



# Synthesis Report of ESF 2016 Annual Implementation Reports

Written by Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini  
December – 2016



**COWI**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion  
Directorate G — Audit, evaluation and communication  
Unit G.4 — Evaluation & impact assessment

*European Commission  
B-1049 Brussels*

Gmbh Yg]g F YdcfhicZ 9G: `&\$%\*`  
5bbi U` =a d`Ya YbhUh]cb`  
F Ydcfhg`

***Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers  
to your questions about the European Union.***

**Freephone number (\*):**

**00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

(\* The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

## **LEGAL NOTICE**

This document has been prepared for the European Commission however it reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2017

ISBN: 978-92-79-71474-0  
doi:10.2767/341872

© European Union, 2017

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

For any use of photo which are not under the European Union copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holder(s) indicated.

## Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	5
LIST OF FIGURES .....	6
LIST OF TABLES .....	7
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	9
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Methodology .....	1
2 SCOPE OF THE ESF .....	5
3 PROGRAMME OUTPUT, RESULT AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ESF .....	7
3.1 Total outputs and results .....	7
3.2 The performance of ESF (target achievement).....	25
4 FINANCIAL PROGRESS .....	36
4.1 Overall progress in implementation.....	37
4.2 Implementation progress across themes .....	38
4.3 Financial progress of ESF.....	42
4.4 Financial progress of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).....	49
5 EFFICIENCY .....	54
5.1 Costs per output.....	54
5.2 Costs per result.....	55
6 OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIONS .....	57
6.1 Evaluation plans .....	57
6.2 Reporting on evaluation findings.....	58
7 EX ANTE CONDITIONALITY ON STATISTICAL SYSTEMS AND RESULT INDICATORS .....	61
7.1 Ex ante conditionalities in the CPR .....	61
7.2 Fulfilment of requirements on statistical systems and result indicators ...	61
8 CONTRIBUTION OF ESF TO EU POLICIES .....	65
8.1 Thematic Objective 8: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility .....	65
8.2 Thematic Objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty, and discrimination .....	77
8.3 Thematic Objective 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning .....	87
8.4 Thematic Objective 11: Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.....	96
9 CONCLUSIONS .....	99
9.1 Progress in implementation.....	99
9.2 Overview and assessment of the performance as shown by cumulated achievements.....	101
9.3 Progress towards milestones and targets .....	101
9.4 Contribution to the main EU policy objectives.....	102
9.5 Consistency of reporting and reporting on ex ante conditionality 7 .....	103
9.6 Suggestions for improvement of AIR reporting .....	104

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Methodological steps taken for producing the ESF performance report for 2014-2015.....	4
Figure 2.1 ESF allocation to thematic objectives .....	6
Figure 3.1 Absorption of budgets to IPs under TO8 .....	40
Figure 3.2 Absorption of budgets to IPs under TO9 .....	41
Figure 3.3 Absorption of budgets to IPs under TO10 / TO11 .....	41
Figure 3.4 Eligible expenditures as implementation rate: 2007-2013 / 2014-2020 .....	43
Figure 3.5 Eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries vs financial milestones .....	45
Figure 3.6 Eligible cost per region by 2015 vs achievement of financial milestone .....	46
Figure 3.7 Achievement financial milestone vs. eligible cost of operations by 2015 .....	47
Figure 3.8 Share eligible costs of milestone value – per PA by 2015 .....	48
Figure 3.9 Achievement Financial Milestone YEI – eligible expenditure.....	52
Figure 3.10 Achievement financial milestone – eligible cost of operations YEI by 2015 ..	53
Figure 4.1 Cumulative number of participants over the programme years 2014-2015 versus 2007-2013 (first 5 years). .....	7
Figure 4.2 Relative share of (fe)male participation across MS over 2014-2015 (all IP, including YEI) .....	12
Figure 4.3 Relative share of participants per TO and IP and category of region (2014-2015).....	15
Figure 6.1 Overview planned evaluations over time .....	57
Figure 6.2 Overview of planned evaluation on ESF themes.....	58
Figure 8.1 % Headline target national Employment (20-64 years old) - 2015 – distance from national target (%)(in percentage points) .....	65
Figure 8.2 Distance to national poverty reduction target (2015, in thousands) .....	78
Figure 8.3 Headline target Early School Leaving – distance from national target (in percentage pointns) .....	88
Figure 8.4 Headline target HE attainment (30-34 year old) 2015 – distance from national target (in percentage points).....	88

## List of Tables

Table 2.1 Allocated ESF Budget (2014-2020) .....	5
Table 3.1 Progress financial implementation - Total (ESF + YEI).....	37
Table 3.2 Overview allocated budget versus eligible costs reported – by thematic objective per MS and EU28 (in million Euros) – ESF only.....	39
Table 3.3 Progress financial implementation - Total (ESF only).....	42
Table 3.4 Overview ESF targets / allocated budget (EU+national) by MS .....	43
Table 3.5 Overview of OP with incorrect target setting .....	44
Table 3.6 Progress financial implementation - Total (YEI + ESF contribution YEI only)...	49
Table 3.7 Overview total budgets YEI / Milestone target .....	50
Table 4.1 Total number of participants per MS (ESF / YEI / ESF + YEI) Cumulative until 2015 .....	9
Table 4.2 Totals common outputs for participants per MS (ESF / YEI / ESF + YEI), cumulative until 2015, by indicator .....	10
Table 4.3 Totals common outputs for participants by region (ESF only), cumulative until 2015, by indicator.....	11
Table 4.4 Total number of projects / SME at EU level over 2014-2015 (all IP, ESF + YEI) .....	13
Table 4.5 Total number of participants per TO and IP across MS over 2014-2015 (sum of CRO1, CRO3, and CRO5, ESF + YEI) .....	14
Table 4.6 Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of common result indicator over the programming period 2014-2015, and relative share of women (for ESF and YEI) .....	16
Table 4.7 Overview common result indicators, by MS (ESF only) .....	17
Table 4.8 Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of common result indicator over the programming period 2014-2015, per TO. ....	18
Table 4.9 Overview common result indicators, by MS (ESF + YEI) .....	18
Table 4.10 Overview common result indicators, by MS (YEI only) .....	19
Table 4.11 Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of common result indicator over the programming period 2014-2015, per MS.....	20
Table 4.12 Total aggregated outputs reported by AIR per type of programme specific output indicator over the programming period 2014-2015 .....	24
Table 4.13 Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of programme specific result indicator over 2014-2015.....	25
Table 4.14 Progress towards the 2023 target of common output indicators that have a target value (average % of target achievement) over the programming period 2014-2015. ....	26
Table 4.15 Progress towards target achievement of programme specific output indicators .....	27
Table 4.16 Progress towards target achievement of common result indicators that have a target value (average % of target achievement) over the programming period 2014-2015. ....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Table 4.17 Average success rate of common result indicators by linking result achievement over 2014-2015 to the reference output values .....	28
Table 4.18 Progress towards the target achievement of programme specific result indicators that have a target value (average % of target achievement) over the programming period 2014-2015. Only indicators were included that have an IP label. ....	29
Table 4.19 Average success rate of programme specific result indicators by linking result achievement over 2014-2015 to the reference output values .....	30

Table 4.20 Explanation provided for under performance over the programming period 2014-2015.....	32
Table 4.21 Progress towards milestone achievement 2018 of programme performance indicators (average % of milestone target achievement) over the period 2014-2015. ....	35
Table 5.1 Eligible expenditures declared per participant.....	54
Table 5.2 Eligible expenditures declared per short-term result achieved .....	56
Table 6.1 Overview of reporting on evaluations (categories are not exclusive).....	59
Table 6.2 OP with active YEI support, no evaluation results reported in line with Article 19(4) of ESF Regulation.....	60
Table 7.1 Number of actions (to be) taken towards fulfilment of general ExAC 7.....	62
Table 7.2 Actions for GExAC 7 to be taken – by year of deadline .....	64
Table 8.1 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8i.....	67
Table 8.2 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8ii .....	69
Table 8.3 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8iii .....	71
Table 8.4 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8iv .....	72
Table 8.5 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8v.....	73
Table 8.6 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8vi .....	75
Table 8.7 Summative factsheet on progress of IP8vii .....	76
Table 8.8 Overview TO8 .....	77
Table 8.9 Summative factsheet on progress of IP9i.....	80
Table 8.10 Summative factsheet on progress of IP9ii .....	81
Table 8.11 Summative factsheet on progress of IP9iii .....	83
Table 8.12 Summative factsheet on progress of IP9iv .....	84
Table 8.13 Summative factsheet on progress of IP9v .....	85
Table 8.14 Summative factsheet on progress of IP9vi .....	86
Table 8.15 Overview TO9 .....	87
Table 8.16 Summative factsheet on progress of IP10i .....	90
Table 8.17 Summative factsheet on progress of IP10ii .....	92
Table 8.18 Summative factsheet on progress of IP10iii.....	93
Table 8.19 Summative factsheet on progress of IP10iv.....	95
Table 8.20 Overview TO10.....	96
Table 8.21 Summative factsheet on progress of TO11 .....	98

## List of acronyms

<b>AIR</b>	Annual Implementation Report
<b>ALMP</b>	Active Labour Market Policy
<b>CIE</b>	Counterfactual impact evaluation
<b>CSR</b>	Country Specific Recommendations
<b>ERDF</b>	European Regional Development Fund
<b>ESF</b>	European Social Fund
<b>IB</b>	Intermediary Body
<b>IP</b>	Investment Priority
<b>IVET</b>	Initial Vocational Education and Training
<b>MA</b>	Managing Authority
<b>MS</b>	Member State
<b>NRP</b>	National Reform Programme
<b>OP</b>	Operational Programme
<b>PAX</b>	Priority Axis
<b>PES</b>	Public Employment Service
<b>SO</b>	Specific Objective
<b>SFC</b>	System for Fund Management



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The present report has been prepared for Task 1 of the service “ESF Performance and Thematic Reports”. It provides a summary of monitoring information reported by Member States in their Annual Implementation Reports as delivered in spring 2016. This reporting cycle covers the years 2014 and 2015.

Annual reporting follows the 'intervention logic' adopted in Operational Programmes (OPs). The definition of OPs starts with the identification of development needs and the changes the programme is intended to bring about to meet specific objectives addressing these needs. Each programme must set 'specific objectives' and the related expected results that are intended to be achieved while taking into account the policy needs and characteristics of the area to which it relates. Expenditure, output and result indicators have to be monitored by the Managing Authorities (MAs) and reported upon in the framework of the Annual Implementation Report.

This report provides input for the ESI Fund summary report 2016, which the European Commission will transmit to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (Article 53(1)). The report shall be based on the annual implementation reports of the Member States as well as a synthesis of the findings of available evaluations of programmes.

This report provides:

- An overview of the progress made in the implementation, as expressed by the common and programme specific indicators, by financial indicators and evaluation findings by category of region and MS (at EU level) / OP (at national level), and also by thematic objective, investment priority and target group.
- An overview and assessment of the performance, as shown by cumulated achievements in relation to financial allocations and progress-quantified targets, along with success rates (results/ outputs).
- An analysis of the progress towards the milestones and targets of the performance framework.
- An analysis of the contribution to the main EU policy objectives. The assessment of the contribution of the ESF and YEI to these objectives should also rely on the evaluation findings and take into account the European economic and social situation.
- An assessment of the consistency of reporting by MA and the reporting on progress on general ex ante conditionality 7 that is required based on the AIRs.

