target has been defined.

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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, 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 (110 %) and long-term unemployed (113 %). 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.

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 YEI³⁶. When reviewing such unit costs, it is necessary to take into consideration that unit costs may not always represent the full picture. It is possible that operational programmes 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.

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 below³⁷.

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	298 296	685.3	2 298	8 533		2 228	3 044
BE	1 659 135	1 726.1	1 040	1 186	734	1 509	689
BG	2 312 741	1 690.4	731	2 433	1 273	799	212
CY	151 571	284.9	1 879	6 205	4 743	1 854	3 115
CZ	890 432	3 945.2	4 431	3 155	4 841	4 853	7 831
DE	3 438 346	11 970.2	3 481	3 991		4 660	2 509
DK	125 427	353.7	2 820	3 104		6 930	1 876
EE	253 453	596.2	2 352	1 722		3 341	2 504
ES	8 795 518	10 278.5	1 169	1 100	1 847	1 124	939
FI	436 053	927.3	2 126	2 233		2 707	1 896
FR	6 385 456	10 520.5	1 648	1 844	1 528	1 388	3 244
GR	1 433 927	4 736.7	3 303	2 629	3 962	5 518	2 936
HR	502 392	1 436.5	2 859	1 701	4 613	4 471	2 181
HU	2 643 413	5 020.6	1 899	2 164	2 281	2 319	1 228
IE	330 189	861.3	2 608	8 974	18 327	2 961	1 065
IT	12 612 895	14 495.4	1 149	1 107	2 779	1 794	729
LT	1 136 897	1 351.4	1 189	3 071	1 113	682	1 044
LU	70 234	109.0	1 553	1 588		2 771	761
LV	457 948	642.9	1 404	1 171	2 207	1 228	1 876
MT	214 804	376.3	1 752	1 061		2 304	1 018
NL	857 292	1 024.8	1 195	5 163		1 303	
PL	9 241 576	11 098.9	1 201	1 334	1 915	1 861	820
PT	3 693 855	8 567.3	2 319	1 440	5 803	2 364	2 534
RO	1 966 874	3 957.2	2 012	2 005	2 008	2 998	859
SE	466 414	1 303.9	2 796	6 511	3 300	9 205	1 163
SI	287 769	843.5	2 931	4 368	6 294	13 177	1 340

³⁶ The values presented in this section use calculations that are based on the declared expenditures. 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

³⁷ 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.

SK	1 315 389	2 789.1	2 120	4 062	1 548	1 284	645
UK	2 584 350	6 685.3	2 587	2 069	3 152	2 716	3 065
Total	64 562 646	108 278.4	1 677	1 783	2 127	1 984	1 323
MS	Total participation	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Overall unit cost (€)	Employment TO8 ESF (€)	Employment TO8 YEI (€)	Social Inclusion TO9 (€)	Education TO10 (€)
Less dev.	28 613 375	46 106	1 611	1 961		1 931	1 151
More dev.	21 109 564	37 233	1 764	1 620		2 044	1 669
Trans.	8 337 424	13 548	1 625	1 691		1 953	1 341
REACT-EU	2 614 517	3 121	1 194				
- No region							
YEI - No region	3 887 766	8 271	2 127		2 127		
<p><i>Empty fields indicate that no interventions are programmed for that thematic objective in that Member State or category of region. Note that YEI / REACT-EU interventions are not assigned to a particular category of region.</i></p> <p><i>Thematic objective 11 and REACT-EU are not presented per MS, because of individual outliers due to relatively low number of participations. Its values are included in the aggregated totals.</i></p> <p><i>Technical assistance excluded.</i></p>							

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Overall, the table shows a cost per participation of EUR 1 677, which is considerably above the unit costs that were found in the ex-post evaluation of ESF 2007-2013³⁸. However, this aggregated figure hides 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 2022 that show 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 type of region.

³⁸ 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.

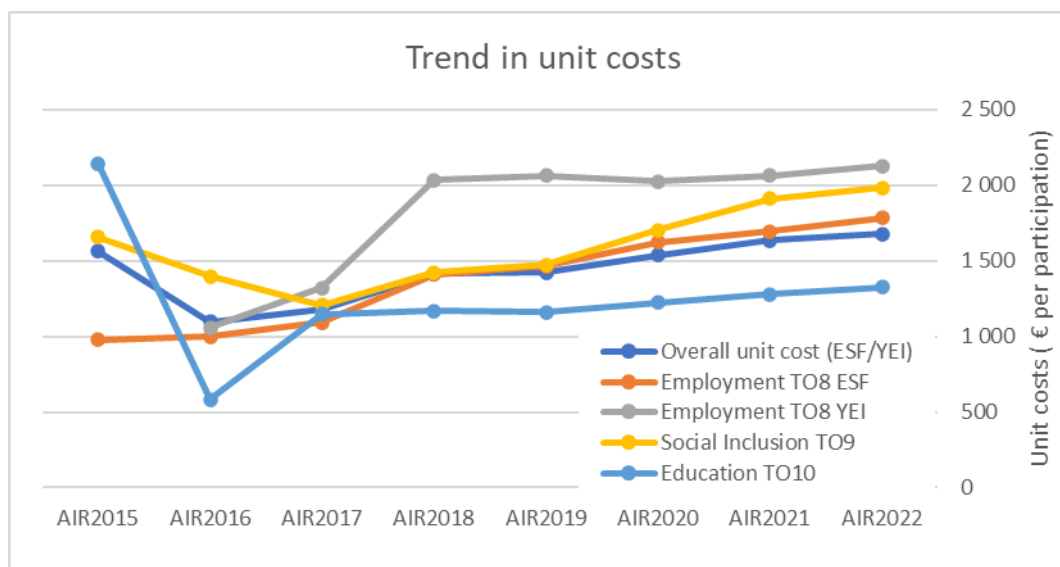
Table 39. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per participation – by investment priority (only ESF) and category of region

	Unit costs			
	More developed	Transition	Less developed	All regions
Access to employment (8i)	1 222	1 480	2 338	1 707
Youth employment (8ii - ESF)	1 731	1 290	2 521	2 009
Entrepreneurship (8iii)	1 805	999	5 432	2 056
Gender equality (8iv)	1 243	1 190	2 141	1 649
Adaptation to change (8v)	2 436	3 472	1 193	1 920
Active ageing (8vi)	7 768	35 152	147	369
Labour market institutions (8vii)	2 891	9 576	21 085	7 666
Thematic Objective 8	1 620	1 691	1 961	1 783
Active inclusion (9i)	1 877	1 726	1 777	1 819
Integrating marginalised communities (9ii)	2 482	1 514	1 636	1 693
Combating discrimination (9iii)	817	967	4 978	1 200
Access to social services (9iv)	4 038	28 156	2 013	2 622
Promoting social economy (9v)	1 637	2 318	4 826	3 950
Local development strategies (9vi)	4 119	11 366	1 332	1 636
Thematic Objective 9	2 044	1 953	1 931	1 984
Early school leaving (10i)	1 108	1 095	727	866
Access to higher education (10ii)	2 959	4 326	2 563	2 718
Access to lifelong learning (10iii)	1 908	979	953	1 264
LM relevance of education (10iv)	2 173	2 496	2 140	2 200
Thematic Objective 10	1 669	1 341	1 151	1 323

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Finally, the development of the unit costs across thematic objectives was analysed over 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 most recent years, the increase in unit costs related to social inclusion interventions (TO9) since AIR2019 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 16. Trend in reported unit costs



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2015-2022 (extracted on July 6, 2023)

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)³⁹. 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.

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	146 807	685.3	4 668	19 806		6 197	7 729
BE	529 508	1 726.1	3 260	3 101	4 515	4 317	2 311
BG	777 432	1 690.4	2 174	21 287	3 006	3 986	442
CY	8 598	284.9	33 132	10 403	10 445	221 881	6 925
CZ	403 320	3 945.2	9 782	4 880	4 909	27 737	93 434
DE	2 266 560	11 970.2	5 281	5 384		8 869	3 678
DK	16 421	353.7	21 539	17 117		26 881	27 206
EE	99 223	596.2	6 008	11 078		20 039	2 897
ES	4 955 938	10 278.5	2 074	2 825	2 843	2 609	1 129
FI	41 535	927.3	22 325	15 015		27 291	40 893
FR	2 954 147	10 520.5	3 561	4 074	2 873	3 276	6 170
GR	528 734	4 736.7	8 959	8 416	10 515	43 547	6 181
HR	83 412	1 436.5	17 221	9 670	8 108	27 494	34 924
HU	1 106 200	5 020.6	4 539	4 211	2 670	11 159	2 513
IE	228 971	861.3	3 762	10 390	20 593	5 557	1 493
IT	1 849 268	14 495.4	7 838	3 627		25 389	7 706
LT	309 371	1 351.4	4 368	3 525	1 576	7 501	6 772
LU	2 538	109.0	42 966	9 315		51 922	30 173
LV	103 292	642.9	6 224	2 505	4 288	17 735	8 275
MT	23 426	376.3	16 063	7 824		7 020	6 451
NL	218 532	1 024.8	4 689	22 637		4 746	
PL	2 534 691	11 098.9	4 379	3 884	2 208	7 535	4 255
PT	873 682	8 567.3	9 806	9 231	9 409	27 698	7 721
RO	422 010	3 957.2	9 377	6 886	7 110	29 236	4 157
SE	109 920	1 303.9	11 862	14 367	4 766	21 372	8 282
SI	96 233	843.5	8 765	7 176		44 416	5 231
SK	209 485	2 789.1	13 314	11 685	3 565	109 774	9 133
UK	1 420 975	6 685.3	4 705	3 439	7 292	7 688	4 654
Total	22 320 197	108 278.4	4 851	4 621	4 349	7 168	3 842
MS	Total participation	Expenditure declared (€ million)	Overall cost per result (€)	Employment TO8 ESF (€)	Employment TO8 YEI (€)	Social Inclusion TO9 (€)	Education TO10 (€)
Less dev.	7 389 119	46 105.7	6 240	5 576		13 621	4 638
More dev.	8 135 092	37 233.0	4 577	4 036		5 921	4 110
Trans.	4 259 175	13 547.9	3 181	3 752		4 530	2 194
REACT-EU -no region	635 299	3 121.2	4 913				

³⁹ 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.

YEI - No region	1 901 512	8 270.6	4 349	4 349
<i>Thematic objective 11 and REACT-EU are not presented per MS, because of individual outliers due to relatively low number of individual results. Its values are included in the aggregated totals.</i>				
<i>Technical assistance excluded.</i>				

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

At the EU level, the costs for a single short-term result in the analysis amount to EUR 4 923. This aggregate value covers substantially larger variations among Member States and among Thematic Objectives, often the result of different reporting practices. While such unit costs do not necessarily tell us much about efficiency of interventions, these do provide insights in 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 6 241 of declared expenditure is reported, against EUR 4 572 in more developed regions, and EUR 3 181 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. These unit costs are based exclusively on the participant-level common results and therefore do not include other types of results. It shows how the balance between costs and individual results in investment priorities related to active ageing (8vi), labour market institutions (8vii) and access to social services (9iv) are substantial outliers. 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 classified as outliers, such as gender equality (8iv), access to higher education (10ii), social economy (9v) and local development strategies (9vi).

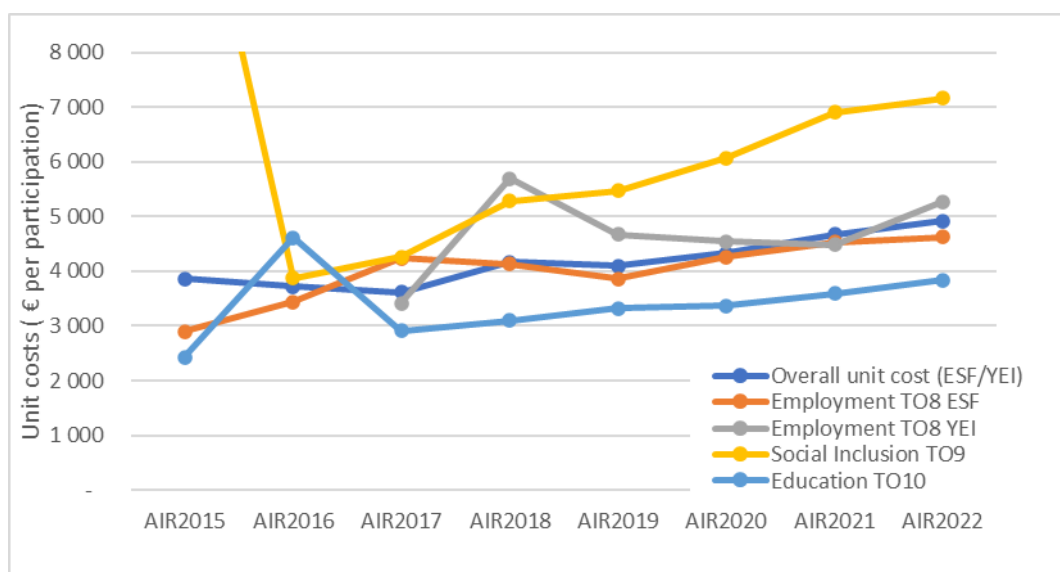
Table 41. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per immediate participant-level common result achieved – by investment priority (ESF only)

	Costs per result achieved			
	More developed	Transition	Less developed	All regions
Access to employment (8i)	3 015	3 298	4 391	3 693
Youth employment (8ii - ESF)	3 868	2 185	5 068	4 157
Entrepreneurship (8iii)	5 105	1 992	14 288	4 809
Gender equality (8iv)	7 275	6 964	16 646	10 884
Adaptation to change (8v)	5 548	9 916	6 729	6 548
Active ageing (8vi)	728 494	492 124	6 410	16 348
Labour market institutions (8vii)	13 328	23 930	211 591	40 019
Thematic Objective 8	4 036	3 752	5 576	4 621
Active inclusion (9i)	4 879	3 925	8 165	5 136
Integrating marginalised communities (9ii)	12 085	2 274	7 484	7 227
Combating discrimination (9iii)	3 999	5 529	29 088	6 172
Access to social services (9iv)	78 871	218 359	54 078	64 318
Promoting social economy (9v)	6 889	10 243	40 001	25 805
Local development strategies (9vi)	10 354	17 571	17 147	15 924
Thematic Objective 9	5 921	4 530	13 621	7 168
Early school leaving (10i)	3 741	2 802	6 137	4 432
Access to higher education (10ii)	6 353	13 935	15 291	12 098
Access to lifelong learning (10iii)	3 932	1 314	2 455	2 575
LM relevance of education (10iv)	4 465	2 899	4 155	3 981
Thematic Objective 10	4 110	2 194	4 638	3 842

