European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) 2021–2027

2018/0206(COD) - 16/01/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 543 votes to 81, with 64 abstentions, amendments to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

The matter was referred back to the competent committee for interinstitutional negotiations.

The main amendments adopted in plenary concern the following issues:

General objectives

The ESF+ shall consist of ***three strands***: the strand under shared management, the Employment and Social Innovation strand and the Health strand. It aims to:

- support Member States, at national, regional and local level, and the Union to achieve inclusive societies, high levels of quality employment, job creation, quality and inclusive education and training, equal opportunities, eradicating poverty, including child poverty, social inclusion and integration, social cohesion, social protection and a skilled and resilient workforce ready for the future world of work;

- support, complement and add value to the policies of the Member States to ensure equal opportunities, equal access to the labour market, lifelong learning, high quality working conditions, social protection, integration and inclusion, eradicating poverty, including child poverty, investment in children and young people (in particular through the implementation of the youth guarantee fund), non-discrimination, gender equality, access to basic services and a high level of human health protection.

The ESF+ shall deliver on the principles set out in the European Pillar of Social Rights and contribute to the goals of the Union as regards to strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion and the commitment of the Union and its Member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

Budget

The total financial envelope for the ESF+ for the period 2021-2027 shall be **EUR 106 781 000 000** in 2018 prices (EUR 120 457 000 000 in current prices). The part of the financial envelope for the ESF+ strand under shared management under the Investment for Jobs and Growth goal shall be:

- EUR 105 686 000 000 of which EUR 200 000 000 shall be allocated for transnational cooperation supporting innovative solutions;

- EUR 5 900 000 000 shall be allocated for measures falling under the European Child Guarantee;

- EUR 400 000 000 as additional funding to the outermost regions and the NUTS level 2 regions.

The financial envelope for the Employment and Social Innovation strand and the Health strand for the period 2021-2027 shall be EUR 1 095 000 000. The indicative distribution of this shall be:

- EUR 675 000 000 for the implementation of the Employment and Social Innovation strand;

- EUR 420 000 000 for the implementation of the Health strand.

Consistency and thematic concentration

Member States and the Commission, shall foster synergies and ensure coordination, complementarity and coherence between the ESF+ and other Union funds, programmes and instruments such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, InvestEU, Creative Europe, the Rights and Values Instrument, Erasmus, the Asylum and Migration Fund, the post-2020 EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Reform Support Programme, both in the planning phase and during implementation.

Parliament proposed the following:

- within the specific objectives for the social inclusion policy area, Member States should allocate at least **5%** of their ESF+ resources under shared management to targeted actions aiming at implementing the **European Child Guarantee**, in order to contribute to children's equal access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition;

- Member States should allocate at least **27%** of their ESF+ resources under shared management to specific objectives in the field of social inclusion and at least **3%** of their resources to the specific objective of social inclusion of the most deprived and/or material deprivation;

- Member States having a rate of young people aged 15 to 29 not in employment, education or training (NEET) is above the Union average in 2019 or where the NEET rate is above **15%** on the basis of Eurostat data, shall allocate at least 15 % of their ESF+ resources under shared management for the years 2021 to 2025 in the programming period to targeted actions and structural reforms to promote youth employment, paying particular attention to the most affected regions.

Lastly, with regard to the partnership between the EU institutions and national, regional and local authorities, Member States should allocate at least 2% of ESF+ resources to strengthen the capacity building of social partners and civil society organisations at Union and national level.

By 31 December 2024, the Commission shall carry out a mid-term evaluation of the strands. The results of that mid-term evaluation shall be presented to the European Parliament and to the Council.