The first Annual Implementation Report by Managing Authorities was due in 2016 (Art. 50 and 111 CPR), covering the financial years 2014 and 2015. The deadline for submitting the final report for the ESI Funds is 15 February 2025 or 1 March 2025 (Article 59(5) of the Financial Regulation). Progress reports from Member States in 2017 and 2019 must report on the performance of each programme (article 52(2)b of CPR). Structured data on YEI performance had to be submitted by the Member States for the first time in April 2015 and also in subsequent years at the same time as the regular AIR (article 19(3) ESF).

## 1.2 Methodology

This report is based on 61 Accepted and 97 Admissible reports, as well as another 10 AIRs that

were non-admissible<sup>1</sup>, 7 that were returned by the EC for modification<sup>2</sup> and 5 that were sent and under examination<sup>3</sup>, as of 15 July 2016 (cut-off date). Seven OPs are not covered by this report as their AIRs were missing at the time of the cut-off date<sup>4</sup>.

The table below displays figures on AIRs broken down by MS and aggregated by achieved status, i.e. taking into account the fact that in order to be accepted an AIR has been previously sent and declared admissible.

**Table 1.1** Number of AIRs (covering 2014/2015) by achieved status (15 July 2016)

MS	Total no of OPs	AIRs not submitted	AIRs Sent	AIRs Returned for modification	AIRs non Admissible	AIRs Admissible	AIRs Accepted
AT	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
BE	4	1	3	1	1	1	0
BG	3	0	3	0	0	3	0
CY	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
CZ	3	0	3	0	0	2	0
DE	17	0	17	0	2	15	0
DK	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
EE	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
ES	23	0	23	0	0	23	18
FI	2	0	2	0	0	2	1
FR	33	4	29	1	0	28	2
GR	17	0	17	0	0	17	2
HR	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
HU	5	0	5	2	0	3	0
IE	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
IT	29	1	28	0	0	25	13
LT	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
LU	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
LV	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
MT	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
NL	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
PL	17	0	17	1	0	16	11
PT	10	0	10	0	7	3	0
RO	2	0	2	0	0	2	0
SE	2	0	2	0	0	2	2
SI	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
SK	2	0	2	0	0	2	1
UK	6	0	6	0	0	6	6
<b>EU 28</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>61</b>

Source: SFCR2014, AIR 2014-2015

In order to prepare the 1<sup>st</sup> ESF synthesis report, different methodological steps were undertaken (as presented in figure 1.1 below).

1. First of all, data was collected and stored from all OPs and AIRs submitted in 2016 in the 28 EU MS. Data was exported from SFC2014 by the EC IT service, including

<sup>1</sup> BE: 2014BE05M9OP002; DE: 2014DE05SFOP004, 2014DE05SFOP016; PT: 2014PT16M2OP001, 2014PT16M2OP002, 2014PT16M2OP003, 2014PT16M2OP004, 2014PT16M2OP006, 2014PT16M2OP007, 2014PT16M3OP001.

<sup>2</sup> BE: 2014BE05M9OP001; EE: 2014EE16M3OP001; FR: 2014FR05SFOP005; HU: 2014HU05M3OP001, 2014HU16M2OP001; LV: 2014LV16MAOP001; PL: 2014PL16M2OP012.

<sup>3</sup> CZ: 2014CZ05M2OP001; IT: 2014IT05SFOP001, 2014IT05SFOP009, 2014IT05SFOP014; PT: 2014PT05SFOP001

<sup>4</sup> BE: 2014BE05SFOP001; FR: 2014FR05M0OP001, 2014FR05SFOP003, 2014FR05SFOP004, 2014FR16M2OP012; IT: 2014IT16M2OP003; LU: 2014LU05SFOP001

information on (1) programme architecture (MS;CCI; PA; IP; type of region); (2) financial tables (Table 6 and 7 in Section 3.4 of the AIR), common output and result indicator tables (table 2A and 4A in section 3.2 of the AIR), YEI result indicators (Table 2B), programme specific output and result indicator tables (table 2C and table 4B in Section 3.2 of the AIR) and performance framework (table 28 of the OP). Furthermore, qualitative information was extracted from Section 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the AIR)<sup>5</sup>.

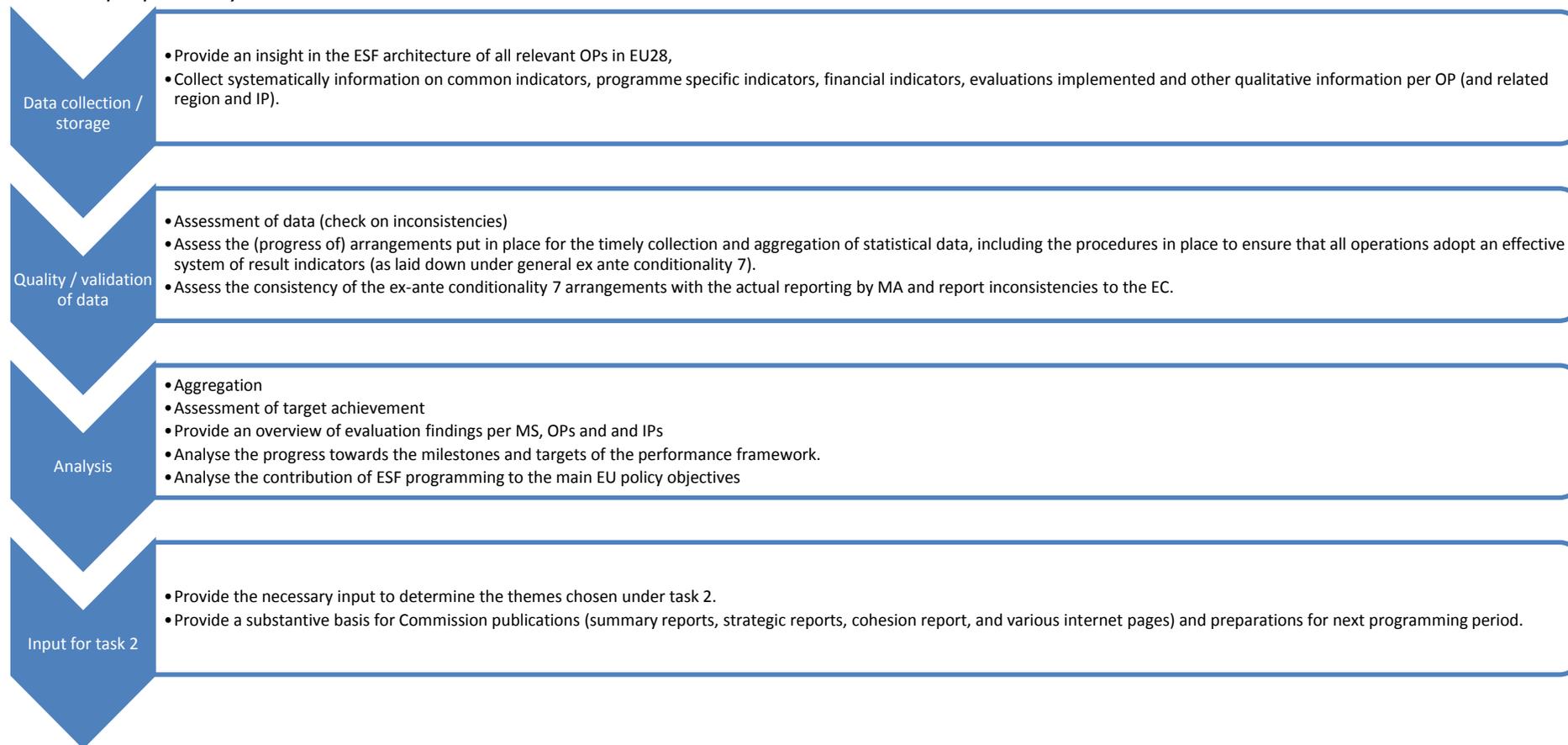
2. Secondly, an assessment was carried out on the extracted data (addressing missing values, 'zero' values, extreme values, coherence between output and result values, unit costs, identification of measurement of units) by defining 'alert' and 'remedy' rules for (1) the detection of trivial errors (gaps, inconsistencies and format errors) and for (2) for the detection of performance peculiarities (under- or over performance, etc.) in the form of a set of thresholds. Annex 3 provides an overview of type of checks performed. Where necessary, data was corrected or manipulated (in case e.g. percentages needed to be recalculated to absolute values). Data inconsistencies are flagged and reported to the Commission (shared in a separate note, not constituting an integral part of this report). In order to allow comparison at EU level and further aggregation and analysis, some of the data was further screened and categorised. In particular, programme specific output and results indicators were labelled according to a standard set of categories (see Annex I). Qualitative information was also carefully screened and categorised (see Annex II).
3. Thirdly, an analysis was made of the data collected by: aggregating financial, output and result indicators; measuring progress in target achievement; calculating success rates of individuals supported; calculating costs per output and result; benchmarking with the EU average, analysis of outliers, categories of qualitative information in AIR; and also conducting a socio economic context analysis, and ESF contribution analysis.
4. Finally, the main findings are synthesised into a comprehensive report.

---

<sup>5</sup> The cut-off date for the collection of qualitative information from SFC2014 was set at June 21st, 2016.

**Figure 1.1** Methodological steps taken for producing the ESF performance report for 2014-2015

Source: prepared by the authors



## 2 Scope of the ESF

For the entire 2014-2020 period, the European Social Fund is structured into 187 ESF OPs, adopted by the 28 MS. The total EU budget for ESF is over EUR 83 billion for 2014-2020, which totals EUR 86.4 billion when including the YEI ESF matching support. As the ESF is required to complement national efforts, MS are required to match EU funding with a certain level of national co-financing. As set out in the Regulations, the levels of co-financing are determined by the economic status of the regions targeted with funding. Table 2.1 below summarises the total EU budgets and total ESF amount available to all MS. The allocation of the funds under the Youth Employment Initiative is also reported here.