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

When reviewed over time, the analysed data also points at an upward trend of costs per result, particularly since 2019. 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 over EUR 7 000 in 2022. 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 subjectivity⁴⁰. 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 17. Trend in cost per individual immediate result



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

⁴⁰ 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

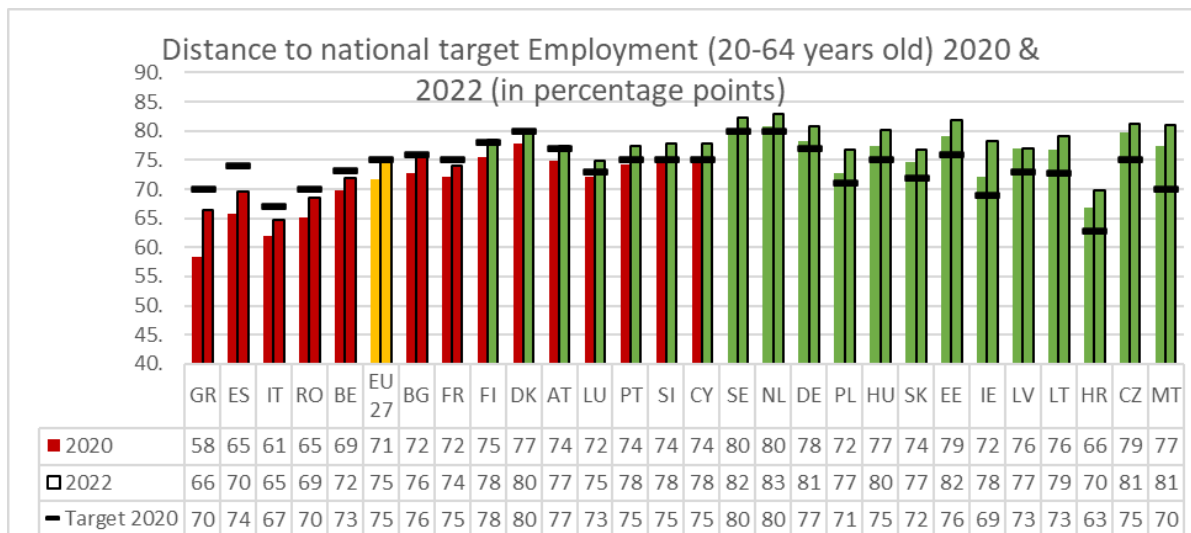
5.1 Thematic Objective 8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility

5.1.1 Objectives

ESF 2014-2020 was designed to offer additional financial means to help implement interventions that contributed to the Europe 2020 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. The action plan for the European Pillar of Social introduced new targets for the next decade, to be reached by 2030. However, this section focuses on the Europe 2020 targets as these informed programming for ESF2014-2020. By promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility under thematic objective 8 (TO8), the ESF sought to contribute to the Europe 2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This section assesses the ESF contribution to this objective. As part of the Europe 2020 strategy, national targets had been set for individual Member States.

When assessing performance on progress towards national targets for the employment rate (see Figure 18), 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 and Bulgaria were still relatively far from reaching their national targets. The EU average distance to target in 2020 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. In the years since 2020, Finland, Denmark, Austria, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia and Cyprus managed to improve their employment rates and pass the 2020 targets.

Figure 18. Headline national targets for Employment (20-64 years old) – 2020 and change by end of 2022 – ranked by distance from 2020 national targets (%)



Source: authors, based on 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 interventions⁴¹. The total ESF investments allocated under thematic objective 8 amount to EUR 39.9 billion (EU + national co-financing), of which 81% had been declared as expenditures by the end of 2022⁴². Please note that REACT-EU investments under TO8 are not included in this overview (see for this section 5.5). The table below summarises key implementation figures of TO8 investments for each Member State. By the end of 2022, TO8 implementation remained behind the EU average in Austria, Croatia, Italy, Spain. Despite these lower-than-average implementation rates, managing authorities do not report any particular implementation challenges. Higher expenditure than allocated budget to this priority is declared in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Netherlands and Slovenia.

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 (any)	Median result achievement	% participants that entered employment ⁴³
AT	113.6	66.3%	8 829	121.9%	3 804	66.7%	18%
BE	762.5	81.5%	523 699	223.4%	200 357	123.3%	26%
BG	493.0	113.2%	229 397	102.1%	26 215	40.2%	12%
CY	27.2	106.0%	4 656	99.8%	2 777	98.9%	55%
CZ	1 834.8	89.7%	521 694	129.9%	337 334	140.4%	47%
DE	4 020.7	98.2%	989 197	114.8%	733 282	97.2%	23%
DK	187.8	87.4%	52 883	114.4%	9 591	81.6%	7%
EE	241.1	88.1%	123 372	57.4%	19 177	93.3%	19%
ES	3 854.5	64.9%	2 274 039	71.3%	885 464	34.6%	42%
FI	468.4	84.1%	176 427	86.5%	26 234	24.0%	17%
FR	2 708.9	94.4%	1 386 572	76.7%	627 626	63.2%	34%
GR	1 773.3	79.1%	533 791	99.3%	166 742	15.2%	12%
HR	430.0	69.8%	176 294	62.2%	31 015	74.4%	36%
HU	2 074.7	83.4%	799 254	115.6%	410 787	168.2%	61%
IE	274.0	84.2%	25 722	95.7%	22 217	40.9%	13%
IT	5 750.6	71.6%	3 720 645	103.9%	1 135 517	26.0%	23%
LT	438.7	99.9%	142 668	130.9%	124 310	100.0%	51%
LU	20.2	98.5%	12 503	133.2%	2 131	18.4%	5%
LV	124.1	90.4%	95 832	99.3%	44 800	128.6%	21%
MT	64.5	145.8%	88 682	210.1%	12 022	45.3%	25%
NL	253.5	100.3%	49 223	130.7%	11 226	132.9%	21%
PL	5 316.5	83.3%	3 320 972	114.1%	1 140 098	89.5%	51%
PT	1 997.1	83.1%	1 152 042	104.8%	179 769	47.8%	37%
RO	1 376.7	84.0%	576 876	63.0%	167 990	44.3%	26%
SE	549.4	89.0%	75 110	126.2%	34 040	85.0%	19%
SI	340.7	102.8%	80 201	112.6%	48 816	62.8%	47%
SK	1 596.1	86.6%	340 310	92.5%	118 285	10.2%	14%
UK	2 788.4	77.1%	1 038 759	88.3%	624 766	87.3%	18%
Total	39 880.9	82.8%	18 519 649	104.8%	7 146 392	69.0%	32% (>24%)
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results (any)	Median result achievement	% participants that entered employment

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² **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.

⁴³ This indicator is included as core performance indicator for MFF 2014-2020 under this objective. The final target for 2023 is defined at 24%.

Less dev.	20 144.4	80.9%	8 309 920	108.5%	2 923 230	83.6%	41%
More dev.	14 249.4	87.4%	7 690 048	101.8%	3 087 222	64.3%	24%
Transition	5 487.1	77.7%	2 519 681	99.8%	1 135 940	36.2%	35%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The EC defined the share of unemployed or inactive who entered employment upon leaving the intervention as core performance indicator for this thematic objective, with an EU-level target of 24 %. This target was met since 2019 and remained above it since, in each type of region and in most Member States. It is important to underline that this does not mean that these 24 % of participants gained employment *as a result of ESF funding*. Such a causal link can only be established in a counterfactual analysis. From this perspective the recent finding (2022) of a meta-analysis of counterfactual analyses conducted on ESF interventions is relevant, which found an average 7.3 percentage point improvement of employment probability of participants in ESF participation⁴⁴.

The median achievement of the output indicators defined by programmes themselves is considerably higher than what could be expected on the basis of implementation rates alone. However, the median target achievements in Croatia, Estonia and Romania are considerably below the EU median achievement for TO8. These Member States explain these lower target achievement rates by pointing at a cascade effect of delays in the first years, which contributed to lower target achievement of output indicators. Estonia in particular also mentioned COVID and the consequences of the Russian aggression in Ukraine as reasons that required further adjustments to project implementation, at a time when preparations for the start of ESF+ 2021-2027 had already been initiated. Croatia indicated 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.

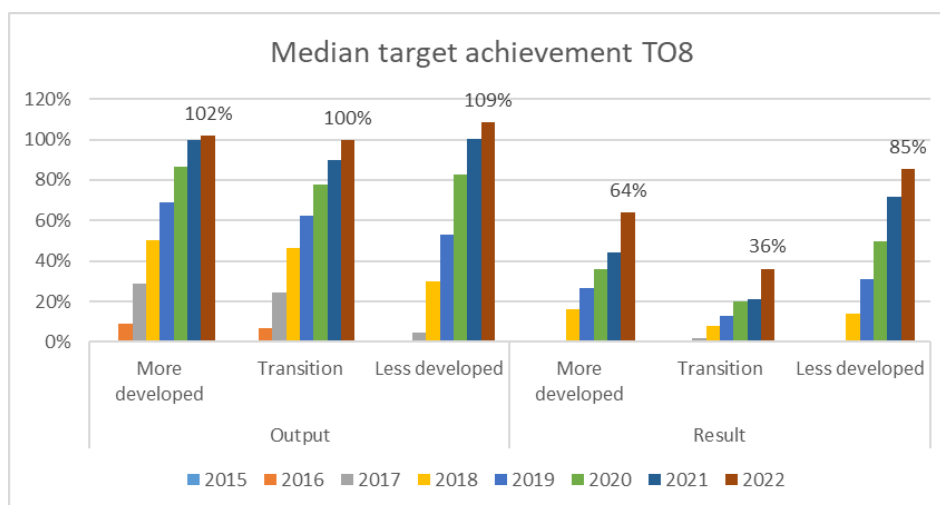
The target achievement of result indicators is also advancing steadily (to 70.1 % at the EU level), though with Greece, Luxembourg, and Slovakia considerably behind their own target setting. Slovakia reports that so far its reporting on common indicators is not complete due to technical issues; it is 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 reached above 100% in less developed and more developed regions, and practically reached 100 % in transition regions as well (99.8 %). Particularly for less developed regions, a considerable improvement can be observed since 2018. For result indicators, achievement rates continue to be lower, though rapidly improving particularly in less developed regions, where the median stands at 85 % at the end of 2022. Result indicators in transition regions remain considerably behind their targets (36 %), though show a considerable improvement in

⁴⁴ European Commission (2023), [Meta-analysis of the ESF counterfactual impact evaluations – Final report](#), Publications Office of the European Union.

2022. The lower value for transition region is mainly caused by almost 50 result indicators mainly in Greece, Italy and Greece programmes that do not yet report any progress. The relevant annual implementation reports do not offer explanations for the lack of progress in these indicators.

Figure 19. Evolution of median target achievement for TO8 – by category of region



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 (85.6 %). A total of more than 8.3 million participations were reported in interventions under this priority. The median target achievements for outputs (113.2 %) and results (82.3 %) are above the overall median target achievement rate reported for the entire thematic objective (104.8 % and 69.6 % 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

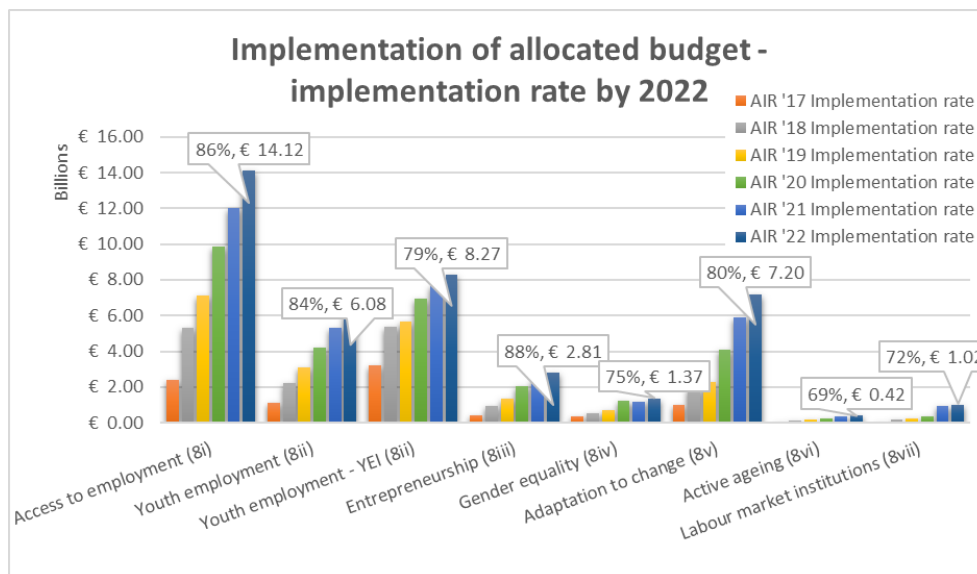
Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Access to employment (8i)	16 498.9	85.6%	8 267 281	113.2%	3 822 208	82.3%
Youth employment (8ii)	7 277.6	83.5%	3 026 044	95.3%	1 462 626	62.9%
Entrepreneurship (8iii)	3 213.5	87.5%	1 367 828	100.8%	584 668	44.3%
Gender equality (8iv)	1 828.0	75.1%	832 713	105.3%	126 149	57.6%
Adaptation to change (8v)	9 029.0	79.7%	3 748 801	109.1%	1 099 379	76.5%
Active ageing (8vi)	616.0	68.6%	1 143 764	115.0%	25 844	63.0%
Labour market institutions (8vii)	1 417.9	72.0%	133 218	85.7%	25 518	18.5%
Total – TO8	39 880.9	82.8%	18 519 649	104.8%	7 146 392	69.0%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Figure 20 and 21 below illustrate how implementation has developed over time and show how the implementation rates of individual investment priorities have steadily increased over the years. The implementation of smaller investment priorities, such as 8iv (Gender equality – 75 %), 8vi (Active ageing – 69 %), and 8vii (Modernisation of

labour market institutions – 72 %) started later but is currently actively catching up and has increased substantially in the last year.

