

European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020

2011/0268(COD) - 20/11/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 579 votes to 33 with 12 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

Parliament adopted its position in first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary were the result of a compromise between Parliament and Council. They amend the Commission proposal as follows:

ESF Missions: the amended Regulation established the mission of the European Social Fund (ESF), including the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the scope of its support, specific provisions and the types of expenditure eligible for assistance.

The ESF shall improve access to the labour market, enhance social inclusion, combat poverty, promote education, skills acquisition and lifelong learning, and mobilising a range of policies targeting the most disadvantaged people. Its main missions were the following:

- promote employment, **improve access to the labour market**, paying particular attention to those who are the furthest from the labour market and support voluntary labour mobility ;
- facilitate the **adaptation of workers** to industrial change and changes to production system needed for sustainable developments ;
- support the **transition between education and employment for young people**;
- promote **gender equality**, non-discrimination and equal opportunities;

support **active and healthy ageing**, including through innovative forms of work organisation,

The ESF should also contribute to cultural and creative skills.

The ESF shall benefit people, including **disadvantaged people** such as the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic minorities, marginalised communities and people of all ages facing poverty and social exclusion.

Consistency and thematic concentration: the strategy and actions set out in the Operational Programmes must be consistent and respond to the challenges identified in the National Reform Programmes, as well as, where relevant, in their other national strategies that aim to fight unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Member States shall concentrate the ESF allocation to each operational programme on up to **five** of the investment priorities.

At least 20 % of the total ESF resources in each Member State shall be allocated to the thematic objective "promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination".

Involvement of partners: efficient and effective implementation of actions supported by the ESF should take into account those who act at the regional and local levels, in particular the umbrella associations representing local and regional authorities, organised civil society, economic and in particular the social partners and non-governmental organisations.

Social innovation: this should be encouraged particularly at local or regional level, to address social needs, in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular social partners.

Youth Employment Initiative: this will target all **young persons in eligible regions under the age of 25** not in employment, education or training, residing in the eligible regions, who are inactive or unemployed (including long-term unemployed), and registered or not as seeking work.

"Eligible regions" are those NUTS 2 level regions that have youth unemployment rates for young persons aged 15-24 of more than 25% in 2012 or, for Member States where the youth unemployment rate has increased by more than 30% in 2012, NUTS 2 level regions that have a youth unemployment rate of more than 20% in 2012.

The resources for the YEI may be **revised upwards for the years 2016 to 2020** in the framework of the budgetary procedure in accordance with Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020.

Sound financial management: Member States should refrain from adding rules which complicate the use of funds for the beneficiary.

The ESF should complement other Union programmes and close synergies shall be developed between the ESF and other Union financial instruments.