**Table 2.1 Allocated ESF Budget (2014-2020)**

MS	N. OPs	EU amount (x€1,000,000)*			EU + national (x€1,000,000)*		
		ESF budget	ESF budget (incl. ESF contribution to YEI)	YEI (dedicated budget)	ESF budget	ESF budget (incl. ESF contribution to YEI)	Total (ESF+ESF-YEI+YEI)
AT	1	442.1	442.1	0.0	875.7	875.7	875.7
BE	4	986.3	1,028.7	42.4	2,195.8	2,280.6	2,323.1
BG	3	1,466.4	1,521.6	55.2	1,722.9	1,787.8	1,843.0
CY	1	117.4	129.0	11.6	138.1	151.8	163.3
CZ	3	3,416.4	3,430.0	13.6	4,202.6	4,218.6	4,232.2
DE	17	7,495.6	7,495.6	0.0	12,570.5	12,570.5	12,570.5
DK	1	206.6	206.6	0.0	399.2	399.2	399.2
EE	1	587.0	587.0	0.0	690.6	690.6	690.6
ES	23	6,646.1	7,589.6	943.5	9,721.1	10,831.1	11,774.6
FI	2	515.4	515.4	0.0	1,030.7	1,030.7	1,030.7
FR**	33	5,716.7	6,026.9	310.2	10,099.5	10,512.6	10,822.9
GR	17	3,512.1	3,683.7	171.5	4,528.2	4,749.4	4,921.0
HR	1	1,449.9	1,516.0	66.2	1,705.7	1,783.6	1,849.7
HU	5	4,662.4	4,712.1	49.8	5,644.8	5,703.4	5,753.1
IE	1	474.3	542.4	68.1	948.6	1,084.9	1,153.0
IT	29	9,900.9	10,468.4	567.5	17,608.7	18,554.6	19,122.1
LT	1	1,095.5	1,127.3	31.8	1,288.8	1,326.2	1,358.0
LU	1	20.1	20.1	0.0	40.1	40.1	40.1
LV	1	609.5	638.6	29.0	717.1	751.2	780.3
MT	1	105.9	105.9	0.0	132.4	132.4	132.4
NL	1	507.3	507.3	0.0	1,024.8	1,024.8	1,024.8
PL	17	12,939.7	13,192.2	252.4	15,217.1	15,514.1	15,766.5
PT	10	7,382.3	7,543.1	160.8	8,925.5	9,114.6	9,275.4
RO	2	4,668.0	4,774.0	106.0	5,487.1	5,611.8	5,717.8
SE	2	730.2	774.3	44.2	1,460.4	1,548.7	1,592.9
SI	1	707.7	716.9	9.2	884.6	896.2	905.4
SK	2	2,045.4	2,167.6	72.2	2,461.3	2,605.1	2,677.3
UK	6	4,736.5	4,942.6	206.1	8,739.2	9,133.1	9,339.2
<b>EU28</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>83,143.7</b>	<b>86,405.0</b>	<b>3,211.3</b>	<b>120,461.0</b>	<b>124,898.2</b>	<b>128,134.5</b>

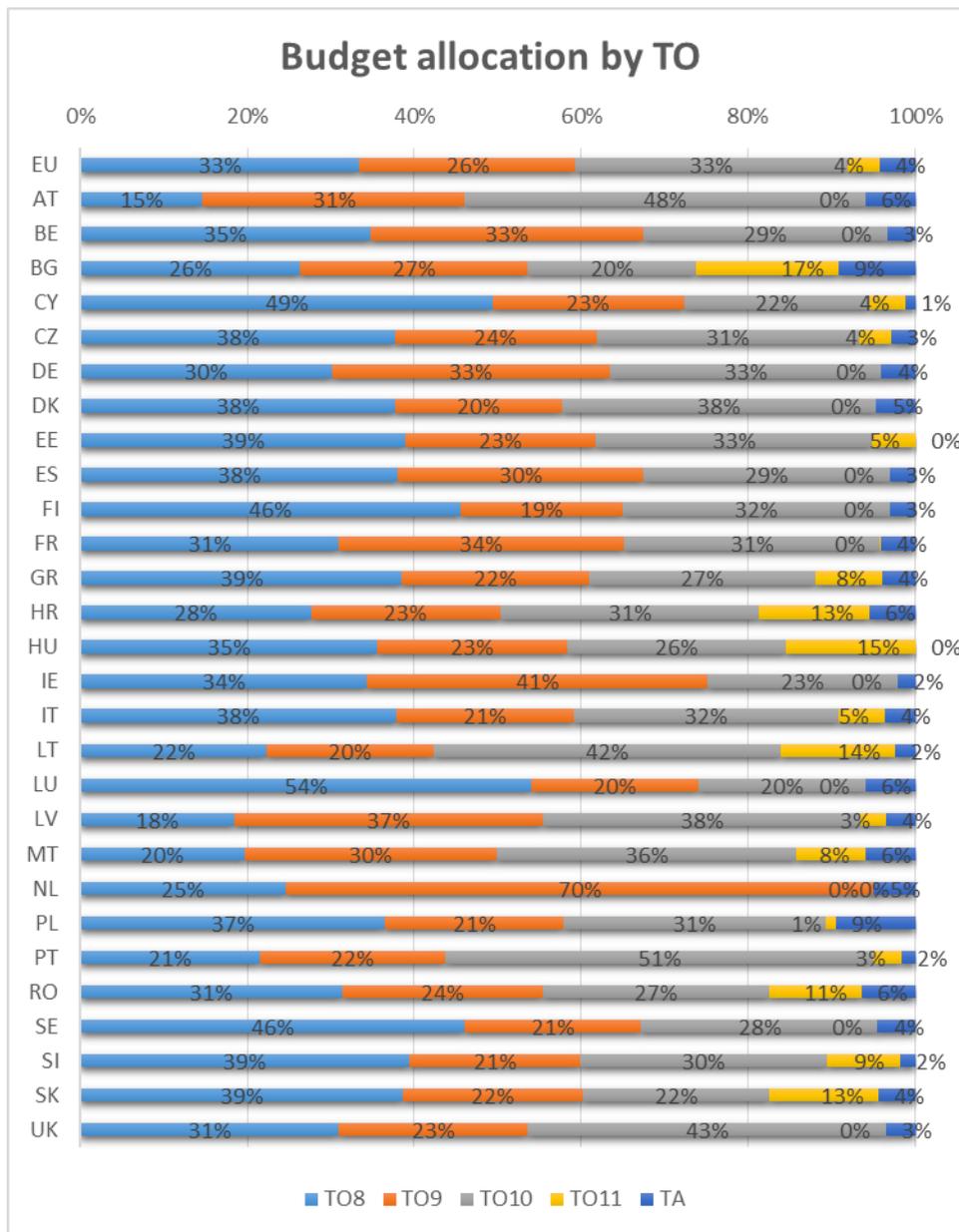
\* Includes Technical assistance

\*\* FR reports a different total funding in AIR 2015 than in its OP (2014FR05M9OP001)

Source: Comparison of Operational Programmes / AIR 2015 (updated until 15-7-2016)

Based on the challenges identified in the various strategic documents, Member States defined their ESF programming and selected the priorities for ESF funding. This gives MS the possibility to direct ESF funding towards the areas and objectives that are most pressing in their own contexts. To better understand the priorities chosen by the MS, the figure below summarizes the share of ESF investments across all analysed OPs in the EU for the four ESF-relevant Thematic Objectives.

**Figure 2.1** ESF allocation to thematic objectives



Source: Comparison of Operational Programmes / AIR 2015 (updated until 15-7-2016)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Values reported exclude YEI funds and ESF-share of YEI allocation

### 3 Programme output, result and achievements of ESF

The main purpose of annual implementation reporting is to inform the EC on the progress made by the programme. This section presents the overall progress in terms of output and results in section 3.1, and against their targets set in the performance framework in section 3.2. Both sections present the output and results of ESF / YEI separately.

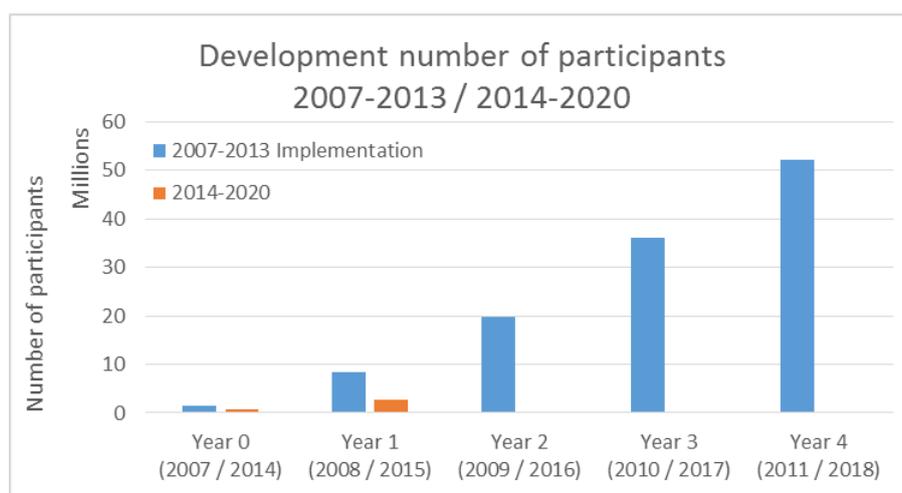
#### 3.1 Total outputs and results

##### 3.1.1 Total outputs

#### Total individual outputs compared to the previous programme period 2007-2013

MAs systematically report on the achievement of values for common output indicators (as defined in the Annex 1 of the ESF regulation, Reg (EU) no 1304/2013) at IP level, which can then be aggregated at EU level. In table 3.1, an overview is provided of the total aggregation at EU level (including common output indicators for YEI). In total, 2.7 million participants<sup>7</sup> are registered in ESF interventions (around 0.8 million participants in 2014 and 1.9 in 2015)<sup>8</sup>. If compared with the total number of participants for reported in the previous programming period (Annex XXIII data), this figure, for 2014-2015, is much lower than that registered than for the first two years of the 2007-2013 programming period (8,284,723 participants - see figure 4.1).

**Figure 3.1** Cumulative number of participants over the programme years 2014-2015 versus 2007-2013 (first 5 years).



Source: SFC 2007 and SFC2014, based on AIR2014-2015

This reflects the earlier conclusion that the financial implementation rates for the first two years of the current programming are lower than those of the 2007-2013 period. Based on these figures, one could conclude that ESF 2014-2020 has a considerable amount of catching up to do over the coming years. Nevertheless, one should be careful when drawing such strong conclusions, due to the fact that the large difference between outputs can perhaps also be explained by the fact the ESF Regulation (Annex I) is more clearly stating that participants are

<sup>7</sup> Monitoring systems record participations in ESF supported interventions. As a result, one individual person can participate in one or more ESF supported interventions over the programming period. For the purpose of this report we further refer to the number of participants.

<sup>8</sup> In order to provide figures on the total number of participants the common output indicators on number of unemployed (CO01), employed (CO05) and inactive (CO03) were aggregated, since these are mutually exclusive, and complete. Please note that this aggregation is lower than the total number of participants (ZZZ) reported by AIR (2,703,599 versus 2,927,309). Differences between the aggregation and ZZZ are reported for BE (182), BG (3,302), DE (13,024), ES (48,069), FR (41,495), GR (27,290), IE (1), IT (30), PL (9,077), PT (80,576), SE (575), SI (89)

those directly benefiting from an ESF intervention; this is in contrast to the 2007-2013 programming period where MS sometimes report on persons that indirectly benefit from it. Another important difference is that Annex XXIII data of 2007 and 2008 include data for almost all MS, with the exception of the CZ and MT<sup>9</sup>, while some MS did not report any data (yet) for 2014-2015 (most likely mainly due to delays in the designation process). However, in terms of financial implementation (which is also better suitable for comparison), data also show that implementation of ESF 2014-2020 is slower than in 2007-2013. In view of the relatively lower number of participants reached in the first two years of ESF 2014-2020 implementation in comparison to 2007-2013, and the similarly slow take-up of eligible expenditures declared to the EC, considerable action will be needed to catch up towards the targets set for 2018 and 2023. Since many MAs will finalise their designation process in 2016, this is likely to bring an acceleration in implementation in 2016.