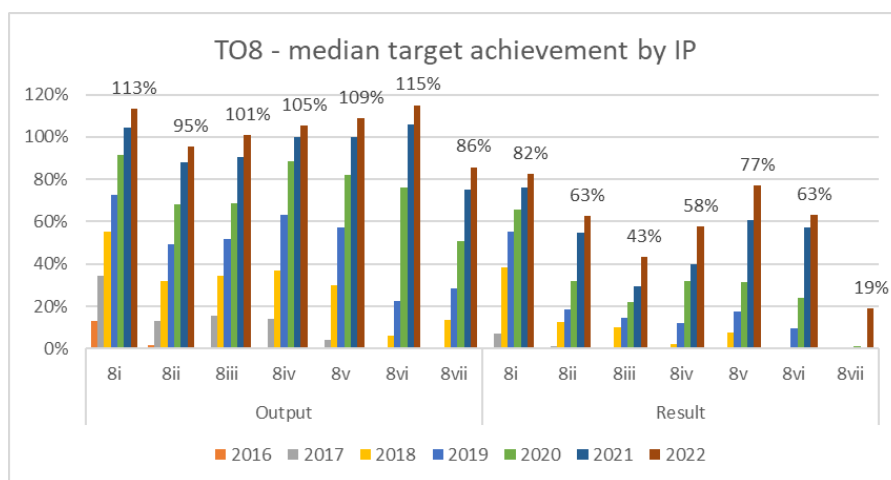
Figure 20. Absorption of budget under investment priorities on employment (TO8)



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)⁴⁵

When reviewing target achievement (Figure 20) for output and result indicators by IP, interventions that focus on modernising labour market institutions (IP8vii) progressed the least by the end of 2022. 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 21. Evolution of median target achievement under TO8 – by investment priority



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

So far, investments in this thematic objective supported almost 18.5 million participations, which led to more than 7.1 million positive results. These positive results

⁴⁵ 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

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 27 716 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 participation, but also for instance in terms of the number of (small- / medium-sized) companies supported. Positive results were reported for a total of 138 651 enterprises. Such results vary and can range from concluding training sessions, developing a strategic action plan or put in place specific gender equality measures. Such results can be found across 13 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
Individual results	7 146 392	152	28
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	278 153	152	28
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	611 283	152	28
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	2 357 432	152	28
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	3 899 524	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	27 716	19	9
	DE, CZ, ES, FI, FR, LT, PL, SK, UK		
Entities – number of enterprises with positive results ⁴⁶	138 651	27	13
	AT, BG, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HU, IT, PL, PT, RO		
Of which defined explicitly as SME	95 805	26	6
		AT, DE, GR, LV, PL, SK	
Individual results: other positive result after intervention: Number of people supported through preventive health examinations	752 512	16	1
			PL
Entities – number of Labour Market Institutions with positive results	3 691	20	8
		BG, DK, GR, HR, HU, IT, PL, RO	

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 752 512 individuals were reached across the various Polish regional programmes. Note that these projects were set up before COVID-19, and

⁴⁶ 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).

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 some of these investments to also include COVID-19 tests, but most of such investments are found under Thematic Objective 9 (access to healthcare services).

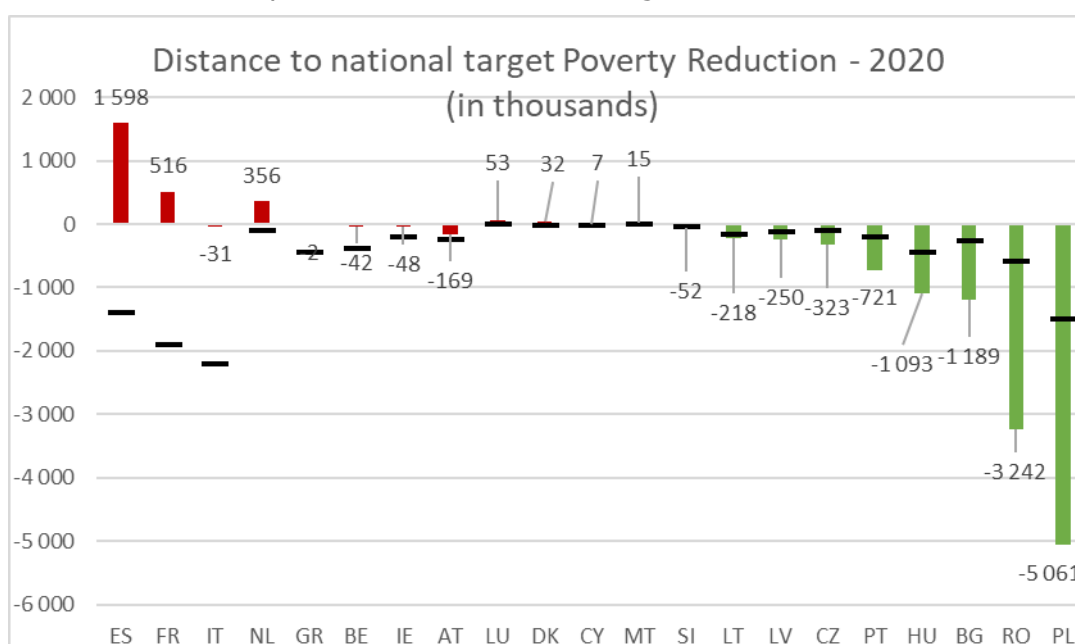
Investments that focus on modernising labour market institutions (IP8vii) are also not adequately measured by common indicators. A total of 3 691 labour market institutions were reported to have some type of positive result (upgraded systems, key staff members trained, new tools deployed, knowledge exchanged), from across eight 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.

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 Europe 2020 headline target aimed to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty by 20 million compared to the year 2008. The action plan for the European Pillar of Social introduced new targets for the next decade, to be reached by 2030. However, this section focuses on the Europe 2020 targets as these informed programming for ESF2014-2020. 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 22. Distance to national poverty reduction targets (2020, in thousands) - ranked by distance from national targets



Source: Eurostat (ilc_peps01)⁴⁷

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 22. 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 or social exclusion in 2020. 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 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 2020⁴⁸. It also represents a considerable setback from its 2019 value (when for the EU27 a total of 11.95 million 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 to 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 here⁴⁹. Thematic Objective 9 has been allocated a total of EUR 34.9 billion (EU + national co-financing), of which 84.5 % had been declared as expenditures by the end of 2022⁵⁰. 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 these differences between Member States, with Ireland at the lower end (67.5 %) and France on the higher end (113.3 %) of the scale.

⁴⁷ Due to changes in the indicators used for measuring the number of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion since 2020, the targets and indicators cannot be compared to progress after 2020. For this reason, we only present the final figures for the EU2020 headline targets.

⁴⁸ Note that the total target set for the EU is not equal to the sum of national targets.

⁴⁹ 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.

⁵⁰ **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.

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	% reached inactive engaged in job-search ⁵¹
AT	271.8	84.0%	102 501	184.7%	36 847	202.9%	8%
BE	777.8	78.9%	406 300	152.8%	142 069	96.3%	4%
BG	564.6	74.3%	524 599	121.3%	105 178	138.7%	3%
CY	121.6	98.4%	64 517	114.5%	539	50.0%	(no inactive)
CZ	1 050.8	87.6%	189 568	108.6%	33 170	128.9%	5%
DE	4 027.1	94.4%	815 687	118.8%	428 598	83.8%	10%
DK	78.3	94.5%	10 678	55.0%	2 753	41.1%	8%
EE	168.8	85.1%	42 989	126.6%	7 167	133.9%	4%
ES	2 876.7	73.3%	1 874 982	110.3%	807 899	52.1%	20%
FI	201.1	87.4%	64 939	128.3%	6 442	91.1%	2%
FR	3 780.0	113.3%	3 083 743	85.1%	1 306 746	84.7%	41%
GR	1 599.8	100.8%	292 215	100.0%	37 031	26.5%	21%
HR	589.1	86.1%	113 395	136.5%	18 439	54.2%	7%
HU	1 239.9	82.2%	439 383	185.6%	91 329	75.0%	1%
IE	297.6	67.5%	67 856	36.7%	36 154	31.4%	12%
IT	4 862.5	71.5%	1 938 554	102.6%	136 986	13.7%	2%
LT	302.3	92.6%	410 543	131.8%	37 320	74.3%	1%
LU	11.0	80.9%	3 204	89.0%	171	3.1%	2%
LV	294.5	72.2%	173 148	94.2%	11 991	90.0%	1%
MT	40.0	85.2%	14 788	175.5%	4 853	63.5%	4%
NL	726.3	100.9%	562 172	249.1%	154 378	102.0%	8%
PL	3 488.5	75.7%	1 419 291	105.5%	350 544	79.1%	7%
PT	1 758.6	90.1%	670 184	97.9%	57 189	90.2%	3%
RO	2 164.4	76.3%	551 047	41.7%	56 513	34.6%	3%
SE	376.5	76.6%	31 342	105.9%	13 499	122.1%	12%
SI	197.0	94.9%	14 184	100.0%	4 208	55.6%	4%
SK	564.9	81.3%	357 419	104.1%	4 182	96.9%	0%
UK	2 515.3	68.8%	637 523	84.8%	225 228	32.8%	20%
Total	34 946.8	84.5%	14 876 751	103.3%	4 117 423	60.3%	13% (<16%)
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	% reached inactive engaged in job-search
Less dev.	14 874.7	78.0%	6 010 913	103.3%	852 144	65.9%	3%
More dev.	15 019.8	88.3%	6 483 665	103.6%	2 238 508	58.0%	21%
Transition	5 052.3	92.1%	2 381 234	101.9%	1 026 533	47.9%	31%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

⁵¹ This indicator is included as core performance indicator for MFF 2014-2020 under this objective. The final target for 2023 is defined at 16%.

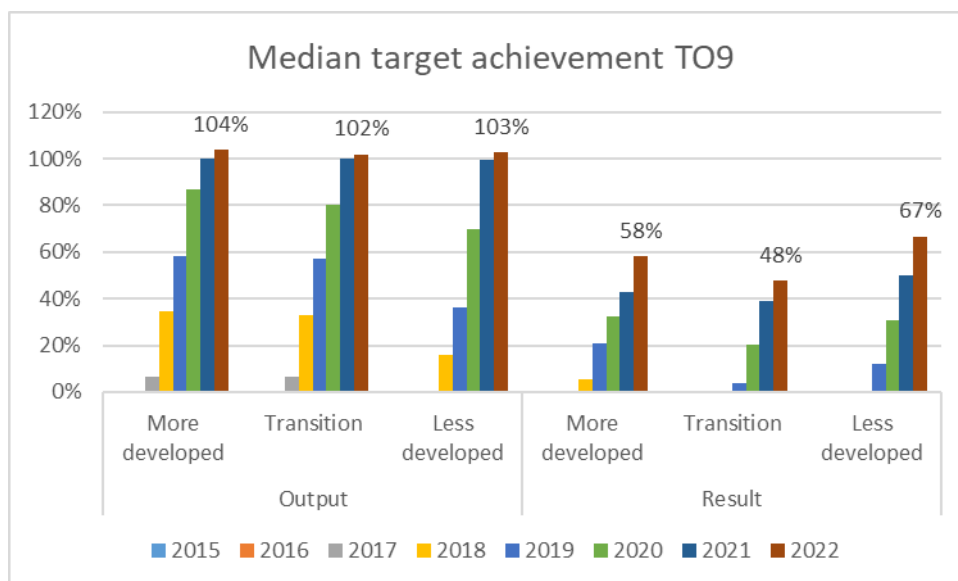
In terms of individual results achieved, less developed regions reached one-third of the number of results achieved in more developed regions (0.8 million in less developed against 2.2 million in more developed regions). When looking at this data, one must take into account that the EU2020 poverty headline 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.

This is also reflected in the progress measured by the EC core performance indicator, which in this thematic objective measures the share of inactive participants in this thematic objective who engaged in job-search upon leaving the intervention (last column in table 45). The target for 2023 is set at 16 %, which is comfortably met in more developed regions and transition regions but is very low in less developed regions. As a result, at the EU level the indicator stands at 13 % and has not yet reached its target.

When reviewing the target achievement of the result indicators in the programmes, the median achievement in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom lags considerably behind the EU median of 60.9 %. 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 and Luxembourg), this suggests that considerable improvements in results achievement need to materialize in the final year of implementation. Luxembourg confirms there is high demand for the remaining projects in the area of social inclusion and expects to be able to report increased results in its final implementation report.

Figure 23 shows relatively comparable target achievement rates by the end of 2022 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. In more developed regions the first progress in the median was reported in 2018, with the median target achievement now reaching 58 %, slightly behind that of less developed regions (67 %), and above that of transition regions (48 %).

Figure 23. Evolution of median target achievement under TO9 – by category of region



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The progress in implementation was further analysed at the level of individual investment priorities. As in thematic objective 8 on employment it is reassuring here as well that the dominant investment priority (9i) also shows the highest implementation rate (90.3 %) and produced a considerable number of observable results towards the EU poverty-reduction objectives (3.7 million). Investment in the area of community-led local development (9vi) continues to be one of the investment priorities with the lowest progress in implementation, both in terms of implementation rate (64.6 %), 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.

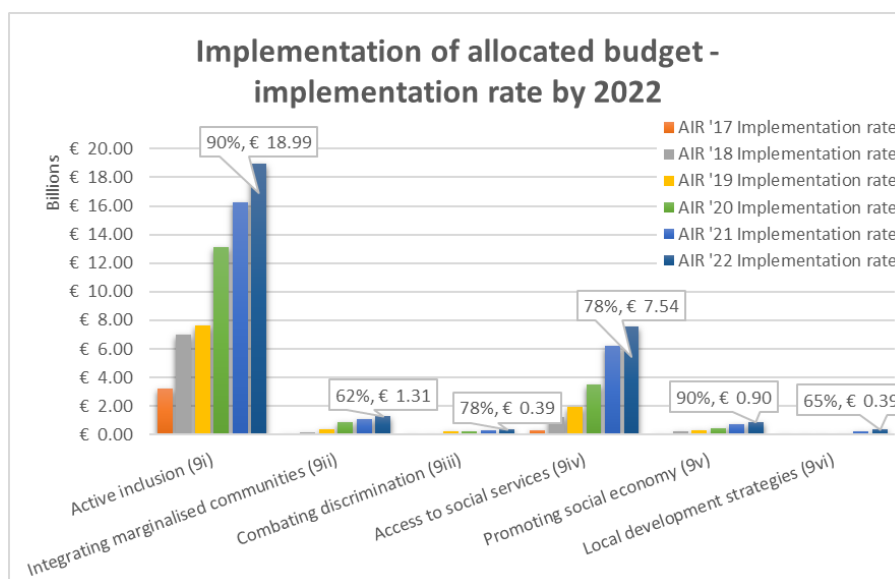
Table 46. Overview of TO9

Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Active inclusion (9i)	21 025.7	90.3%	10 436 759	110.2%	3 696 474	68.8%
Integrating marginalised communities (9ii)	2 091.2	62.5%	771 612	100.0%	180 764	43.3%
Combating discrimination (9iii)	506.2	77.9%	328 555	110.5%	63 900	61.2%
Access to social services (9iv)	9 731.0	77.5%	2 876 987	100.0%	117 286	59.6%
Promoting social economy (9v)	995.7	90.2%	227 259	108.4%	34 789	57.5%
Local development strategies (9vi)	597.0	64.6%	235 579	87.7%	24 210	20.0%
TO9	34 946.8	84.5%	14 876 751	103.3%	4 117 423	60.3%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Figure 24 confirms the overall increasing trend for implementation rates. Under Thematic Objective 9, implementation efforts by Member States are predominantly focused on active inclusion (9i). Member States allocated a variety of interventions to this broad investment priority, also evidenced by its highest allocated budget.