### **Total individual participants per type of region and MS**

The majority of participants are reported in the more developed regions (1.4 million), followed by transition regions (0.6 million), and less developed regions. Half a million participants have been recorded for the YEI, thus not belonging to any category of region. From the AIRs it is not always clear whether indicator values are based on "fully" versus "partially" implemented operations (see article 5(3) of ESF regulation), thus not allowing a detailed analysis on the distribution of values amongst these categories.

ES, FR, IT, DE, BE, PT, IE, GR, and NL report a particularly large number of participants. For a number of MS, no outputs have been reported (such as AT, CY, HR, HU, LU, MT and RO)<sup>10</sup>. The AIR in these countries does not provide a clear reason for this non-reporting on common output (and result) indicators, besides referring to a slow start-up of programme implementation due to a variety of reasons (see for more detailed information Section 3.2). For AT, the AIR explained that there were some delays in starting up the implementation of the programme, due to the lack of available funds caused by the long lasting designation procedure of the MA and the certifying body. For HU, it was mentioned that the implementation was slowed down by the closing of the previous programming period and the development of new IT systems, making it impossible, as of yet, to report on outputs (as reported for 2014HU05M2OP001). Other programmes in HU report on a slow take-up of applicants (2014HU05M3OP00) or a late start-up of the call for proposals, which has led to the projects starting at the beginning of 2016 (2014HU16M0OP001). Furthermore, for MT it was mentioned that limited actions have taken place, since the MA was still active, closing projects from the previous programming period, which led to limited action for the 2014-2020 programming period (2014MT05SFOP001). For RO, it was reported that there were delays launching the call for proposals, so output and results will only become available in 2016. For CY it was indicated that the implementation is in progress, but no outputs were reported yet. LU had not yet submitted its AIR by July 15 2016.

When comparing the total number of participants in each MS for 2014 and 2015 with those reported in 2007 and 2008, one sees there are three MS that reported no figures in 2007-2008 (CZ, HR and MT), while no participants were reported for 7 MS in 2014-2015 (namely in AT, HR, CY, HU, LU, MT and RO). The largest differences between the first two years in both programming periods<sup>11</sup> can be found in GR (+133,838 participants), BE (-93,779), IE (-104,222), BG (-114,388), PL (-16,983), AT (-154,758), DE (-329,181), IT (-452,022), UK (-473,054), PT (-614,893), FR (-918,020), and ES (-2,222,621). There are only 5 MS reporting a larger number of participants for 2014-2015 than for the first two years of the previous programming period 2007-2013 (namely GR, LV, CZ, LT and SK), while 21 MS report a lower number of participants for 2014-2015. There are no clear-cut reasons available and multiple factors can play a role; for example, the way by which participants are reported (and the

---

<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that this data was already available in 2007 and 2008, but could be entered in the SFC2007 later on.

<sup>10</sup> No outputs have been available for Luxembourg either, which had not submitted an AIR by July 15 2016.

<sup>11</sup> 2014 and 2015 compared to 2007 and 2008.

definition of 'participant'), the budget shifts between programming period, the focus of programmes, and the challenges programmes face in implementation. It goes beyond the purpose of this performance report to assess in-depth why these numbers have changed, but the figures for 2007-2013 could be used as a benchmark for further monitoring programme output in the coming years.

**Table 3.1** Total number of participants per MS (ESF / YEI / ESF + YEI) Cumulative until 2015

MS	Number of participants (ESF)	Number of participants (YEI)	Number of participants (ESF + YEI)	Reported "Grand total" in SFC
AT	0		0	0
BE	214,568	27,455	242,023	242,205
BG	11,152	0	11,152	14,454
CY	0	0	0	0
CZ	14,304	0	14,304	14,304
DE	274,023		274,023	287,047
DK	243		243	243
EE	1,262		1,262	1,262
ES	568,960	20,660	589,620	637,689
FI	17,467		17,467	17,467
FR	327,571	143,459	471,030	512,525
GR	111,417	32,077	143,494	170,784
HR	0	0	0	0
HU	0	0	0	0
IE	167,045	13,909	180,954	180,955
IT	158,888	130,753	289,641	289,671
LT	14,766	0	14,766	14,766
LU	0	0	0	0
LV	15,064	13,038	28,102	28,102
MT	0		0	0
NL	138,865		138,865	138,865
PL	73,620	72,139	145,759	154,836
PT	77,879	40,788	118,667	199,243
RO	0	0	0	0
SE	1,676	6,215	7,891	8,466
SI	0	39	39	128
SK	5,062	887	5,949	5,949
UK	8,348	0	8,348	8,348
<b>EU28</b>	<b>2,206,322</b>	<b>501,419</b>	<b>2,703,599</b>	<b>2,927,309</b>
Regions	Number of participants (ESF)	Number of participants (YEI)	Number of participants (ESF + YEI)	Reported "Grand total" in SFC
Less developed	240,694		240,694	
More developed	1,410,163		1,410,163	
Transition	551,323		551,323	
No region	-	501,419	501,419	2,927,309
<i>Total participants in first three columns calculated by sum of Unemployed (CO1), Inactive (CO3), and Employed (CO5), as reported in table 4a AIR</i>				
<i>Discrepancies in totals reported by MS (last column) and totals in first 3 columns are caused when MS do not collect all required background characteristics</i>				
<i>The common output indicators related to YEI are not labelled to any of the type regions</i>				
<i>Excluding participants in technical assistance PA</i>				

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2014-2015

### Background characteristics of participants

Table 3.2 provides information on the total number and relative share of participants per type of common indicator, showing that the largest group of participants consists of the unemployed (58% of total participants in ESF + YEI). The largest age group is 25-54 year old (55%), followed by 39% persons below 25. In terms of education level, most participants have ISCED level 1 or 2 (36%), followed by ISCED 3/4 (31%).

**Table 3.2** Totals common outputs for participants per MS (ESF / YEI / ESF + YEI), cumulative until 2015, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Total ESF		Total YEI		Total (ESF + YEI)	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Employment status</b>						
CO01 Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	1,175,665	53%	395,798	79%	1,571,463	58%
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	456,914	21%	168,973	34%	625,887	23%
CO03 Inactive	590,869	27%	105,621	21%	696,490	26%
CO04 of which not in education or training	175,653	8%	101,734	20%	277,387	10%
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	435,646	20%			435,646	16%
<b>Age</b>						
CO06 Below 25 years of age	672,682	31%	374,499	75%	1,047,181	39%
CO07 Above 54 years of age	149,916	7%			149,916	6%
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including Long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	71,633	3%			71,633	3%
*Between 25-54 years of age	1,379,582	63%	126,920	25%	1,506,502	56%
<b>Education</b>						
CO09 With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	824,049	37%	146,107	29%	970,156	36%
CO10 With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary Education (ISCED 4)	609,892	28%	233,668	47%	843,560	31%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5-8)	271,288	12%	109,773	22%	381,061	14%
*Other / unknown ISCED level	496,951	23%	11,871	2%	508,822	19%
<b>Other background characteristics</b>						
CO12 Participants who live in jobless households	338,081	15%	96,570	19%	434,651	16%
CO13 Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children	153,559	7%	32,541	6%	186,100	7%
CO14 Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	145,828	7%	26,286	5%	172,114	6%
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	343,222	16%	39,226	8%	382,448	14%
CO16 Participants with disabilities	261,033	12%	6,915	1%	267,948	10%
CO17 Other disadvantaged	462,779	21%	52,209	10%	514,988	19%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	22,893	1%	5,180	1%	28,073	1%
CO19 From rural areas	178,309	8%	73,784	15%	252,093	9%

*% of participants calculated on the basis of the sum of Unemployed (CO1), Inactive (CO3), and Employed (CO5). These 3 categories (presented bold in the table) add up to 100%*

*Values not assigned to CO (between 25-54 years, and other ISCED level, indicated by "\*") calculated by authors*

*Excluding participants in technical assistance PA*

*Source: SFC2014, based on AIR2014-2015*

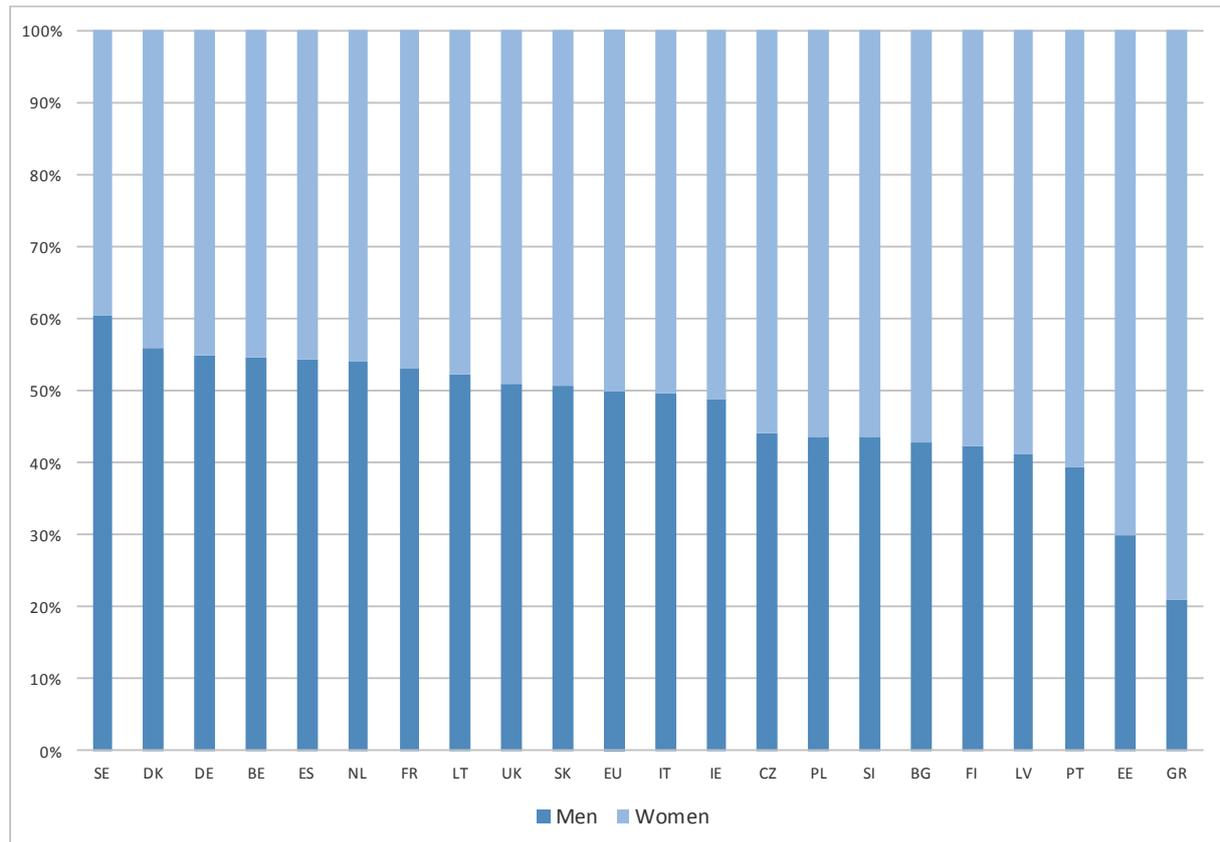
**Table 3.3** Totals common outputs for participants by region (ESF only), cumulative until 2015, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Less developed Total	Less developed %	More developed Total	More developed %	Transition Total	Transition %	Total ESF
<b>Employment status</b>							
CO01 Unemployed, including long-term unemployed	103,088	43%	697,600	49%	374,977	68%	1,175,665
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	38,236	16%	311,014	22%	107,664	20%	456,914
CO03 Inactive	98,520	41%	405,055	29%	87,294	16%	590,869
CO04 of which not in education or training	13,647	6%	119,985	9%	42,021	8%	175,653
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	39,086	16%	307,508	22%	89,052	16%	435,646
<b>Age</b>							
CO06 Below 25 years of age	110,918	46%	434,211	31%	127,553	23%	672,682
CO07 Above 54 years of age	19,976	8%	103,034	7%	26,906	5%	149,916
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including Long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training	16,526	7%	42,956	3%	12,151	2%	71,633
*between 25-54 years of age	109,800	46%	872,918	62%	396,864	72%	1,379,582
<b>Education</b>							
CO09 With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	45,221	19%	586,909	42%	191,919	35%	824,049
CO10 With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary Education (ISCED 4)	131,617	55%	332,964	24%	145,311	26%	609,892
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	52,332	22%	160,229	11%	58,727	11%	271,288
*Other / unknown ISCED	11,524	5%	330,061	23%	155,366	28%	496,951
<b>Other background characteristics</b>							
CO12 Participants who live in jobless households	19,638	8%	232,272	16%	86,171	16%	338,081
CO13 Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children	8,313	3%	106,107	8%	39,139	7%	153,559
CO14 Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	8,889	4%	104,950	7%	31,989	6%	145,828
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	11,572	5%	280,881	20%	50,769	9%	343,222
CO16 Participants with disabilities	19,708	8%	202,044	14%	39,281	7%	261,033
CO17 Other disadvantaged	19,032	8%	360,583	26%	83,164	15%	462,779
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	512	0%	17,787	1%	4,594	1%	22,893
CO19 From rural areas	32,889	14%	114,898	8%	30,522	6%	178,309
<i>% of participants calculated on the basis of the sum of Unemployed (CO1), Inactive (CO3), and Employed (CO5). These 3 categories (presented bold in the table) add up to 100%</i>							
<i>Values not assigned to CO (between 25-54 years, and other ISCED level, indicated by "*")</i>							
<i>'calculated by authors</i>							
<i>Excluding participants in technical assistance PA</i>							