Figure 24. Absorption of budget under investment priorities with a social inclusion objective (TO9)

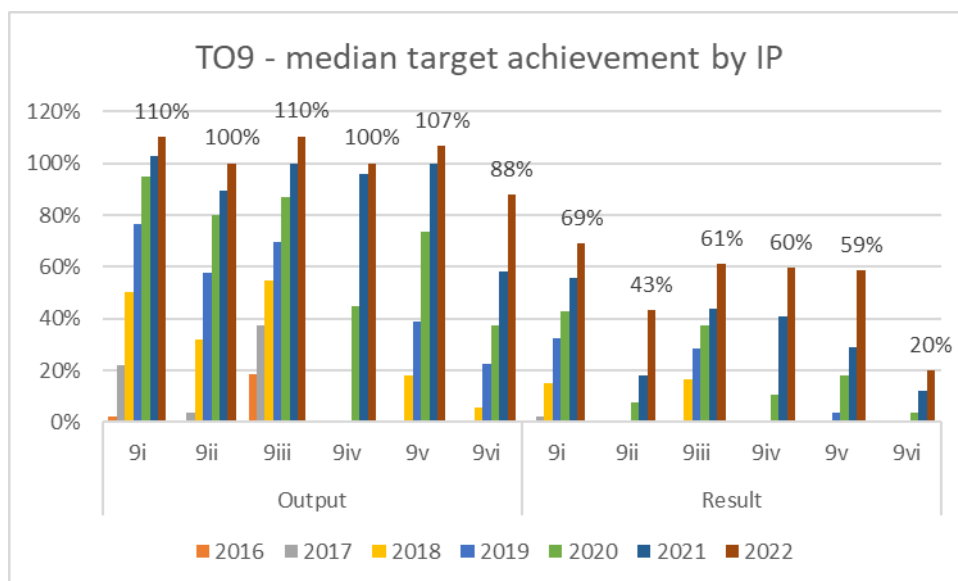


Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Target achievement rates for output indicators have been substantially improving since 2018, and further increased in 2022. The median output target achievement rates for most investment priorities are now above their targets, with an exception in the implementation of local development strategies (9vi). 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 almost all investment priorities below 60 % of their target achievement. This can be 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 intervention⁵². 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 year of implementation.

⁵² 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 25. Evolution of median target achievement under TO9 – by investment priority



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 2022, a total of 4.1 million individual results were recorded by the ESF common indicators for these 14.9 million participations, among which the number of participants that found employment upon leaving the intervention is the largest (slightly under 1.7 million, see table 46 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
Individual results	4 117 423	145	28
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	702 485	145	28
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	647 588	145	28
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	1 086 213	145	28
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	1 681 137	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
Individual result: other positive result after intervention: The number of people who benefited from new, innovative measures for the implementation of social inclusion	1 710 822	52	21
			AT, BE, BG, 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	848 127	57	16
			BG, CZ, ES, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK
Achievements: Capacity increased for childcare	60 712	22	7
			BE, BG, ES, IT, SI, SK, UK
Entity: enterprise / economic operator – Social enterprises	25 709	36	12
			BG, CZ, ES, GR, HU, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, RO, SI
Achievement – jobs created in social enterprises	20 132	20	4
			CZ, FR, PL, UK
Achievement – jobs preserved in social enterprises	11 282	5	2
			ES, LT

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 1.7 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 21 Member States, across 52 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 0.8 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 146 000 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 2022, 25 709 social enterprises benefited from ESF support. A total of 20 132 jobs were created in social enterprises, while another 11 282 jobs were preserved in such entities with support from ESF.

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. The action plan for the European Pillar of Social introduced new targets for the next decade, to be reached by 2030. However, this section focuses on the Europe 2020 targets as these informed programming for ESF2014-2020.

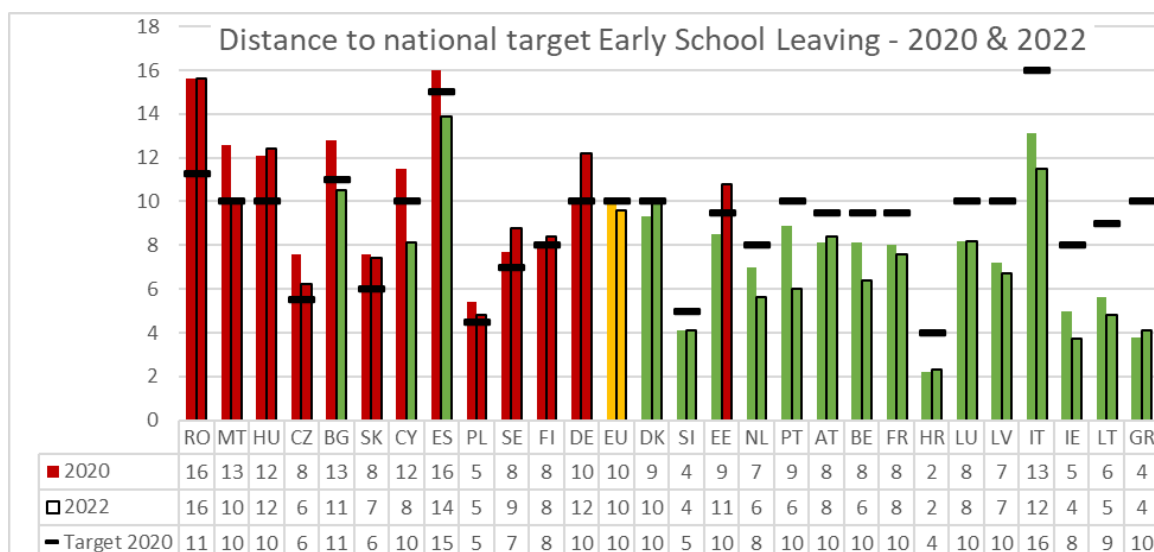
In addition to the EU2020 goals on education (that remain the cornerstone of European strategy in this field), "Education and Training 2020" (ET 2020) provides complementary common strategic objectives for Member States, including a set of principles for achieving these objectives, as well as common working methods with priority areas for each periodic work cycle⁵³. 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 Europe 2020 target for reducing early school leaving has been met for the EU as a whole⁵⁴. By 2020, national targets were reached by Denmark, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria, Belgium, France, Croatia, Luxembourg, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Ireland, Lithuania, and Greece (see figure 26 below). Estonia stands out in this group, as its rate of early school leaving had shot up again after 2020, to 11%, above its 2020 target. 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. Among this group, Bulgaria Cyprus and Spain passed their 2020 national targets by the end of 2022. Romania and Hungary remained further away from their targets, with over 2 percentage points away from their national target.

⁵³ It should be mentioned however that the CPR is not directly linked to the ET2020 strategy

⁵⁴ 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;

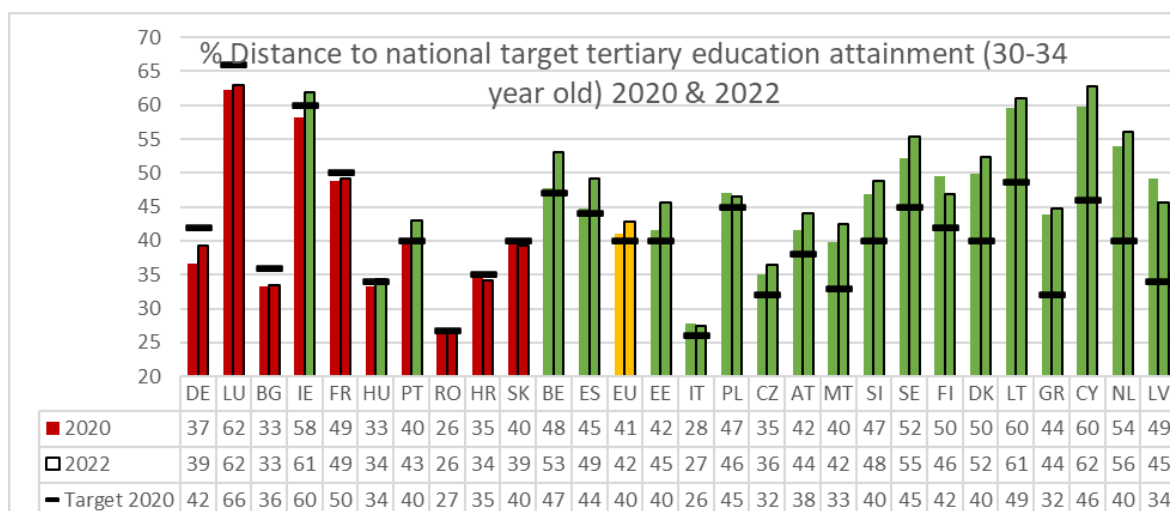
Figure 26. Headline target on Early School Leaving – ranked by distance from national targets in 2020



Source: Eurostat (EDAT_LFSE_14)

The second Europe 2020 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 was very close to reaching their national targets in 2020 (Romania, Croatia, Slovakia). Ireland, Hungary and Portugal reached their national targets for 2020 by 2022. In Germany, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, and France increases in educational attainment were not enough to meet their national targets⁵⁵.

Figure 27. Headline target on tertiary education attainment (30-34-year-old) 2020 – ranked by distance from national targets



Source: Eurostat (T2020_41)⁵⁶

⁵⁵ 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%).

⁵⁶ Due to a break in the timeseries in the Labour Force Survey, the data beyond 2020 is not directly comparable to 2020 and the 2020. For this reason not included.

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 for education. This section reviews the implementation of these investment priorities in more detail⁵⁷. A total of EUR 36.7 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 85.4 %⁵⁸. 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.

Some clear differences remain in the number of results reported by individual Member States by the end of 2022. Comparatively low numbers of results are observed in Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland and Luxembourg. Particularly in Denmark and Luxembourg, the low numbers of results are also associated with low progress towards the targets set, showing considerable room for improvement in the final year of implementation. In Denmark, this is 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 and 2022. 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, and expects to do so in the final implementation report.

⁵⁷ 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.

⁵⁸ 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.

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	Rate of participants who gained qualification ⁵⁹
AT	439.1	86.9%	125 299	151.7%	49 343	116.4%	23%
BE	550.0	60.9%	486 206	165.5%	144 888	125.7%	18%
BG	328.6	75.0%	1 160 309	93.2%	556 805	100.0%	12%
CY	13.3	104.9%	4 468	107.5%	2 010	40.9%	14%
CZ	1 322.3	91.1%	153 894	182.8%	12 899	101.1%	4%
DE	4 001.9	96.9%	1 546 431	109.3%	1 054 775	87.8%	50%
DK	126.1	86.7%	58 270	137.3%	4 018	12.5%	3%
EE	239.0	87.4%	83 417	123.8%	72 103	99.0%	69%
ES	3 248.3	76.7%	2 651 886	103.4%	2 205 939	53.2%	72%
FI	332.8	101.8%	178 706	150.2%	8 287	51.0%	2%
FR	2 697.8	92.2%	766 666	97.0%	403 083	69.7%	27%
GR	1 250.7	97.8%	416 701	142.9%	197 967	13.0%	32%
HR	418.3	76.7%	147 178	125.6%	9 191	23.6%	5%
HU	1 516.5	78.7%	971 306	130.3%	474 627	128.0%	44%
IE	241.1	100.0%	226 327	74.2%	161 448	76.9%	36%
IT	4 879.0	87.0%	5 829 362	108.5%	551 147	32.9%	4%
LT	530.2	86.1%	437 198	135.5%	67 435	83.5%	12%
LU	7.2	99.3%	9 360	106.6%	236	0.0%	2%
LV	297.2	77.4%	122 722	100.0%	27 818	97.7%	8%
MT	40.9	86.7%	34 835	168.1%	5 497	77.0%	9%
NL							
PL	4 623.1	72.7%	4 099 057	119.8%	789 937	95.5%	17%
PT	4 639.5	96.2%	1 761 247	100.8%	578 034	0.0%	21%
RO	984.0	65.6%	750 820	56.4%	155 231	3.6%	6%
SE	446.1	67.4%	258 273	123.7%	36 282	35.7%	14%
SI	266.1	84.9%	168 534	124.2%	43 189	91.8%	18%
SK	416.6	73.5%	474 699	201.0%	33 531	103.5%	5%
UK	2 891.4	83.6%	788 675	79.7%	519 369	53.1%	60%
Total	36 747.0	85.4%	23 711 846	111.9%	8 165 089	72.7%	25% (>23%)
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Rate of participants who gained qualification
Less dev.	18 555.0	84.9%	13 682 833	114.8%	3 395 265	84.2%	25%
More dev.	12 998.8	85.1%	6 630 576	109.5%	2 692 744	62.0%	41%
Transition	5 193.2	87.7%	3 398 437	111.2%	2 077 080	48.9%	61%

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

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The EC defined the share of participants who gained a qualification upon leaving an ESF intervention as core performance indicator. This indicator reached its target consistently since 2017, and by the end of 2022 remains at 25 % of all participants.

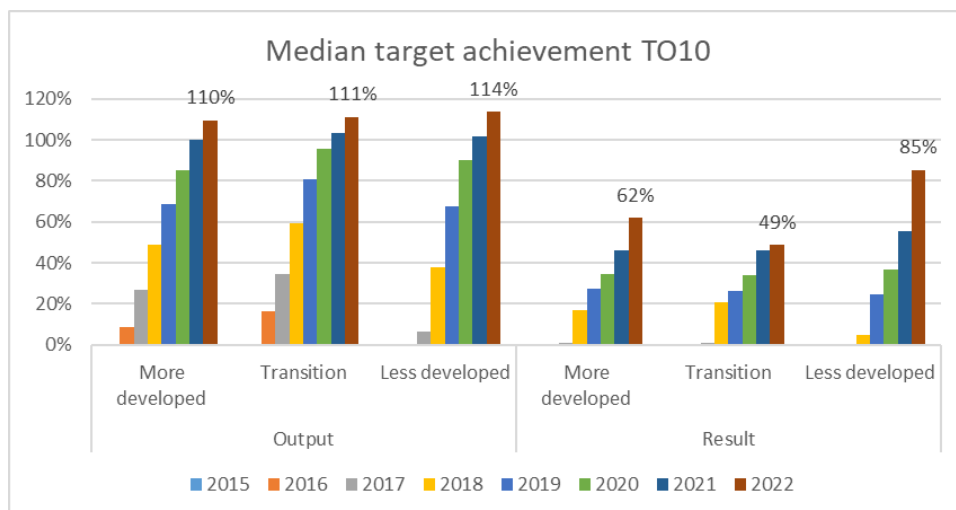
All Member States indicate that COVID-19 measures had an impact on progress in implementation of education investments but vary in the level of detail when describing how exactly investments in this thematic objective were impacted. Many education providers were unable to offer training, there were less 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

⁵⁹ This indicator is included as core performance indicator for MFF 2014-2020 under this objective. The final target for 2023 is defined at 23%.