## Gender sensitivity

From analysing the gender distribution of participants, one sees that the participation of women and men is equally spread at EU level<sup>12</sup>. There are, however, significant differences among MS. Some MS report a relatively large share of women participating in ESF, such as GR, EE, PT, LV, FI, BG, SI, PL, CZ; while other MS report a significant larger number of male participants (namely for SE, DK, DE, BE, ES, NL). AT, HR, CY, HU, RO do not report any figures (and are not included in the figure below).

**Figure 3.2** Relative share of (fe)male participation across MS over 2014-2015 (all IP, including YEI)



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

Women are overrepresented in the following groups: employed (55%), those who have post-secondary education (54%) and tertiary education (63%), participants in jobless households with dependent children (62%), and participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children (72%). Men are overrepresented in the groups of homelessness or affected by housing exclusion (61%), participants with disabilities (58%), and participants with primary or lower secondary education (57%). By exploring the gender balance per IP, it can be seen that some IPs have a large percentage of male participants. This is namely the case for IP11ii (60%), IP 10iv (58%), IP8v (57%), IP10i (56%). Other IP are more dominated by female participants like IP8iv (99%); IP8vi (75%), IP11i (64%), IP9iii (60%), and IP10iii (60%). An analysis of whether there is a gender balance between male and female participants in target setting is not possible at MS and EU level; this is because the total number of participants reported in the AIR is equal to the sum of the targets of female and male participants in only three MS (Slovak Republic, Finland, and Cyprus), signalling a significant under reporting on gender by MS.

<sup>12</sup> For this analysis we used to total number of participants as reported in the "Grand Total" by SFC, and its distribution on gender.

The common output indicators measuring the number of projects and entities supported, report a total of 2,828 projects by social partners or non-governmental organisations, while 1,160 projects were supported that are dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment. Another 930 projects were targeting public administration / public services. ESF supported a total of 87,091 SME in 2014 and 2015. The number of projects shows a steep increase from 2014 towards 2015. Most projects that are implemented by social partners or NGOs are reported for IP8v, 9i, 10i, 10iii, 8vi, and 8ii, while fewer or no projects were reported for IP 10ii, 9ii, 8iv, 11ii, 8vii, and 11i. The largest number of projects dedicated to participation and the progress of women in employment are to be found under IP8v, 9i, 10i, 8ii, 10iii, and 10.iv. The largest number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level are to be found under IP10iv, 8i, 9i, and 8vii; surprisingly, a lower number of projects were reported in IP falling under TO11. Projects related to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are mainly reported under IP 8iii, 8v, 9i, 8vi, and 10iii.

### Types of projects supported

Most projects for women in the labour market can be found in DE (921) and FR (167), while a large number of projects that are implemented by social partners and NGO were reported in DE (2,135), ES (169), FR (154), IT (115), and NL (182). The number of SME supported over the years is more balanced. Projects targeting public services were mainly reported in EE (73), ES (372), FI (40), FR (79), and IT (313). A large number of SME were supported in DE (16,293), FI (2,160), FR (64,866), and NL (1,532).

**Table 3.4** Total number of projects / SME at EU level over 2014-2015 (all IP, ESF + YEI)

Row Labels	Sum of 2014 total	Sum of 2015 total	Sum of Cumulative value total
Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations	141	2,687	2,828
Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment;	95	1,065	1,160
Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	66	864	930
Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)	52,792	34,299	87,091

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### Number of individual participants per TO and IP

By looking at the total aggregation of participants for each Thematic Objective and Investment Priority, one sees that some TO supported more participants over 2014-2015 than others. For TO8 especially (and IP 8.i and 8.ii more specifically), the largest number of participants were reported (total 1,490,789). This was followed by TO9 (mainly for IP 9.i) and TO10 (more evenly distributed around the different IP), which both have supported a similar number of participants (630,300 and 536,757 respectively). TO8 and TO10 are traditionally the areas where the most participants have been achieved with ESF (see also the previous programming period). Nevertheless, since TO8 supports existing ALMP measures, it is easier for the programme to achieve results than it would be for interventions related to schools in the first two years of programming. A smaller number of participants are reported for TO11 (45,743), which has traditionally covered the ESF priority areas where the lowest number of participants are recorded (supporting ESF intervention at system level and training of public government officials). A total number of 4,142 participants were not allocated to any IP, but fall under TA<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> This is the case for Bulgaria (PA 5 for 2014BG05SFOP001), France (2014FR16M0OP013; 2014FR16M2OP001; 2014FR16M2OP007), and Italy (2014IT05SFOP003; 2014IT05SFOP006; 2014IT05SFOP008; 2014IT05SFOP009; 2014IT05SFOP010; 2014IT05SFOP020; 2014IT05SFOP021).

**Table 3.5** Total number of participants per TO and IP across MS over 2014-2015 (sum of CRO1, CRO3, and CRO5, ESF + YEI)<sup>14</sup>

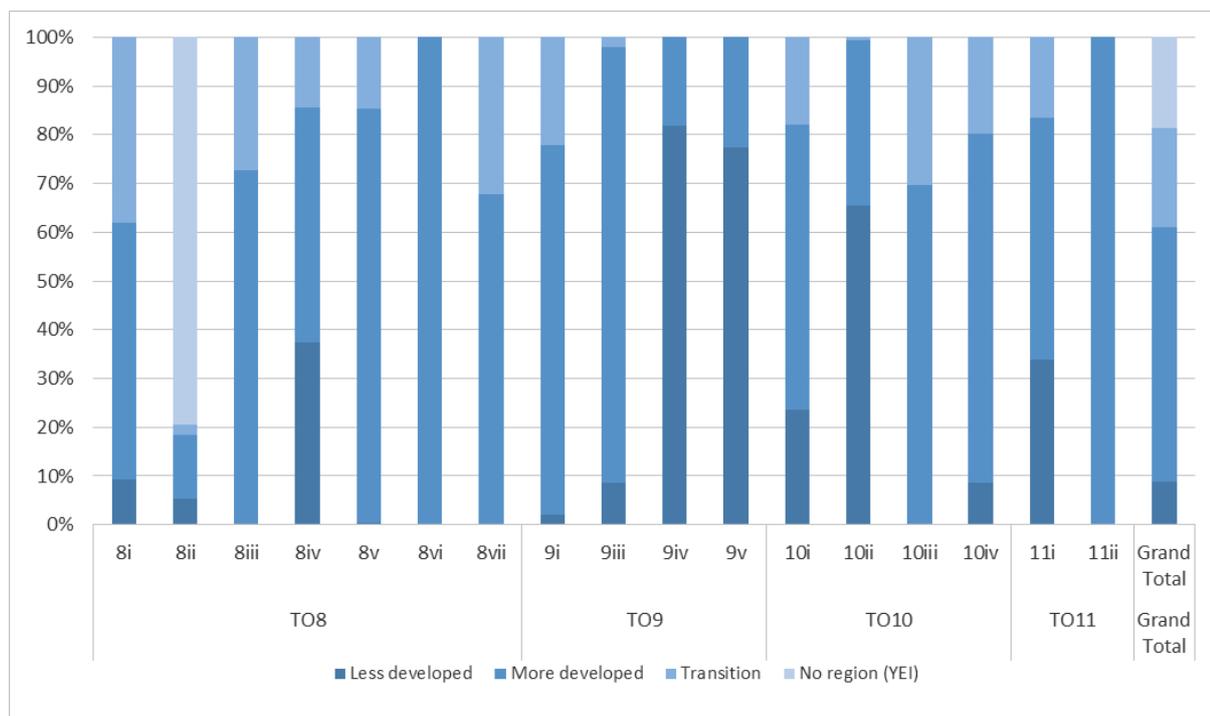
MS	8i	8ii	8iii	8iv	8v	8vi	8vii	9i	9iii	9iv	9v	9vi	10i	10ii	10iii	10iv	11i	11ii	Total
AT	0				0			0							0				0
BE	18,941	52,928			413			81,541					1,686		86,514				242,023
BG					0					11,152									11,152
CY	0																		0
CZ	14,304																		14,304
DE	4,974	8,868	3,430	5,915	33,335			76,269	203				46,855	331	29,274	64,569			274,023
DK			201		42														243
EE	269							402		233			129		106		123		1,262
ES	381,833	20,660	84,527	3,392	35,472			24,923	3,691		1,000		3,409	2,398	389	27,926			589,620
FI	4,738			162	2,591			2,863							7,113				17,467
FR	16,948	143,459	27,592		9,941	4	2,318	241,100					4,823		24,845				471,030
GR	0	32,077	0	37,438	0			25,095	525		0	0				3,302	45,057		143,494
HR	0	0						0		0	0								0
HU															0				0
IE	38,689	13,909						4,715	17					25,107	98,517				180,954
IT	65,418	182,910	0	4,878	2,654	0	0	7,594		2,649	0		7,592	2,914	1,501	10,958	30	543	289,641
LT	11,387										3,379								14,766
LU																			
LV	13,864	13,038						655		545									28,102
MT																			
NL								138,865											138,865
PL	22,794	114,617	0		0						50					8,298			145,759
PT		40,788											19,514	58,201		164			118,667
RO																			
SE	98	7,437						119							237				7,891
SI		39																	39
SK	5,062	887																	5,949
UK	5,548	0		0				2,715				0				85			8,348
Total	604,867	631,617	115,750	51,785	84,448	4	2,318	606,856	4,436	14,579	4,429	0	84,008	88,951	248,496	115,302	45,210	543	2,703,599

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

<sup>14</sup> For IP 9ii no achievements were reported by AIR for CO01, CO03, and CO05. Excluding participants in technical assistance PA.

The number of participants differs strongly per category of region. As already indicated, most participants for 2014-2015 were reported in the more developed regions, followed by the transition regions, while a relatively small number of participants have been reported in the less developed regions (this is partly explained by the problems that programmes face when starting up the implementation during the early years of the programming period, as well as the problems with IT systems tracking the number of participants). It is interesting to see that, for IP 8.iv, 9.iv, 9.iv and 10.ii, a relatively large number of participants are reported in the less developed regions. The same can be said for IP11i and 11ii, although this is evident as these IP are only eligible in cohesion countries.

**Figure 3.3** Relative share of participants per TO and IP and category of region (2014-2015)



Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### 3.1.2 Total results of ESF

Member States report on common result indicators in a systematic manner. Table 3.6 below provides a total aggregation of the common result indicators (for ESF as well as YEI) measuring the immediate results of participants upon leaving an ESF supported intervention at EU level, ranging from 236 thousand participants in employment (of which 72 thousand YEI participants), 175 thousand participants gaining a qualification (of which 18 thousand YEI participants), 36 thousand participants engaged in job searching, and 109 thousand in education/ training (of which 6 thousand YEI participants).

When overviewing the common result indicators that are addressing more specific target groups, one sees that, in total, 275 thousand disadvantaged participants achieved a positive result in terms of employment, gaining a qualification, education or training, or engaging in job-search (of which 49 thousand YEI participants). Immediate results for ESF were only reported for 16 MS (namely BE, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, IE, IT, LT, LV, NL, PL, SE, UK. This was especially the case in BE, DE, ES, FR, IT, and PL, which all report a large number of results, while DK, EE, and SE only report a few immediate results (being the countries that use administrative registers).

When assessing the programme achievement on the common result indicators that capture longer-term effects, 7 MS already report on results six months after completing the operation; DE, EE, ES, FR, IE, IT, PL for ESF (and BE, FR, IE, PL, and SE for YEI). They are not obliged to do this as the regulation only obliges Member States to report on these indicators later on, according to Article 50(1) and (2) and Article 111(1) of CPR Regulation. The remaining years should provide a more complete picture of ESF achievements (common longer-term result

indicators, should only be reported in 2019 and in the final report<sup>15</sup>). In these MS ESF contributed to 23 thousand participants finding employment six months after leaving an ESF supported intervention (of which 15 thousand YEI participants), while 2 thousand have gained an improved labour market situation (of which 658 YEI participants). Upon closer inspection of the reporting on elderly and disadvantaged individuals, around 169 participants above the 54 years old are in employment six months after leaving and ESF supported intervention (and logical no YEI participants), while around 11 thousand disadvantaged persons are in employment 6 months after leaving and ESF supported intervention (of which 8 thousand YEI participants).

The number of disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, in education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment (including self-employment) upon leaving that have been reported is particularly high, especially compared to the share of disadvantaged participants among total outputs. The large number of results for this indicator could potentially be explained by the fact that this individual result indicator includes different types of results. As a result, MS could more easily place a result in this category, instead of the more difficult to measure employment situation after the intervention. However, further examination shows that in some cases MS (specifically FR and NL) did not report the results achieved for disadvantaged participants in the common result categories 1-4.

**Table 3.6** Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of common result indicator over the programming period 2014-2015, and relative share of women (for ESF and YEI)

Result indicators	Total ESF	Total YEI	Total ESF +YEI	Percentage women of ESF	Percentage of women YEI
CR01 - Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	30,396	5,961	36,357	48%	34%
CR02 - Participants in education/training upon leaving	96,044	12,862	108,906	54%	42%
CR03 - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	156,321	18,396	174,717	47%	37%
CR04 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	163,736	72,042	235,778	47%	48%
CR05 - Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	226,731	48,564	275,295	48%	49%
CR06- Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	8,260	14,624	22,884	44%	45%
CR07 - Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	2,009	658	2,667	57%	35%
CR08 - Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	169	0	169	38%	46%
CR09 - Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	2,888	7,907	10,795	46%	46%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

Comparing the result between the categories of region, one sees that most results are reported in the more developed regions followed by the transition regions. A relatively low number of results are reported in the less developed regions. The table further confirms the distorting effect of the reporting in FR and NL on CR5, which is not matched by at least similar results reported in CR1-4.

<sup>15</sup> EC (2015) Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy: ESF, Guidance document, p18 (June 2015 version)

**Table 3.7** Overview common result indicators, by MS (ESF only)

MS	CR01	CR02	CR03	CR04	CR05	CR06	CR07	CR08	CR09
AT			0						
BE	1,663	42,796	29,761	20,884	15,292				
BG							0		
CY				0	0				
CZ	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DE	2,760	10,296	37,510	9,945	30,332	1,258	1,360	14	1,048
DK				11	8				
EE	2	48	9	29	148	18	2	11	11
ES	1,546	2,379	3,538	50,518	8,546	1,250	152	26	830
FI	33	130	745	224	413	0	0		
FR	23,120	7,596	17,352	49,865	154,912	673	9	11	330
GR	898	220	854	50	319	0	0		0
HR			0	0		0	0		
HU			0						
IE	157	31,718	48,344	2,628	767	4,575		107	74
IT	75	94	7,583	1,814	1,058	486	486	0	152
LT			3,793	3,116					
LV		84	2,495	960	490				
NL	50	86		1,502	5,212				
PL	80	548	4,211	22,045	9,127	0	0		443
SE	12	49	10	96	107	0	0		
SK				0					
UK		0	116	49	0	0			
PT									
RO									
SI									
<b>EU28</b>	<b>30,396</b>	<b>96,044</b>	<b>156,321</b>	<b>163,736</b>	<b>226,731</b>	<b>8,260</b>	<b>2,009</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>2,888</b>
Region	CR01	CR02	CR03	CR04	CR05	CR06	CR07	CR08	CR09
Less developed	316	570	10,444	23,666	8,089	18	2	11	454
More developed	19,476	67,510	106,527	54,975	148,149	6,503	1,435	128	1,310
Transition	10,604	27,964	39,350	85,095	70,493	1,739	572	30	1,124

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

Upon closer inspection of the total aggregated results, per common result indicator and per thematic objective, one sees that TO9 reports the largest number of results, followed by TO8 and TO10. However, including the results of YEI, TO8 would be the largest TO. It seems evident that ESF support under TO8 led to the largest number of participants in employment (including self-employment), which is due to the fact that ESF support under this objective also contributes to employment. ESF interventions under TO10 report the largest number of participants gaining a qualification upon leaving, or participants in education and training upon leaving; this also seems logical given the focus of TO10 on human capital. ESF support under TO9 reports the largest number of inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving and disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/training, gaining a qualification or in employment, including self-employment. The low aggregated achievement shown for TO11 are also probably due to the fact that actions under this TO are hardly measurable in terms of participants and are not fully adequate to reflect relevant achievements.

**Table 3.8** Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of common result indicator over the programming period 2014-2015, per TO.

Common result indicator	TO8 - ESF	TO8- YEI	TO9- ESF	TO10- ESF	TO11- ESF
CR01 - Inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	3,251	5,961	23,600	3,545	0
CR02 - Participants in education/training upon leaving	7,766	12,862	29,030	59,234	14
CR03 - Participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	58,995	18,396	17,804	79,423	99
CR04 - Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	95,640	72,042	55,356	12,739	1
CR05 - Disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	42,748	48,564	158,744	25,127	112
CR06- Participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	6,656	14,624	679	925	0
CR07 - Participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	1,101	658	454	452	2
CR08 - Participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	141	0	13	15	0
CR09 - Disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	1,994	7,907	542	352	0

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

Having a closer look on the common results per MS one sees that a number of MS report a relative high number of results, like BE, DE, ES, FR, IE, NL, SI.

**Table 3.9** Overview common result indicators, by MS (ESF + YEI)

MS	CR01	CR02	CR03	CR04	CR05	CR06	CR07	CR08	CR09
AT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BE	5,191	46,378	33,455	31,908	15,693	8	29	0	0
BG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CZ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DE	2,760	10,296	37,510	9,945	30,332	1,258	1,360	14	1,048
DK	0	0	0	11	8	0	0	0	0
EE	2	48	9	29	148	18	2	11	11
ES	1,546	2,379	3,538	50,518	8,546	1,250	152	26	830
FI	33	130	745	224	413	0	0	0	0
FR	25,327	14,035	22,188	73,634	183,297	14,470	638	11	8,093
GR	898	220	854	50	319	0	0	0	0
HR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
HU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IE	214	32,549	52,201	3,116	782	4,651	0	107	74
IT	75	94	7,583	1,814	1,058	486	486	0	152
LT	0	0	3,793	3,116	0	0	0	0	0
LU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LV	136	550	4,014	2,242	1,349	0	0	0	0
NL	50	86	0	1,502	5,212	0	0	0	0
PL	80	1,527	8,594	52,641	24,489	0	0	0	587
SE	45	489	117	1,857	1,202	743	0	0	0
SK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UK	0	0	116	49	0	0	0	0	0
PT	0	125	0	3,122	2,447	0	0	0	0
RO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>EU28</b>	<b>36,357</b>	<b>108,906</b>	<b>174,717</b>	<b>235,778</b>	<b>275,295</b>	<b>22,884</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>10,795</b>

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### 3.1.3 Total results of YEI

Out of all 187 OPs funded through the ESF, there are 34 OPs supported by the Youth Employment Initiative. The ESF regulation has defined common result indicators to monitor YEI achievement<sup>16</sup>, as presented in the table below. The previous sections already provided information on the achievement of YEI on the common output (501,419 participants) and result indicators, which is a significant proportion of all ESF outputs and results (ESF+YEI) due to the earlier inception and shorter implementation period of YEI.

Below, an overview is presented of the total of results achieved by YEI in each of the MS, measured by the ESF Common result indicators.