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 28. Median output target achievement for education investments had been visible as early as 2016, and has steadily increase since, to over 110 % by the end of 2022 in all types of regions. The median achievement rate of result indicators is also relatively comparable to the achievement rates under other thematic objectives, with 62 % in more developed region, 85 % in less developed regions and 49% in transition regions.

Figure 28. Evolution of median target achievement under TO10 –by category of region



Source: authors’ calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 the implementation rate of investments focusing on the quality of higher education (10ii) remained behind other types of interventions (77.1 % against overall rate of 85.4 %). Declared expenditure for investments in early school leaving (10i) and improving labour market relevance (10iv) are above average with 85.9 % and 91.5 % respectively. This further confirms the substantial ESF contribution to the EU 2020 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 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 of individuals, 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 40.9 % is reported for this investment priority, compared to 73.0 % 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.

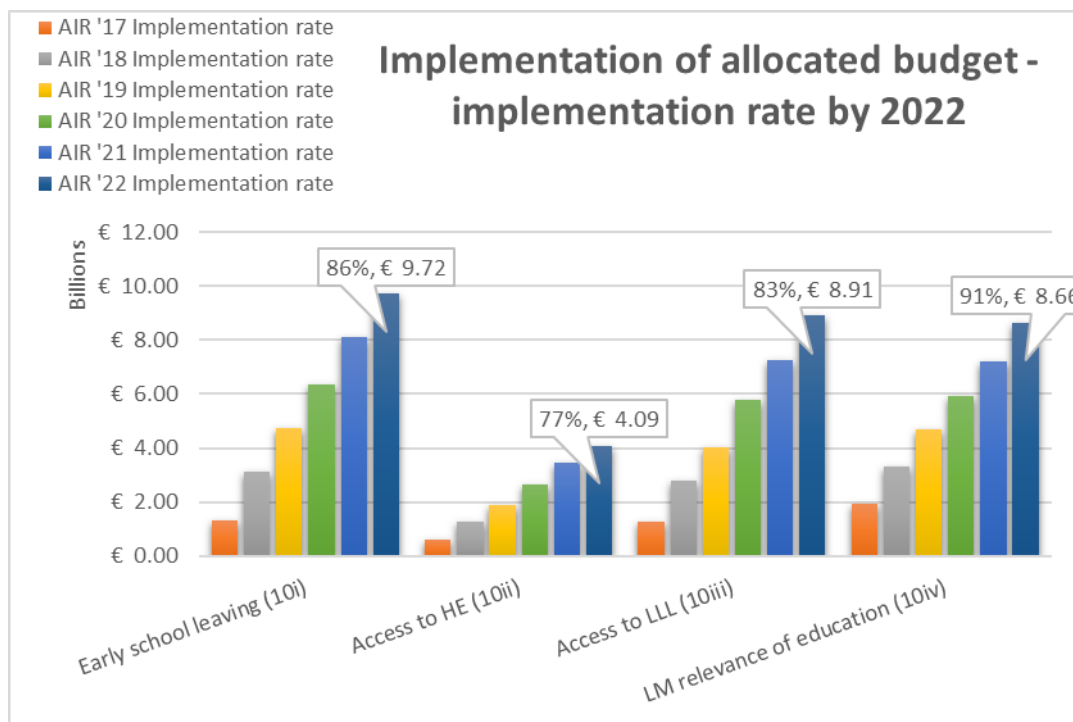
Table 49. Overview of TO10

Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Early school leaving (10i)	11 309.2	85.9%	11 227 493	116.9%	2 193 492	73.3%
Access to higher education (10ii)	5 300.5	77.1%	1 503 199	117.7%	337 675	40.9%
Access to lifelong learning (10iii)	10 673.3	83.5%	7 047 315	108.4%	3 459 644	80.1%
Labour market relevance of education (10iv)	9 464.0	91.5%	3 933 839	109.3%	2 174 278	72.2%
Total TO10	36 747.0	85.4%	23 711 846	111.9%	8 165 089	72.7%

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Figure 29 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.

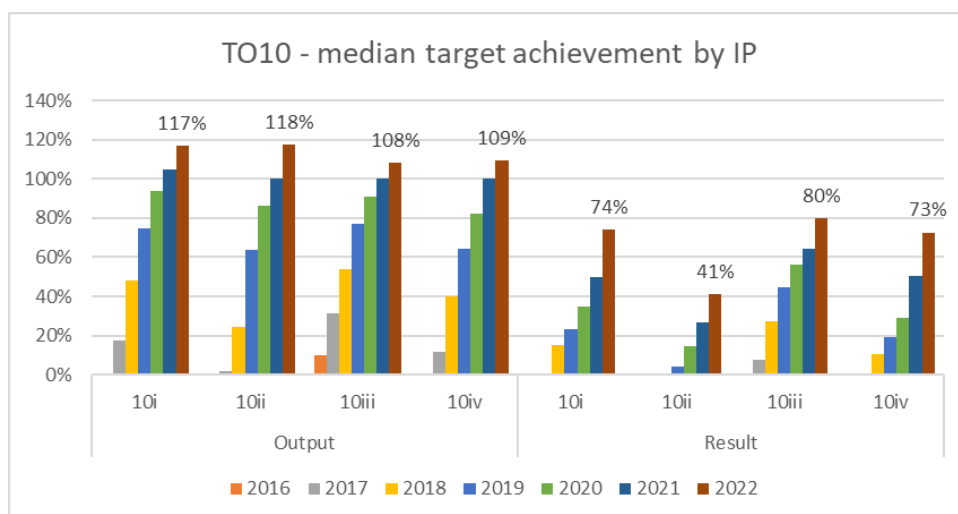
Figure 29. Absorption of budget under investment priorities with education objectives (TO10)



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Progress towards the indicator targets shows most improvements since 2018. The median target achievement for output indicators reached 117% for early school leaving (10i), which means that half of the indicators under this investment priority are at or above 117 % of their initial targets. Other investment priorities also show median achievement rates well above their targets. 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, leaving considerable room for improvement in the final year of implementation.

Figure 30. Evolution of median target achievement under TO10 - by investment priority



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

In total, 23.7 million participations are reported under this thematic objective, of which 8.2 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 2022, 5.8 million participants gained a qualification through 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 288 581 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
Individual results	8 165 089	147	27
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	391 355	147	27
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	1 442 339	147	27
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	5 820 247	147	27
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	511 148	147	27
A selection of key results in education investments as measured by Programme-specific indicators	Total achieved	Number of OPs covered	Number of MSs covered
Individuals – number of persons with skills improved after intervention	5 372 833	32	11
	BG, CZ, DE, ES, FR, IT, LV, PL, SI, SK, UK		
Individuals – number of children supported into pre-primary education	288 581	19	4
		DE, GR, PL, RO	
Entities – Education providers reached (outputs)	192 505	35	15
	BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, GR, HR, LT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK		
Entities – Positive result for education providers	146 809	38	18
	BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, GR, HR, LT, LV, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK		
Achievements: Capacity increased for community learning centres	427 184	4	4
		CZ, PL, PT, RO	
Projects – Number of successful projects	3 366	17	12
	BE, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, LV, PL, RO, SE, SK		

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 192 505 education providers were reached, of which a total of 146 809 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 by itself; 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 4.2 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 71.2 % of the allocated budget. Lowest implementation rates can be observed in France (27.7 %) and the United Kingdom (47.5 %)

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	215.3	75.5%	99 297	110.6%	51 839	115.4%	52%
CY	13.1	96.1%	0	100.0%	0	99.7%	
CZ	163.3	88.2%	19 125	49.8%	13 819	30.9%	72%
DE							
DK							
EE	33.4	87.7%	3 675	140.0%	776	100.0%	21%
ES							
FI							
FR	23.3	27.7%	176	25.3%	74	186.2%	42%
GR	260.9	64.3%	119 530	67.9%	99 979	3.2%	84%
HR	132.9	86.5%	23 566	86.2%	892	68.1%	4%
HU	892.5	85.8%	229 683	104.0%	94 907	105.6%	41%
IE							
IT	816.4	61.1%	159 818	126.2%	25 618	60.0%	16%
LT	114.1	70.2%	67 239	124.4%	26 591	75.5%	40%
LU							
LV	20.9	92.3%	26 412	138.7%	350	101.9%	1%
MT	13.5	74.5%	3 946	114.4%	1 054	76.2%	27%
NL							
PL	220.8	53.6%	116 390	100.0%	6 196	87.3%	5%
PT	247.2	68.2%	12 249	93.3%	0	49.2%	0%
RO	625.1	62.0%	44 928	122.5%	32 367	57.8%	72%
SE							
SI	78.6	78.6%	21 900	225.0%	20	94.0%	0%
SK	287.8	76.5%	4 183	201.7%	0	116.7%	0%
UK	23.6	47.5%	0	125.0%	0	25.0%	
Total	4 182.6	71.2%	952 117	100.0%	354 482	66.7%	37%
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
Less dev.	3 389.7	72.4%	609 709	103.8%	218 480	73.3%	36%
More dev.	668.4	67.1%	305 275	100.0%	116 618	66.7%	38%
Transition	124.5	62.8%	37 133	88.7%	19 384	49.1%	52%

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

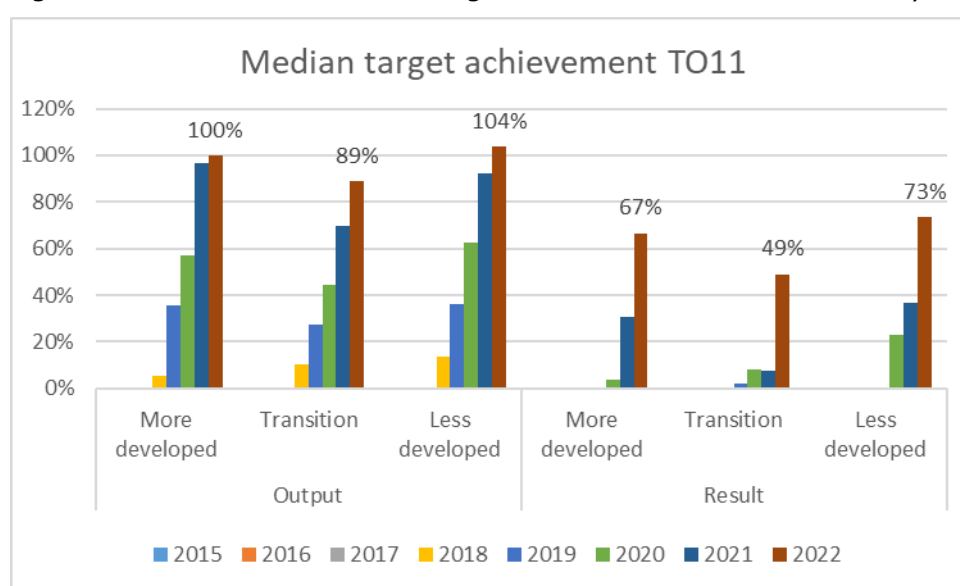
Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

So far, no participations nor individual results have been reported for Cyprus, Slovakia, Portugal, and the United Kingdom, while the numbers reported for France are also still practically at zero. 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. 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 2022. 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 116.7 %. For Portugal no individual results are reported for 84 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. Finally, 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 to be included in the final implementation report.

Figure 31 shows how the median output and result indicators at EU level have started to edge towards their targets. 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 73 % 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 31. Evolution of median target achievement under TO11 – by category of region



Source: authors’ calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Some differences 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 61.2 % so far, compared to the 71.7 % for institutional capacity building (11i). On the other hand, its median target achievement for output indicators is in fact higher than the latter (110.4 % against 100 % respectively).

Table 52. Overview of TO11

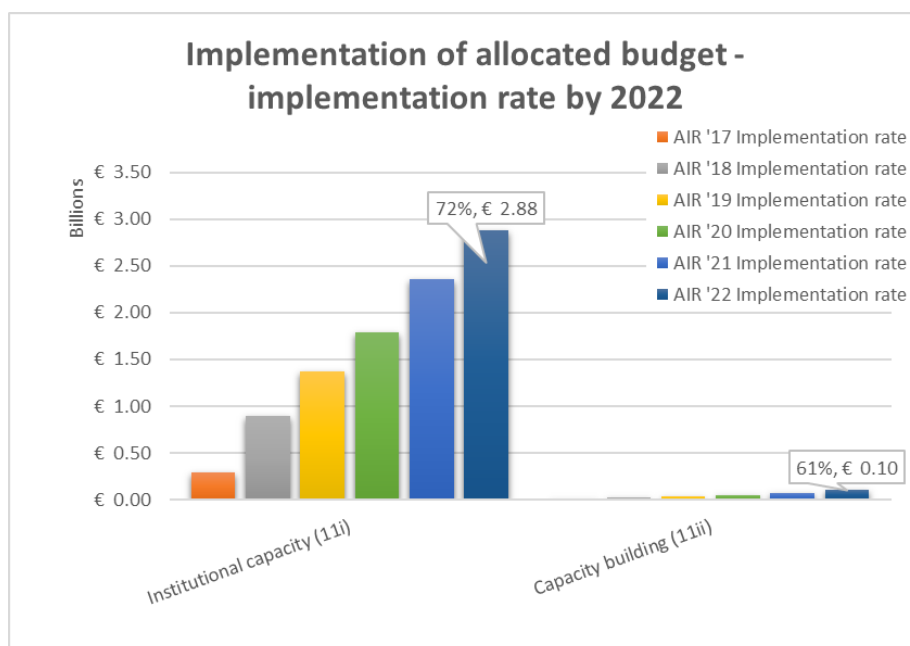
Investment priority	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement
Institutional capacity (11i)	4 013.5	71.7%	919 804	100.0%	352 029	68.0%
Capacity building (11ii)	169.1	61.2%	32 313	110.4%	2 453	53.3%
Total TO11	4 182.6	71.2%	952 117	100.0%	354 482	66.7%

Source: authors’ calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 32 shows below, the actual costs reported have been increasing steadily every year since 2016.