**Table 3.10** Overview common result indicators, by MS (YEI only)

MS	CR01	CR02	CR03	CR04	CR05	CR06	CR07	CR08	CR09
AT									
BE	3,528	3,582	3,694	11,024	401	8	29		
BG									
CY									
CZ									
DE									
DK									
EE									
ES									
FI									
FR	2,207	6,439	4,836	23,769	28,385	13,797	629		7,763
GR									
HR									
HU									
IE	57	831	3,857	488	15	76			
IT									
LT									
LV	136	466	1,519	1,282	859				
NL									
PL		979	4,383	30,596	15,362				144
SE	33	440	107	1,761	1,095	743			
SK									
UK									
PT		125		3,122	2,447				
RO									
SI									
<b>EU28</b>	<b>5,961</b>	<b>12,862</b>	<b>18,396</b>	<b>72,042</b>	<b>48,564</b>	<b>14,624</b>	<b>658</b>		<b>7,907</b>

\* not reported by region, because YEI indicators are not labelled to one type of region

The table below displays the total aggregation per MS and EU level for each common YEI result indicator (as defined in Annex II of the ESF regulation). Only for 10 MS were YEI results reported in the AIR (out of 20 receiving support from YEI). The table below also reports on the total number of female participants that have been supported, along with the target achievement per type of YEI indicator<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Annex II, ESF Regulation

<sup>17</sup> Only for 204 out of 384 YEI indicators a target achievement could be calculated (since a target is defined) of which 100 indicators report a target achievement of 0 percent. The remaining 104 indicators report on a target between 0.4% and 1,569%. Especially the 13 result indicators that report a target achievement above the 200% (all in FR) needs careful assessment whether the targets set are appropriate and whether the measurement unit for the target value is correct. The table includes the target achievement of YEI indicators, by dividing the total cumulative achievement value by the total cumulative target value of all indicators that have target.

**Table 3.11** Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of common result indicator over the programming period 2014-2015, per MS.

	BE	ES	FR	GR	IE	IT	LV	PL	PT	SE	Total 2014- 2015	Total women (2014- 15)	Target achievem ent (%)
YEI-CR01 –Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	6,529	6,379	36,057	18,834	1,244	37,536	4,375	40,931	13,215	565	<b>165,665</b>	86,986	17%
YEI-CR02 – Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	329	4,619	32,790	1,595	294	355	1,439	25,099	4,773	176	<b>71,469</b>	37,599	12%
YEI-CR03 –Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	579	3,446	29,750	0	434	8,346	1,427	33,621	3,247	2,050	<b>82,900</b>	40,762	14%
YEI-CR04 – Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	4,991	1,403	11,025	17,742	721	23,816	1,249	18,139	929	234	<b>80,249</b>	43,582	25%
YEI-CR05 –Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	173	1,016	9,124	1,490	191	222	756	11,355	174	74	<b>24,575</b>	13,384	12%
YEI-CR06 - Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	426	758	7,987	0	240	4,583	751	14,234	415	523	<b>29,917</b>	14,923	17%
YEI-CR07 – Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention	101	2,605	8,082		29	23,883	1,443	686	0	29	<b>36,858</b>	17,003	23%

	BE	ES	FR	GR	IE	IT	LV	PL	PT	SE	<b>Total 2014- 2015</b>	Total women (2014- 15)	Target achievem ent (%)
YEI-CR08 – Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	27	1,886	6,717		6	80	696	910	0	14	<b>10,336</b>	4,214	13%
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	8,919	1,407	6,037		9	7,441	933	903	0	185	<b>25,834</b>	9,851	25%
YEI-CR10 – Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	10	0	3,688	491	65	0	183	35	459	368	<b>5,299</b>	2,604	10%
YEI-CR11 – Participants in employment six months after leaving	7	0	13,643	5,240	73	0	1,638	153	10,633	0	<b>31,387</b>	16,192	24%
YEI-CR12 – Participants in self-employment six months after leaving	1	0	191	467	4	0	40	85	88	0	<b>876</b>	485	11%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

The table above shows that:

- **The young unemployed:** A total of 165,665 unemployed persons completed a YEI intervention (with an average target achievement across MS of 17%), while around 71,469 unemployed persons received an offer after completing the intervention (with a target achievement of 12%), and another 82,900 unemployed were in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (14% of the target achievement).
- **The long-term young unemployed:** A total of 80,249 long-term unemployed completed the YEI intervention (25% of target achievement), while 24,575 received an offer (12% of target achievement), and 29,917 persons were activated into education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (17% of target achievement).
- **The inactive young:** A total of 36,858 inactive persons completed the YEI intervention (23% of target achievement), while 10,336 received an offer (13% of the target achievement), and 25,834 are in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (25% of target achievement).

Finally, 5,299 participants are in education & training after six months (target achievement of 10%), 31,387 are in employment after six months (24% target achievement), and 876 are in self-employment after six months (11% target achievement). The overall target achievement for all YEI indicators together is 16%. Looking at the distribution of male and female participation, one sees that, overall, 51% of participants (including the (long-term) unemployed and inactive) are female.

A screening of the relevant sections in the AIR on YEI implementation (Section 5) shows that, in total, 4 AIR identify the implementation of YEI as completely in line with original planning (in FR, HU, and PT); 20 AIR report that the implementation is mostly in line with planning (only addressing a few minor issues) in BE, CY, ES, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LV, SE, UK. In total, only 3 AIR report a slower take up than anticipated (BE, CZ, UK). For 6 AIR, no information could be deduced on YEI implementation from the text in the AIR (BG, FR, PL, RO, SI, SK), while 1 AIR with YEI was not submitted (FR). The AIR generally report a wide variety of challenges for implementing YEI, namely:

- **Programme requirements / features:** The biggest challenges for the implementation of YEI (though not necessarily YEI-specific), as reported in 20 AIR, were complications related to implementing the administrative requirements of the regulation and the guidance material and designation procedures for the MA (partly due to late specific programming requirements / features, such as: the age eligibility criteria restricting support to young people between 25 and 30 years of age (BE); privacy regulation with regards to data collection on individuals (BE); the limited timeframe in which YEI should be implemented (BE, SE); the perceived absence of a norm for eligible expenditure declarations or tight eligibility rules (ES, FR and the UK); the absence of auditing tools to prevent fraud (ES); the absence of procedures for the definition, collection, registry and verification of indicators (ES); non-functioning monitoring system (FR); non-functioning systems of identifying and tracking young NEETS (HR); long time periods between approval of projects by MA and the final acceptance of participants by beneficiary organisation (PT); and finally the challenges created by the regulatory nature that did not correspond well with projects aiming to help the hard to reach individuals and capture the results (UK).
- **Targeting hard-to-reach individuals:** In total, 11 AIR report that the implementation of YEI was hampered by the challenge to target the hard-to-reach individuals, especially taking into account the needs and complex situations of these individuals, within the boundaries of stringent rules and procedures (eligibility criteria).
- **National contextual factors:** In total, 7 AIR report that the implementation of YEI was hampered by national contextual factors (political, legal, economic). Another example is mentioned in one of the AIR in FR, referring to the fact that the 'Law of Public Officials' has blocked the prolonging of labour contracts for employees' working within projects, leading to delays in the implementation. In BE, new types of apprenticeships were developed to better reflect the intervention. However, Federal judges had blocked implementation, due to a competence issue of the involved Brussels

Region. Another example includes the challenges to effective cooperation between stakeholders across regions having other legislative frameworks and policy practices in place (as is reported for BE and FR). For FR, challenges were reported relating to the decision to share the management of YEI between the State and the regional councils, which needs to be further clarified. National and regional measures sometimes compete in the process of addressing beneficiaries, thus complicating the achievement of the target indicators. One of the AIR in BE also reported that it was difficult to collaborate with relevant stakeholders on the implementation of YEI, due to the use of different eligibility criteria. In the AIR for GR, it was reported that the need to fulfil ex-ante conditionality 8.1 resulted in delays. Other AIR, like the one for IE, indicated that the economic recovery negatively impacted the target achievement, as only 2,000 people participated in the national internship scheme in 2015, which is below the targeted level. Also, for the UK, challenges were encountered in committing all of the targeted funds. As youth unemployment fell significantly, those who remained unemployed required more intensive and specialised support. For LV it was reported that the youth employment situation had improved over the years, making the interest for YEI financed projects lower than had initially been foreseen.

- **Interests/awareness of beneficiaries:** 7 AIR indicate that there was limited interest and / or awareness amongst beneficiaries for implementing projects. It was indicated by some AIR that beneficiaries were not interested in YEI support given the difficulties associated with sensitising young people and motivating them to participate in the project (such as in the case of BE). In other cases, AIR indicate that the number of NEETS and unemployed youth is in decline, so there is less interest in these types of projects.
- **Delays at governance level:** 6 AIR specifically refer to the delays in designating authorities and the selection of Intermediate bodies, as well as the approval of selection criteria of operations.
- **Incorrect target setting:** Specific reference is made in 6 AIR to incorrect target setting. In some cases, beneficiaries were not very good in setting targets on the number of participants that will take part in YEI. In other cases, programmes were too ambitious and did not realise that some young people (such as those over 25 years old) are not eligible for YEI funding. In other cases, the economic recovery decreased the interest in YEI support. Some AIR report that targets were adjusted like in Italy to progressively bring the programme back on track and a number of measures envisaged to that end.

Other challenges that were reported by a few AIR included: limited availability of national co-funding, complications related to IT system, late approval of OP, and ongoing activities of the previous programming period. In the cases where the AIR report that YEI implementation is in line with original plans, it was indicated that priority was given to YEI implementation (100% of budget should be committed by the end of 2015). For GR, it was reported that the "voucher" practice accelerated the implementation process through the reduction of administrative burdens and other paperwork.

In case challenges were identified, AIR also reported on steps that were taken to counter the issues mentioned above for the implementation of YEI. In most cases, steps were taken to strengthen / fine-tune structures, procedures and tools, such as aligning the definitions of target groups between different administrative areas, the development of new follow-up systems of NEETS, integrating systems, and making amendments in the OP to correct and revise indicators. Other steps involved: further organisational measures (at MS/IB) by developing action plans to solve communication problems with IBs; setting up coordination mechanisms between the national and regional OP, or between regional administrative bodies; implementing evaluations to improve YEI implementation; organising round tables and bilateral sessions between the Ministry and regional administration to discuss and solve emerging issues. Other measures were taken, which involved organising activities to improve stakeholders' competences in programme implementation. In a few cases, AIR report that target groups were adjusted (e.g. expanding the definition of young people to 29 years old), that budget adjustments were made to target other groups above 25 years old (eligibility

criteria), and that improved monitoring was implemented. In other AIR, additional promotional measures were taken to encourage projects to apply, and allocate additional resources.

### 3.1.4 Total outputs and results of a selection of programme specific indicators

The programme specific indicators are not designed for aggregation purposes, since the common output and result indicators are the best source for doing this (these indicators being common across MS). Nevertheless, the programme specific indicators are helpful for further "colouring" the achievements of ESF, especially for types of outputs and results that are not sufficiently captured by the common indicators (for certain specific target groups, entities or products supported and specific types of results). For the purposes of this analysis all programme specific output and result indicators were labelled according to pre-defined categories, allowing for aggregations of individual programme specific indicators across the EU (see Annex 1).

In the section below, an overview is provided of the programme specific output and result indicators that record achievements that are not captured by the common output and result indicators. The analysis of programme specific indicators shows that only a small share of programme specific indicators report an achievement over 2014-2015. Out of the 6,043 programme specific output indicators only 892 indicators (15%) report an achievement value over 2014-2015 above zero (while the majority of indicators report no achievement so far). Out of the 3,843 programme specific result indicators, only 189 indicators (5%) report a value above zero, while 2,732 indicators report an achievement of zero, and 922 indicators do not have an achievement value. Often, these low scores are explained by internal inconsistencies, where MA have conceived their programme specific indicators not at IP, but at a different level (PA, specific objective, or operational). So they would collect a certain indicator only when that specific SO or operation is launched, although participants with the characteristics that are measured by the indicator have already entered or left another operation of the IP.