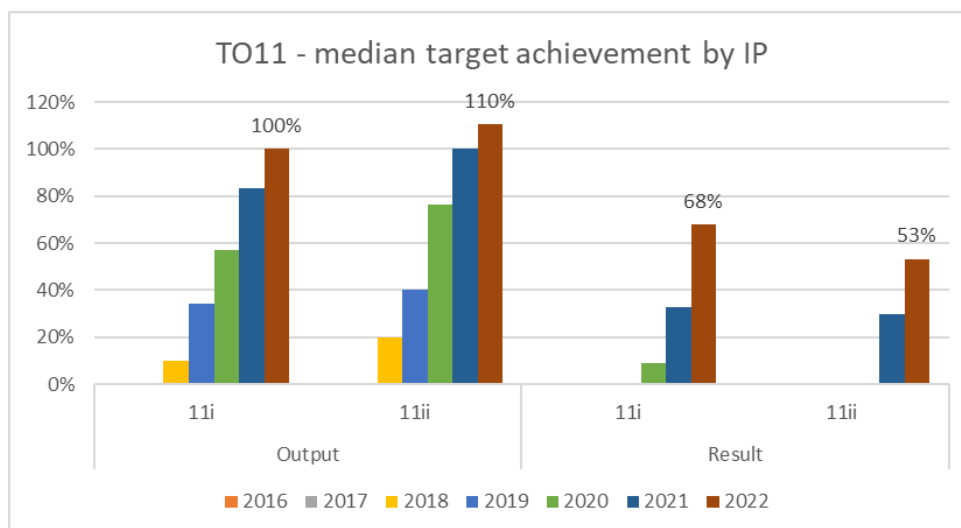
Figure 32. Absorption of budget under investment priorities with institutional capacity objectives (TO11)



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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 53 %).

Figure 33. Evolution of median target achievement under TO11 by investment priority



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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
Individual results	354 482	54	17
Of which inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving (CR01)	280	54	17
Of which participants in education/training upon leaving (CR02)	26 164	54	17
Of which participants gaining a qualification upon leaving (CR03)	325 561	54	17
Of which participants in (self-)employment, upon leaving (CR04)	2 477	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	30 874	28	15
	BG, CY, CZ, EE, GR, HR, HU, IT, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK		
Of which Positive result for national public authorities	4 795	14	10
	BG, CY, GR, IT, LT, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK		
Of which Positive result for judiciary	2 290	7	6
		IT, LT, PL, RO, SI, SK	
Of which Positive result for local / regional public authorities	17 835	9	7
		BG, EE, HU, IT, LT, PL, RO	
Of which Positive result for Civil society organisations	1 076	4	4
		HR, PL, RO, SI	
Of which other institutions / organisations	4 879	14	8
		CZ, GR, HR, IT, LT, PL, PT, SK	

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Programme-specific indicators that measure positive results for organisations (public and private) aggregate to a total of 30 874 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 Thematic Objective 13: Fostering crisis repair and resilience

5.5.1 Objectives

With the launch of REACT-EU, a new, transversal objective was defined for Member States to use resources to "foster crisis repair and integrate the green and digital transitions into the recovery strategy to increase the resilience of European economies". It functions as a transversal priority, which means that 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' investment priorities of ESF/YEI. As this section will show,

this has meant a large emphasis on employment measures, with around two-thirds of the entire REACT-EU budget dedicated to that objective.

For the ESF, this has meant support for supporting 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 children⁶⁰. Subsequently, the Russian aggression in Ukraine the subsequent support offered to Ukrainian refugees expanded further the scope and type of eligible activities supported by ESF⁶¹. While REACT-EU funds are allocated in dedicated priority axes and investment priorities, a link can be made to trace more specifically the priorities chosen. This section further reviews the progress of implementation of REACT-EU funds, and its contribution to EU objectives.

5.5.2 Implementation of investments that foster crisis repair and resilience

Section 3.4 already highlighted the relatively low implementation rates of REACT-EU funds, in comparison to the general ESF / YEI priorities (15.9% against overall 83% for ESF). There are number of exceptions to such lower implementation rates. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Lithuania, and Malta for instance all report relatively advanced implementation rates in combination with high target achievement of its output and result indicators. Others, on the other hand, seem to have only barely started to report progress under REACT-EU, such as France, Estonia, Croatia, Ireland, Poland and Slovenia.

⁶⁰ The annual synthesis report for AIR2021 provides a more extensive list of possible interventions in response to the consequences of COVID-19, that can be supported by REACT-EU.

⁶¹ The adoption of changes to ESF programmes to support Ukrainian refugees in most Member States are still ongoing by the end of 2022. It is therefore too early to be able to report on the specific responses taken. So far, only Bulgaria, Poland, and Sweden report the number of Ukrainian an aggregated total of 65 000

Table 54. Overview of implementation under REACT-EU dedicated priorities – by Member State

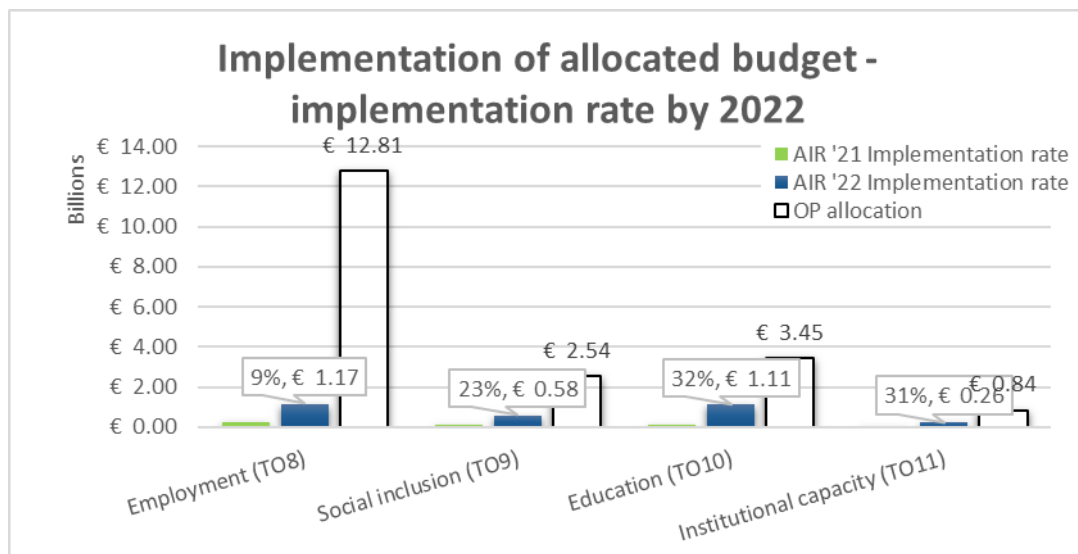
MS	Allocated budget (€ million)	Implementation rate	Participation	Median output achievement	Individual results	Median result achievement	Average success rate
AT	114.2	0.3%	61 667	1690.2%	56 813	0.0%	92%
BE	164.0	6.3%	43 581	44.9%	9 771	8.0%	22%
BG	266.0	72.8%	212 361	71.1%	637	61.3%	0%
CY	65.0	116.5%	70 724	113.5%	0	100.0%	0%
CZ							
DE	898.8	38.6%	87 031	58.3%	49 905	38.9%	57%
DK	55.6	12.6%	3 596	17.5%	59	2.5%	2%
EE	12.8	15.1%	0	24.8%	0	4.4%	
ES	5 937.3	13.5%	697 256	63.1%	213 443	0.0%	31%
FI	89.9	20.8%	15 981	58.5%	572	11.3%	4%
FR	1 227.1	6.4%	421 112	0.0%	229 920	0.0%	55%
GR	100.0	45.4%	0	66.1%	0	15.1%	
HR	530.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU	346.5	63.9%	163 698	0.5%	309	351.1%	0%
IE	141.6	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IT	8 117.9	5.2%	341 469	45.4%	0	0.0%	0%
LT	46.0	60.5%	17 423	134.0%	10 080	170.2%	58%
LU	73.2	100.0%	45 167	100.4%	0	87.1%	0%
LV	22.5	14.3%	10 263	0.0%	3 116	8.5%	30%
MT	111.2	182.2%	72 553	193.5%	0	14.0%	0%
NL	297.6	12.8%	245 897	137.2%	52 928	80.0%	22%
PL	80.1	2.4%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0%
PT	431.8	44.2%	11 744	41.1%	5 408	0.0%	46%
RO	234.0	19.9%	9 109	7.7%	282	0.0%	3%
SE	293.1	35.4%	64 672	41.2%	470	3.7%	1%
SI	13.2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SK	491.1	49.5%	19 212	35.7%	1 586	0.0%	8%
UK							
Total	20 160.6	15.6%	2 614 517	32.3%	635 299	0.0%	24%

Empty cells means that no investments in this thematic objective are programmed

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Figure 34 below shows the allocation and progress of implementation of REACT-EU marked funds to the four distinct thematic objectives for ESF. It highlights how most REACT-EU funds are directed towards employment objectives (over EUR 12 billion), while this also records the lowest implementation rates so far. Just like YEI had taken priority in the early years of implementation over ESF regular funds, it can be imagined that at this stage of implementation Managing Authorities prioritise declaring expenditures of 'regular ESF budgets' first, as it approaches its final eligible year, after which the remaining REACT-EU funds may be declared.

Figure 34. Implementation of allocated budgets – REACT-EU



Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

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.

5.5.3 Emergency support put in place for Ukrainian refugees

The activation of the Temporary Protection Directive in March 2022 enabled Member States in using European Funds to help support people who fled Ukraine access to education and training, the labour market, healthcare, housing and social welfare. Since April 2022, with the approval of the CARE Regulation, the ESF and other funds offer further funding opportunities to support Member States in welcoming people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Subsequently, Flexible Assistance to Territories (FAST-CARE) was introduced in October 2022, further increasing the flexibility already granted by previous initiatives.

The adoption of changes to ESF programmes to account for REACT-EU funds dedicated to support Ukrainian refugees in most Member States were still ongoing by the end of 2022. This means that AIR2022 do not contain sufficient information to report on the specific responses taken by Member States and achievements. In the annual implementation reports under review, ten out of the 27 Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Slovakia) had already programmed the programme-specific reserved output indicator 'Total number of participants who are granted temporary protection after fleeing the war in Ukraine'. This is not likely to be the final number. Most programmes' amendments were formally approved only in the course of 2023, which means that these were not included in AIR2022 reporting and will instead be included in the final implementation report⁶².

⁶² When a Managing Authority opens a new AIR reporting in SFC2014, the latest approved ESF programme version at the time of creation of the AIR template is used, including all financial allocation and indicators in that version. This means effectively that this review does not include ESF programmes and newly introduced indicators that were approved between

A number of Member States defined additional programme-specific indicators to monitor their response as well, such as the value of expenditures dedicated to this priority (Hungary and Poland), the number of children supported (Bulgaria, Spain, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia). So far, only Bulgaria, Poland, and Sweden report first numbers of Ukrainian refugees supported (an aggregated total of 65 904 adult individuals, of which 63 411 in Bulgaria).

5.6 Horizontal review of COVID-19 response

The previous chapters of this report already highlighted how practically all ESF operational programmes have been amended to transform the existing ESF programmes specifically to offer a relevant response to COVID-19 and its consequences for labour markets, social inclusion and education objectives. REACT-EU, as discussed in the previous section served as an important contribution to formulating a response to the consequence of COVID-19. However, this section also shows that the reprogramming effort since REACT-EU also recommitted 'regular' ESF resources towards the COVID-19 response. This section reviews in more detail the scope and types of interventions that were included⁶³.

A wide variety of interventions can be identified across the ESF/YEI 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 schemes⁶⁴
- 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

early 2023 and July 2023, even when using a cut-off date in July 2023. The cut-off date that determines whether programmes are included vary per OP; it depends on when Managing Authorities opened their AIR2022. As such, there is a delay in reporting the contents of ESF programme, often resulting that OP amendments in the first half of a given year are only included in the AIR of the subsequent year.

⁶³ When reviewing this section, it is important to underline that all of the budgets, outputs and results reported in this section are already part of the figures reported under each of the thematic objective 8-11 and 13 in sections 5.1-5.5. Because these measures are not linked to a dedicated investment priority or thematic objective, these cannot be systematically separated from the 'regular' ESF investments. However, as this section will show, the programme-specific indicators used to track investments, outputs and results still give a reliable estimate of the ESF support to this objective.

⁶⁴ 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

In an effort to develop common elements for monitoring across these different types of activities and priorities activated for the COVID-19 response across all European Member States, the European Commission proposed in May 2020 a list of possible COVID-19 related programme-specific indicators that Member States could use to specifically monitor the use of ESF for their COVID-19 response⁶⁵. Take-up of these indicators has been relatively high⁶⁶, which introduces a minimum level of consistency in the monitoring to COVID-19 response measures that allows some preliminary analysis⁶⁷. Estimates presented in this chapter are based on an analysis of these indicators, though readers should be aware that use of the indicators is not mandatory (unlike the common indicators included in the ESF Regulation), and therefore always possible to underestimate the true values reported.

5.6.1 Expenditures reported in relation to COVID-19 response

Table 55 below summarises the overall financial allocations to COVID-19 response measures. Recall that such actions may be programmed across all 'regular' ESF thematic objectives, as well as in REACT-EU priorities. The table highlights how by the end of 2022, Member States already reported at least EUR 6.4 billion for the broad variety of COVID-19 relief measures⁶⁸. Of this 6.4 billion identified COVID-19 expenditures, 82 % (or EUR 5.3 billion) are reported across the 'regular' ESF priorities, i.e. do not include REACT-EU investments⁶⁹. This represents an overall implementation rate of 70 %, with a total of EUR 9.1 billion of programmed expenditures to respond to COVID-19. Among the programmed expenditures, 40 % is reserved in REACT-EU dedicated priorities, while the majority of 60 % is programmed in the 'regular' existing ESF priorities. This difference in ESF and REACT-EU is relevant, also because of the different implementation rates of resources committed through REACT-EU and ESF; at the EU level already 95% of all identified COVID-19 funds in ESF were spent, against 31% of REACT-EU funds.

⁶⁵ 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.

⁶⁶ 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+](#).

⁶⁷ Note that this review follows the structure of the indicators suggested by the European Commission but was specifically not limited to these. The study mentioned in footnote 55 showed that while practically all Member States follow the logic of these suggested COVID indicators, not all Member States followed the same reporting conventions, in terms of names or indicator codes. As input for this review, the study therefore reviewed *all* programme-specific indicators, including those that are not directly identifiable as COVID indicators, and classified these in line with the categories of suggested indicators for comparability.

⁶⁸ The text refers to *at least* EUR 6.4 billion, because not all Member States that used ESF / REACT-EU funds for their COVID-19 response have explicitly identified budgets for their COVID-19 response. In general, we could assume that these cases (marked with an * in the table) allocated some resources in response to COVID-19, even though we cannot specifically know how much.

⁶⁹ The breakdown of reported expenditures and programmed expenditures to ESF and REACT-EU is not presented in the table but based on additional calculations based on the COVID-19 indicators identified as CV30 or that use a similar type of definition.

Table 55. Overview of implementation under REACT-EU dedicated priorities – by Member State

MS	Value of COVID19 actions (CV30 or similar) - (x €1 000)		Implementation rate		
	Total reported	Total target	Total (%)	REACT-EU (%)	ESF (%)
AT*					
BE	962	1 145	84%	-	84%
BG	39 855	56 018	71%	71%	-
CY	121 260	130 589	93%	86%	100%
CZ	271 622	286 800	95%	-	95%
DE	110 389	263 912	42%	36%	100%
DK*					
EE	1 783	24 518	7%	4%	11%
ES	747 455	1 018 313	73%	44%	106%
FI	18 670	86 494	22%	22%	-
FR	201 976	429 843	47%	47%	47%
GR	922 461	856 124	108%	32%	118%
HR*					
HU	533	114 046	0%	0%	-
IE	0	88 335	0%	0%	-
IT	1 445 945	2 775 312	52%	17%	80%
LT	186 101	188 688	99%	-	99%
LU					
LV	0	4 259	0%	0%	-
MT					
NL*					
PL	1 085 424	989 958	110%	14%	116%
PT	422 183	686 254	62%	41%	97%
RO*					
SE					
SI	3 754	10 100	37%	30%	42%
SK	823 989	1 119 581	74%	46%	94%
UK					
Total	6 404 364	9 130 291	70%	31%	96%

Empty cells means that no values / targets are reported for CV30 or similar indicators in that Member State

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 estimates of a certain order of size, not specific approximations of the value or number of results achieved.

(*)These Member States did not define targets for their expenditures that respond to COVID-19, but do report that individuals benefit from the COVID-19 response in these countries.

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Considerable progress still needs to be made in in the final year of committing ESF resources in Slovenia (42 % ESF resources, 37 % overall), Italy, (80 % ESF resources, 52 % overall), and France (47 % ESF resources, 47 % overall). Practically all of REACT-EU resources dedicated to the COVID-19 response also remain to be reported as spent in Hungary, Ireland, and Latvia by the end of 2022.

5.6.2 Outputs reported in relation to COVID-19 response

Table 56 below shows the values and targets linked to the two key output indicators suggested by the European Commission to track the implementation of COVID-19 related interventions; the number of participants (CV31) and the number of entities

(CV33) that benefit from interventions designed to respond to COVID-19⁷⁰. At the EU level, a total of 11.1 million participants are reported to have benefitted from COVID-19 interventions, out of the 18.3 million that were set as target (61 % achieved). A total of 139 464 entities benefited from support, against a target of 147 102 (95 % of target achieved).

Table 56. Progress of standardised output indicators for COVID-19 across ESF investments priorities

MS	Participants reached in COVID19 actions (CV31 or similar)			Entities reached in COVID19 actions (CV31 or similar)		
	Total reported	Total target	% target achievement	Total reported	Total target	% target achievement
AT	62 192	48 582	128%			
BE	36 387	74 320	49%	112	21	533%
BG	215 191	584 698	37%			
CY						
CZ	292 807	175 195	167%			
DE	76 882	159 499	48%	5 714	10 853	53%
DK	9 713	18 580	52%	1 295	170	762%
EE	3 948	13 432	29%			
ES	163 542	492 716	33%	12 406	17 153	72%
FI	16 459	47 195	35%			
FR	14 105	67 830	21%	657	599	110%
GR	5 067 123	8 372 037	61%	30 840	33 013	93%
HR	0	283 500	0%			
HU	167 464	70 856	236%			
IE				0	3 677	0%
IT	1 865 670	5 076 539	37%	39 383	46 611	84%
LT	198 245	151 600	131%			
LU						
LV	4 111	11 862	35%			
MT						
NL	245 959	179 216	137%			
PL	1 904 603	1 668 599	114%	49 000	32 289	152%
PT	17 767	38 848	46%			
RO	8 637	111 500	8%	57	295	19%
SE						
SI	63 886	44 602	143%			
SK	702 698	652 800	108%	0	2 408	0%
UK				0	13	0%
Total	11 137 389	19 279 756	58%	139 464	147 102	95%

Empty cells means that no values / targets are reported for the indicator in that Member State
 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 estimates of a certain order of size, not specific approximations of the value or number of outputs achieved.

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

The table shows a wider variety of progress towards targets than the previous table on financial implementation. Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia all reported a higher total of participants than the aggregated targets (above 100 %). From this list, Hungary stands out because of the limited funds

⁷⁰ Like the estimates for financial expenditures related to COVID-19, the estimates of participants and entities as reported in table 55 are based on an aggregation of all indicators that follow the reporting convention suggested by the European Commission, but deliberately also include all indicators that are similar in type but were labelled differently by Member States. This study reviewed *all* programme-specific indicators, including those that are not directly identifiable as COVID indicators, and classified these in line with the categories of suggested indicators for comparability. It remains possible however that a small number of programmes have not defined any specific indicators counting specifically those participants or entities benefiting from COVID-19 response measures, even if there are interventions of this type. The estimates must therefore be seen as a lower bound.

reported thus far (a reported EUR 0.5 million so far, see table 55). However, this is explained by the fact that the Operational Programme that reported the highest participation (163 out of the 167 thousand participants) did not specify any COVID-19 budgets. On the other end of the scale, Belgium Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, and Romania all report progress to target below 50 %. In terms of absolute numbers, considerable progress is still to be expected in Greece and Italy, with over 3.2 million individuals that still need to be reported to meet the targets in both countries. In Italy, the AIR reports that the interventions were all ongoing in 2022 and will be reported in 2023. Greece makes no specific mention of the remaining progress to target of its COVID-19 intervention. Croatia still reports 0 % progress towards its target but explains in its AIR that the actual number of participants still need to be formally approved through all formal channels and will be included in subsequent reporting.

5.6.3 Results reported in relation to COVID-19

To be able to get an estimate of the results achieved by the different COVID-19 response measures across the EU, the European Commission suggested Member States to report on the number of participants reached that maintained their job six months after the intervention and the number of participants that gained a qualification in an ESF COVID-19 measure. The aggregated results show how over 443 thousand participants were able to maintain their jobs 6 months after they received support from COVID-19 remedy measures in ESF/ REACT-EU. Most results are reported in Bulgaria (almost 91 thousand), Spain (over 92 thousand) and Hungary (over 110 thousand). These figures cannot readily be compared against an output benchmark; not all COVID-19 measures focused on maintaining employment and therefore suggested indicator CV31 is not suitable as comparison (see table 55). For this purpose, the European Commission had suggested a separate output indicator to track the number of persons that benefited from short-term working arrangements supported by ESF/REACT-EU in response to COVID-19. While in theory a good benchmark, it has not been used in comparable ways across Member States, which also reduces its utility as benchmark value (therefore not reported in this section). Progress towards the targets of this indicator still needs to be reported in Greece, Croatia, Portugal and Romania, due to the same reasons as already specified above.

Table 57. Progress of standardised result indicators for COVID-19 across ESF investments priorities

MS	Participants maintaining their job 6 months after support (CVR1 or similar)			Number of participants gaining a qualification in relation to COVID-19 support (CVR2 or similar)		
	Total reported	Total target	% target achievement	Total reported	Total target	% target achievement
AT				-	51	0%
BE	1 359	19 600	7%	5 589	8 600	65%
BG	90 935	71 047	128%	-	20 000	0%
CY	63 028	-	-			
CZ						
DE	551	2 970	19%	24 600	57 629	43%
DK				1 819	9 300	20%
EE	77	878	9%			
ES	92 373	258 871	36%	21 524	883 493	2%
FI				-	74	0%
FR	1 337	4 713	28%	1 368	13 868	10%
GR	0	417 499	0%			
HR	0	209 800	0%			
HU	110 589	31 500	351%	1 846	545	339%
IE						
IT*	89	75	119%	128 096	145 393	88%
LT				160 950	98 141	164%
LU				39 173	46 000	85%
LV				640	3 440	19%
MT						
NL	7 553	-	-			
PL						
PT	0	160	0%	-	18 914	0%
RO	0	8 012	0%			
SE	344	4 684	7%			
SI						
SK	75 206	75 270	100%	536 580	420 830	128%
UK						
Total	443 441	1 105 078	40%	922 185	1 726 276	53%

Empty cells means that no values / targets are reported for this indicator in that Member State. 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 estimates of a certain order of size, not specific approximations of the value or number of results achieved.

*The value reported by Italy refers to a ratio for which no reference output indicator is provided. The AIR provides no indication of the absolute size of this indicator

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

A total of 0.9 million participants gained a qualification that can be linked to COVID-19 support, with the highest numbers found in Italy (0.1 million), Lithuania (0.2 million) and Slovakia (0.5 million). Particularly these last two results stand out in comparison to the reported output in these countries (Lithuania 0.2 million and Slovakia 0.7 million); in these two countries the results are linked directly to the number of individuals supported through short-time working arrangements, and as such suggest high success rates of these measures.

5.6.4 Other types of achievements

In addition to the key indicators explored in the previous section, additional suggestions for standardised indicators were offered in 2020. Because these indicators are less commonly used, a comparison across Member States yields limited added value. Therefore, this section presents the aggregated totals and highlights in what Member

States these indicators have been used in ESF programmes for reporting until the end of 2022.

Starting with the purchase of personal protective equipment with support of ESF, an overall value of EUR 34 million is reported across France, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. France and Lithuania also reported the absolute number of items bought and reported almost 80 million units, for a total value of EUR 24.3 million. The purchase of medical equipment was only reported in Poland (EUR 2.8 million) and Slovenia (EUR 37 million). In Poland, the funds were dedicated to the purchase of ambulances in the Opole region, while in Slovenia the funds were focused on the strengthening the resilience of healthcare providers, establish critical infrastructure and including the purchase of additional healthcare equipment, protective equipment and protective means.

So far, Portugal appears as the country that specifically reported the purchase of IT equipment and software for educational purposes, for a value of over EUR 193.7 million. This includes mostly computers and connectivity tools made available to students and teachers to facilitate distance learning during the pandemic. Investments in this direction are also foreseen in Ireland, Slovakia and the French island of Guadeloupe, but not reported by the end of 2022.

Table 58. Overview of values reported for suggested standardised COVID-19 indicators in ESF

Indicators	Reported by 2022	Member State
Value of personal protective equipment purchased (CV1) (x€1 000)	34 049.54	FR, LT, PL, SI, SK
Value of medical equipment purchased (CV2) (x€1 000)	39 833.96	PL, SI
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)	194 117.7	PT
Number of items personal protective equipment (CV6)	79 884 556	FR, LT
Number of Healthcare professionals supported	71 437	BE, ES, IT, LT, PL
Number of participants who benefitted from support in short-time work arrangements	1 876 012	BG, CY, ES, HU, IT, LT, LU, MT, PL, PT, SI

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 estimates of a certain order of size, not specific approximations of the value or number of results achieved.

Source: authors' calculations based on AIR 2022 (data extracted on July 6, 2023)

Table 58 also highlights that with ESF/REACT-EU support, over 71 thousand healthcare professionals were supported. Belgium, Spain, Italy, Lithuania and Poland defined the explicit indicators that allow arriving at this aggregation. Such support takes different forms across different Member States, ranging from additional training courses, to added flexibility pay and support for hiring of more staff to respond to peak demand. Attention for short-term working arrangement in response to COVID-19 consequences on the labour market is reported by a dedicated indicator in eleven Member States. This indicator shows that over 1.8 million participants benefitted from such support, most of which in Spain (0.5 million), followed by Italy (0.3 million) and Portugal (0.3 million).

6 Conclusions

6.1 Scope of ESF/YEI and REACT-EU support

As of July 2023, the overall budget of ESF 2014-2020 is EUR 146.9 billion (EU + national share)⁷¹, of which EUR 108.9 billion is financed by the EU. When the YEI-specific allocation is added, the total budget available is EUR 151.4 billion (EU + national). The largest share of the budget is earmarked to support European employment objectives under TO8 (with a combined EU and national budget of EUR 39.9 billion for ESF interventions under TO8, and EUR 5.99 billion topping up the dedicated YEI fund with ESF matching funds and national co-financing), followed by education and training under TO10 (EUR 36.7 billion of EU + national resources), and social inclusion under TO9 (EUR 34.9 billion of EU and national resources). Finally, a combined total of EUR 4.2 billion is allocated from EU and national budgets to institutional capacity-building under TO11. REACT-EU complements these four ESF objectives with EUR 19.8 billion, while the remaining EUR 5.6 billion (EU + national share) is allocated to technical assistance.

Since the start of the ESF 2014-2020 programming period, the fund has undergone a number of substantial changes, including – most recently – in response to the COVID-19 crisis and the consequences of Russia’s war of aggression in Ukraine.

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic fallout, flexible rules for implementation and increased budgets were introduced in CRII, CRII+ and REACT-EU. Under REACT-EU, a total of EUR 50.6 billion of additional resources was made available to existing cohesion policy programmes for 2021 and 2022. Member States could decide how to allocate this money across several funds, including the ERDF and FEAD, as well as the ESF and the YEI. In 2022, that flexibility was extended to support the reallocating of funding to emergency support for people fleeing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, under the CARE Regulation.
- Earlier in the programming period, budgets to combat youth unemployment were already raised substantially. In June 2017, the European Parliament and Council approved the European Commission proposal to increase the initial YEI dedicated budget by EUR 1.2 billion, to a total of EUR 4.47 billion, topped up by a matching share of ESF funding and national ESF contributions. Accordingly, by the end of 2021, a total of EUR 8.9 billion of the EU budget was available for YEI interventions, reaching EUR 10.4 billion when national co-financing is included.

Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and additional resources available under REACT-EU have contributed an additional EUR 12.4 billion in ESF investments in labour market interventions (TO8) and EUR 6.2 billion in additional investments in social inclusion (TO9). Interventions in the field of education objectives (TO10) also expanded considerably, for example EUR 1.1 billion for additional supports, including the purchase of relevant IT equipment, software for distance learning, and related skills training.

6.2 Progress in implementation

As of the end of 2022, the implementation of ESF/YEI had advanced, but, as this report shows, most Member States still need to declare considerable amounts of expenditure in the final year to avoid decommitments. Overall implementation rates (share of declared expenditure against the allocated budgets), including the new REACT-EU funds, reached 74 %. If REACT-EU is excluded so to focus on the expenditure that needs to be declared before the end of 2023, the implementation rate is higher, at 83 % for ESF and 79 % for YEI. Compared to the previous year, ESF and YEI programmes increased implementation by only 13 percentage points and 6 percentage point, respectively. That pace is insufficient to reach 100 % by the end of next year, underlining the challenge faced by most Member States. The delays accumulated at the start of the programming period seem to have played an important role in the remaining distance to full

⁷¹ The total of EUR 142.9 billion includes the recent REACT-EU top-up of EUR 16.1 billion.

implementation. However, in all but two years throughout implementation in 2014-2020 the distance with 2007-2013 increased rather than decreased. The substantial reprogramming efforts and considerable increases in budget in the crisis-response measures further limited the potential to effectively speed up implementation towards the end of the programming period.

Member States currently report a total of 64.6 million participations across the various ESF/YEI interventions, including those supported by REACT-EU top-ups. No major implementation differences are evident between regions, with relatively balanced participation 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, there are no indications that it had a negative impact on participation and shares of costs reported by managing authorities. Overall, participants benefiting from ESF/YEI measures had different backgrounds, but most were unemployed (34 %) or inactive (39 %) and 44 % of them were under 25 years old. A considerable proportion of participants were low-skilled (ISCED levels 1 and 2 accounted for 46 %). Participation of women was relatively balanced at EU level, but varied among Member States, depending on local needs and types of interventions.

These totals include 3.9 million participations supported by YEI interventions focusing on enhancing youth employment. This figure has stabilised in the last years, with Member States reporting difficulties in identifying, mobilising and recruiting sufficient young NEETs for the remaining interventions and financial supports. YEI programmes are slowly nearing their targets (median target achievement rate at EU level of 101 %), allowing the 'regular' ESF projects focusing on youth employment to catch up and support this target group.

Member States also reported on the number of projects and entities supported. A total of 118 723 projects targeted social partners or NGOs, while 58 282 projects were dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment. Another 81 206 projects targeted public administration/public services at national, regional or local level. Finally, the ESF supported a total of 2.0 million SMEs between 2014 and 2022.

The ESF and YEI helped 7.2 million participants to find a job, while 10.3 million gained a qualification, 1.5 million were engaged in job searches, and 3.0 million were in education/training. This included 6.9 million disadvantaged participants achieving one of these positive results. Overall, this means that 34 % of recorded participations resulted in at least one of these positive results.

6.3 ESF support to EU policies

This report reviewed the objectives established in the OPs and the types of operations funded (as reported in annual implementation reports) in relation to EU-level strategies and EU 2020 headline targets. While the monitoring of targets has moved on to EU2030 priorities, the report tracked the most recent developments to the key indicators of ESF 2014-2020.

6.3.1 TO8 - employment

Operations that promote sustainable and quality employment (TO8) supported almost 18.5 million participations and led to over 7.1 million positive results (i.e. people either found a job, gained a qualification or otherwise improved their labour market position). Almost 3.9 million participants entered employment after participating in an ESF-supported intervention, which amounts to a total of 32 % of participations recorded for unemployed and inactive persons. This is well above the target of the core performance indicator set in the MFF 2014-2020 for this objective (24 %). Another 0.3 million inactive participants was engaged in job-searching after participation.

Interventions supporting access to employment (IP8i) were most common and were among the highest implementation rates for TO8 (85.6 %). It also reported the highest numbers of participations (8.3 million) and highest number of results achieved by

individuals (3.8 million). As this IP was responsible for roughly 40 % of the budget for employment objectives, it is reassuring that implementation was above average. At the same time, an increase in the pace of implementation in the final year is necessary.

6.3.2 TO9 – social inclusion

Operations in the field of social inclusion are designed to contribute to reducing poverty in the EU, typically through attention for active inclusion (IP9i). Member States undertook a variety of interventions under this intervention priority, which had the highest allocated budget under TO9. Individual background characteristics (economic status, education, family background) show how social inclusion investments targeted specific groups, such as low-skilled people, (long-term) unemployed, older people, people with disabilities, and people with a migrant/foreign background. Programme-specific indicators point to attention for prisoners and ex-offenders, drug users, people with mental disorders, individuals benefiting from specific social support programmes, ethnic minorities, and residents in marginalised neighbourhoods as well. Investments under this TO supported almost 14.9 million participations and led to 4.1 million positive results. This is a substantial achievement against the European 2020 headline target to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty or social exclusion. A total of 0.7 million of inactive participants were engaged in job searching upon leaving, which amounts to 13 % of all participations recorded for inactive persons. This is still slightly below the target defined for the core performance indicator defined for 2023 (16 %).

Investments under IP9i (active inclusion) showed the most progress in implementation rates, with 90.3 % of the total allocated budget declared as expenditure, on average. Implementation rates for smaller IPs were considerably lower, varying from 64.6 % for community-led local development strategies (IP9vi), to 62.5 % for marginalised communities (IP9ii). Finally, the implementation rate of one of the key investment priorities for the ESF COVID-19 response – IP9iv, access to healthcare and social services – reached 77.5 % by the end of 2022.

Consistent progress was made towards the targets defined for output indicators. At the end of 2022 at least half of all indicators had achieved 103 % of their defined output targets. The achievements for results were not as far, reaching a median of 60.9 % by the end of 2022. This underlines that also in the field of social inclusion, challenges remain to reach their targets by the end of 2023.

6.3.3 TO10 – education and training

Implementation of the key investment priorities focusing on education and training steadily progressed each year. By the end of 2022, a total of 23.7 million participations were recorded for all operations in education, of which 8.2 million had achieved an individual short-term result. More than 5.8 million participants gained a qualification through ESF investments with an education objective, which represents 25 % of all participations recorded in this objective. This is already above the target defined as core performance indicator by 2023 (23 %). Another 1.4 million persons were in education/training when they left the intervention. As expected, the numbers of people engaged in education were higher than those engaged in job search or those that had entered employment. Another relevant result recorded in various education programmes relates to improved skills (not necessarily leading to a qualification)⁷², which was recorded by another 5.3 million participants.

The implementation rate for education investments was about average across all investment priorities. The highest implementation rates were in measures focusing on labour market relevance of education (91.5 %), while those funding measures supporting access to higher education (IP10ii) were lowest, at 77.1 %. Here, the median target achievement for results indicator was comparatively lower than other intervention priorities (40.9 % vs overall median of 73.0 %).

⁷² Corresponds to programme-specific indicators.

6.3.4 TO11 – institutional capacity

Institutional capacity investments received the lowest budget allocation, with an overall EUR 4.2 billion (EU + national share, 4 % of the ESF budget). Implementation of these investments was slightly behind that of the other TOs, with an overall implementation rate of 71.2 %. More specifically, investments in capacity-building (IP11ii) have not progressed as much as others, with an implementation rate of 61.2 % at the end of 2022. Much ground needs to be covered before the final implementation reporting on 2023. Interventions mainly contributed to public officials gaining a certain type of qualification (325 561 participants). However, the most meaningful results were procedural, such as improvements in the administrative time required for certain procedures, or specific positive results for organisations, public administrations, the judiciary, and civil society organisations. Good examples include the numbers of institutions implementing certain IT systems, revised and/or simplified procedures, and increased regulatory scrutiny.

6.3.5 TO13 – Fostering crisis repair and resilience

The programme amendments across the EU after the introduction of REACT-EU in 2020 resulted in an aggregated additional EUR 19.8 billion of European funds available for implementation of ESF across the various objectives (EUR 20.2 billion when including national co-financing). Most of these funds were allocated to supporting employment objectives (TO8 - EUR 12.8 billion), followed by investments in education (TO10 - EUR 3.4 billion) and social inclusion (TO9 - EUR 2.5 billion). Remaining investments were reserved for institutional capacity (TO11 - EUR 0.8 billion) and technical assistance (EUR 0.5 billion).

While the investments under TO13 are directed to existing investment priorities, they focused transversally on crisis repair and fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as future-oriented investments. They were also used to finance emergency support measures for Ukrainian refugees in 2022. For the latter, it is too early to report on the specific approaches taken; so far only four Member States report a small number of Ukrainian refugees reached.

As the investments for REACT-EU are only recently programmed and are linked to the financial years 2021 and 2022, implementation cannot be expected to have reached similar levels as other ESF budgets. By the end of 2022, a total of EUR 2.6 billion (16 %) had been declared as expenditure (compared to 83 % of original ESF investments). Implementation of the transversal REACT-EU investments with employment objectives show the lowest implementation rates to date (9 %).

6.3.6 Horizontal review of COVID-19 response

The monitoring data reported in the years since the pandemic show how the ESF has been a vital element of the European response to COVID-19. While the fresh funds and new rules under REACT-EU offered additional support to formulating the COVID-19 response, 60 % of the programmed expenditures that were explicitly defined as COVID-19 response are from 'regular' ESF resources, programmed across the four standard thematic objectives, with 40 % of the COVID-19 expenditures programmed in the dedicated thematic objective 13, used by REACT-EU. Combining original ESF budgets and REACT-EU, an estimated EUR 6.4 billion has been reported as expenditures for the COVID-19 response by 2022, against an overall allocated budget of EUR 9.1 billion until the end of the programming period (equalling an overall implementation rate of 70 %). Like other priorities, the table shows a vast difference in implementation rates of resources committed through REACT-EU and ESF; at the EU level already 95% of all identified COVID-19 funds in ESF were spent, against 31% of REACT-EU funds, which can be declared also beyond 2023.

The considerable scope of these investments is further underlined by the total of 11.1 million participants are reported to have benefitted from COVID-19 interventions. However, compared to the aggregated targets set (18.3 million participants), it seems

not assured that these will be met by the end of 2023 (61 % achieved). A total of 139 464 entities benefited from support, against a target of 147 102 (95 % of target achieved).

6.3.7 Overall assessment

This review has shown that reaching full implementation in the final year of reporting eligible expenditure will remain a challenge in many contexts. Across all thematic objectives and investment priorities, the levels of implementation are relatively even across most Member States and different types of regions. While all Member States reported committing budgets at or close to their total allocation, the increase required in implementation rates and outputs in the final year is higher than what was achieved in any of the past years of implementing ESF2014-2020. While not necessarily impossible, challenges for implementation certainly remain, even when disregarding the additional funds available through REACT-EU.

Annex I Sources of data

AIR versions used

Table 59. Overview AIR

CCI	AIR version	Status	Status date	OP version used for reference	Report approval date
2014AT05SFOP001	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	9.1	29-05-2023
2014BE05M9OP001	2022.0	Accepted by EC	26-06-2023	9.0	26-05-2023
2014BE05M9OP002	2022.0	Admissible	26-06-2023	9.1	25-05-2023
2014BE05SFOP001	2022.0	Returned for modification by EC	26-06-2023	7.0	15-06-2023
2014BE05SFOP002	2022.0	Accepted by EC	30-06-2023	11.1	30-05-2023
2014BG05M2OP001	2022.0	Accepted by EC	05-07-2023	5.0	28-04-2023
2014BG05M9OP001	2022.0	Admissible	05-06-2023	7.0	27-04-2023
2014BG05SFOP001	2022.0	Accepted by EC	15-05-2023	5.0	14-03-2023
2014CY05M9OP001	2022.0	Accepted by EC	30-06-2023	8.0	26-05-2023
2014CZ05M2OP001	2022.0	Admissible	14-06-2023	5.0	04-05-2023
2014CZ05M9OP001	2022.0	Accepted by EC	26-06-2023	4.0	23-05-2023
2014CZ16M2OP001	2022.0	Admissible	09-06-2023	9.0	01-06-2023
2014DE05SFOP001	2022.1	Admissible	27-06-2023	4.0	
2014DE05SFOP002	2022.0	Admissible	15-05-2023	5.0	08-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP003	2022.0	Accepted by EC	16-06-2023	4.0	10-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP004	2022.0	Accepted by EC	05-07-2023	6.0	10-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP005	2022.0	Accepted by EC	14-06-2023	5.0	25-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP006	2022.0	Accepted by EC	27-06-2023	4.1	12-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP007	2022.1	Accepted by EC	30-06-2023	4.0	30-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP008	2022.0	Admissible	29-05-2023	3.0	19-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP009	2022.0	Admissible	06-06-2023	5.0	24-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP010	2022.0	Accepted by EC	21-06-2023	4.1	30-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP011	2022.1	Admissible	15-06-2023	4.0	
2014DE05SFOP012	2022.0	Admissible	26-05-2023	7.0	12-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP013	2022.0	Accepted by EC	16-06-2023	7.0	23-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP014	2022.0	Accepted by EC	14-06-2023	3.0	11-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP015	2022.0	Returned for modification by EC	21-06-2023	5.0	15-05-2023
2014DE05SFOP016	2022.0	Admissible	06-06-2023	5.0	16-05-2023
2014DE16M2OP001	2022.0	Returned for modification by EC	03-07-2023	11.0	25-05-2023
2020DE16M2RE017	2022.0	Admissible	06-06-2023	2.0	24-05-2023
2014DK05SFOP001	2022.0	Admissible	07-06-2023	10.0	17-05-2023
2014EE16M3OP001	2022.0	Admissible	09-06-2023	9.1	11-05-2023
2014ES05M9OP001	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	9.0	22-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP001	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	6.0	31-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP002	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	8.0	26-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP003	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	6.1	26-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP004	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	8.0	31-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP005	2022.0	Accepted by EC	05-07-2023	8.0	26-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP006	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	9.0	26-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP007	2022.0	Accepted by EC	05-07-2023	7.0	22-05-2023
2014ES05SFOP008	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	5.0	30-05-2023
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2014ES05SFOP018	2022.0	Accepted by EC	05-07-2023	7.0	24-05-2023

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2014ES05SFOP019	2022.0	Admissible	08-06-2023	6.0	23-05-2023
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2014FR05SFOP001	2022.0	Admissible	30-10-2023*	7.0	27-09-2023
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2014FR05SFOP004	2022.0	Accepted by EC	04-10-2023*	7.1	24-08-2023
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2014IT05SFOP018	2022.0	Accepted by EC	12-06-2023	4.0	23-05-2023
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2014PL16M2OP006	2022.0	Admissible	05-06-2023	8.0	22-05-2023
2014PL16M2OP007	2022.0	Admissible	05-06-2023	6.0	19-05-2023
2014PL16M2OP008	2022.0	Admissible	05-06-2023	8.0	10-05-2023

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2014PL16M2OP015	2022.0	Admissible	05-06-2023	14.0	30-05-2023
2014PL16M2OP016	2022.0	Admissible	05-06-2023	7.0	29-05-2023
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2014UK05SFOP005	2022.0	Non-admissible	20-06-2023	4.1	05-06-2023

Six AIR marked with this asterisk () were added manually after the cut-off date of July 7, 2023 to ensure maximum coverage.

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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