#### Aggregating programme specific output indicators

**Table 3.12** Total aggregated outputs reported by AIR per type of programme specific output indicator over the programming period 2014-2015

Individuals	N	Products	N	Entities	N
Public administration staff	97,119	Number of contracts	9,341	Number of SMEs	1,721
Students VET	80,892	Number of curricula / education programmes / qualifications / educational methods, tools, material developed	7,820	Number of involved Enterprises/Economic operators	703
Students Higher education	62,869	Number of (good) practices exchanged	217	Number of childcare facilities	362
Other disadvantaged / vulnerable groups	57,471	Number of innovative products / tools supported	92	Number of start-ups	229
Other disadvantaged	36,492	Number of instruments / tools developed	66	Number of involved Institutions/Organisations	174
Participants threatened by poverty and social inclusion	30,641	Number of awareness / communication campaigns	3	Number of networks / partnerships	81
Staff in education and training (teachers / managers)	789	Number of registers / databases developed	1	Number of local / regional government	53
Children	583	Number of studies / evaluation supported	1	Number of primary / secondary schools	31
Professionals (healthcare and other)	326			Other entities	4

Individuals	N	Products	N	Entities	N
Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	165				

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### Aggregating programme specific result indicators

**Table 3.13** Total aggregated results reported by AIR per type of programme specific result indicator over 2014-2015

Type of programme specific result indicators	Total aggregated results over 2014-2015
<b>Participants</b>	
Participants already in employment, improved position	3,505
Participant out of inactivity (in training / completed education / employment upon leaving)	15,780
Participants gaining skills upon leaving	5,659
Participants in traineeship / apprenticeship upon leaving, at a later point (6 months after intervention?)	67
Participant in other positive result (non-specific result, such as completing programme), at a later point (6 months after intervention?)	578
Participants gained a qualification at a later point (6 months after intervention?)	257
<b>Employment positions</b>	
Nr of jobs created / advertised	61,938
Nr of jobs retained	235
<b>Other</b>	
Accessibility / nr of other social / health services provided	5,009
Nr of childcare positions provided	93
New / better education programmes offered	5
Result indicator related to improved capacity/competence of Enterprises/Economic operators	7,357
Result indicator related to improved capacity/competence of Institutions/Organisations	4,226
Other, number of projects / actions / courses implemented	14,361

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

## 3.2 The performance of ESF (target achievement)

### 3.2.1 Performance of output indicators

Some common output indicators were selected for measuring progress in programme implementation by defining a target value. Out of the 1,725 common output indicators that have a target value, only 412 report an achievement over 2014-2015. The other output indicators report a "0" achievement; it is unclear as to whether this is no achievement or non-reported achievement. Table 3.14 below provides an overview of the average target achievement for the common output indicators where the target achievement could be calculated (only for 20 MS). Across all common output indicators with a target value, an average 2023 target achievement of 5% is reported. Nevertheless, if we leave out the common output indicators that report a "0" achievement, this percentage is much higher, at 23% (not reported in the table). Some MS show relatively high performance compared to the EU average, such as BE, followed by LT, FR, ES, and DE.

**Table 3.14** Progress towards the 2023 target of common output indicators that have a target value (average % of target achievement) over the programming period 2014-2015.

% achievement of target	BE	CZ	DE	ES	FI	FR	GR	IT	LT	LV	PL	SE	SK	UK
CO01-Unemployed, incl. LTU	82		11	17		11	49	32	21	9	13	0	2	37
CO02-Long-term unemployed	139		9		9	8		4	19		17		1	
CO03-Inactive	53			141		8		25						14
CO04-Inactive, not in education or training			14		16	55		0			3			
CO05-Employed, including self-employed	21		5	16			39	7				0	0	
CO06-Below 25 years of age		9	14			7		13				3		
CO07-54+ years of age		5	4			7		3						
CO08-54+ years of age who are unemployed, including long term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training						35		13	8					
CO09-With ISCED 1 / 2				14	5	11		10					2	5
CO10-With ISCED 3 / 4						7		13						
CO11-With ISCED 5-8			5	18		6		6						
CO12-Participants who live in jobless hholds														
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 (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)			12	1		575	2	18						
CO16-Participants with disabilities	34			21		13	0	10			18			21
CO17-Other disadvantaged	62					11	4	5						
CO20-Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations			14		25			29						
CO21-Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment;								1						
CO22-Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level						40		28						
CO23-Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)			13		6			9						

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

Table 3.15 provides a closer look at the target achievement of the programme specific output indicators. There are 4,729 programme specific output indicators with a target (excluding TA), for which progress towards their targets is presented below. Significant differences are reported among MS, such as BE, DK, GR, IE, NL, SE all showing progress in achieving their target. For AT, CY, HR, HU, MT, RO no achievements are reported. The average achievement rate across programme specific output indicator at EU level is 7 %. The difference between the target achievement at MS and per indicator is considerable; the average per indicator attaches equal weight to result indicators with fewer absolute results as to those with (almost) all results.

**Table 3.15** Progress towards target achievement of programme specific output indicators

MS	Sum of Target 2023	Sum of Cumulative achievement value	Target achievement per MS total	Average of Target achievement per indicator
AT	246,765	0	0%	0%
BE	78,484,691	20,974,322	27%	30%
BG	1,660,373	14,737	1%	1%
CY	29,380	0	0%	0%
CZ	937,777	31,513	3%	1%
DE	3,060,897	261,451	9%	13%
DK	117,750	19,479	17%	9%
EE	1,014,671	75,680	7%	13%
ES	2,297,828	78,356	3%	5%
FI	65,533	4,312	7%	4%
FR	9,651,413	341,659	4%	20%
GR	1,393,479	245,571	18%	11%
HR	318,297	0	0%	0%
HU	4,256,037	0	0%	0%
IE	1,573,620	401,332	26%	25%
IT	12,059,514	413,089	3%	4%
LT	490,005	8,012	2%	5%
LV	997,714	51,102	5%	8%
MT	43,056	0	0%	0%
NL	356,526	228,274	64%	34%
PL	6,226,289	46,034	1%	2%
PT	7,747,534	418,956	5%	16%
RO	3,881,423	0	0%	0%
SE	35,514	7,551	21%	3%
SI	381,461	196	0%	4%
SK	391,815	887	0%	0%
UK	4,451,739	3,047	0%	0%
Total	142,171,101	23,625,560	17%	7%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### 3.2.2 Performance of result indicators and success rates

#### Target achievement of common result indicators

A number of common result indicators were selected for measuring progress in the programme implementation by defining a target value (not part of the performance framework, since these were selected at IP level). Out of 763 common result indicators with a target value, only 127 report an achievement over 2014-2015. The other result indicators report a "0" achievement, which makes it unclear as to whether this is no achievement or non-reported achievement. Table 3.16 below provides an overview of the average target achievement for the common result indicators where the target achievement could be calculated (only for 20 MS). Over all

Common results indicators with a target value, an average target achievement of 9% of the 2023 target is reported. If we leave out the common result indicators that report a "0" achievement, this percentage is much higher, at 52% (not reported in the table). Some MS show relatively high performance compared to the EU average, such as BE, ES, PL. The highest achievements are reported for participants in employment upon leaving, followed by participants in education/training upon leaving, and disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education / training, gaining a qualification, or in employment upon leaving.

**Table 3.16** Progress towards target achievement of common result indicators that have a target value (average % of target achievement) over the programming period 2014-2015

MS	CR01	CR02	CR03	CR04	CR05	CR06	CR07	CR08	CR09
AT			0						
BE	11	44	39	23	70				
BG							0		
CY				0					
CZ	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DE	9	6	1	2					
ES		0	8	21	0	0	0		
FI	0	0	0		0	0	0		
FR	3	6	4	2		0		0	
GR			0	0	0	0	0		0
HR			0	0		0	0		
HU			0						
IT	0	0	0	0		0	1	0	0
LT			9	10					
LV			10	0	0				
PL			1	78		0	0		
SE						0	0		
SK				0					
UK		0	8	0	0	0			
EU average	4	7	4	28	5	0	0	0	0

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

Table 3.17 below provides an overview of the average success rate of common result indicators, for which we could compare the cumulative achievement of the common result indicator with the reference output indicator. For these indicators we also calculated the success rate the programmes' aims that are to be achieved (by comparing the target value of the common result indicator, with the target value of the reference common output indicator). Only for 151 common result indicators could a success rate be calculated, and this was only possible in the case of DE, ES, FR, IT, LT, PL, SE. FR, DE, LT report the highest success rates<sup>18</sup>. As the table shows, none of the average success rates are higher than foreseen by the targets. Only 5 common result indicators, out of 151, report a higher success rate than foreseen after taking the targets into account.

**Table 3.17** Average success rate of common result indicators by linking result achievement over 2014-2015 to the reference output values

MS	Average of success rate over 2014-2015 (CRI/COI)	Average of Target Success Rate (Target value CRI / Target value COI)	Count of common result indicators
DE	36%	67%	28
ES	4%	54%	42
FR	234%	57%	6
IT	3%	62%	27
LT	24%	39%	4

<sup>18</sup> The high success rate for France is explained by one indicator for the programme 2014FR16M2OP001 (PA 4; IP 10.iii; participants gaining a qualification upon leaving) reporting a success rate of 1392%. Leaving this indicator out the success rate is 28%.

MS	Average of success rate over 2014-2015 (CRI/COI)	Average of Target Success Rate (Target value CRI / Target value COI)	Count of common result indicators
PL	12%	37%	41
SE	0%	27%	3
Total	21%	52%	151

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### Target achievement of programme specific result indicators

Table 3.18 provides greater detail on the target achievement of the programme specific result indicators per MS. There are 2,130 programme specific result indicators (55%) with a target value defined<sup>19</sup>. By dividing the cumulative achievement over 2014-2015 by the cumulative target for 2023 at EU level, one sees that 1% of the total EU target is achieved. Significant differences are reported between MS, such as in the case of SE, which is overachieving its target, followed by BE, DE, DK, IE, LV. For AT, BG, CY, CZ, HR, LT, MT, NL, PT, RO, SI, SK, no achievements are reported. The average achievement rate across programme specific result indicators at EU level is 7 %. The difference between the target achievement at MS (dividing the total sum of all achievements by the sum of all target values) and per indicator (average of all target achievements) is considerable; the average per indicator attaches equal weight to result indicators, while the target achievement per MS is biased by a few indicators with large values.

**Table 3.18** Progress towards the target achievement of programme specific result indicators that have a target value (average % of target achievement) over the programming period 2014-2015. Only indicators were included that have an IP label.

MS	Sum of Target 2023	Sum of Cumulative achievement value	Target achievement per MS total	Average of Target achievement per indicator
AT	0	0	0%	0%
BE	701,666	63,426	9%	37%
BG	874,496	0	0%	0%
CY	9,555	0	0%	0%
CZ	262,670	0	0%	0%
DE	1,350,860	109,757	8%	9%
DK	44,000	4,859	11%	20%
EE	387,481	1,588	0%	82%
ES	454,387	4,823	1%	1%
FI	9,968	375	4%	1%
FR	5,540,319	16,397	0%	5%
GR	11,250,083	56,978	1%	2%
HR	60,908	0	0%	0%
HU	1,924,769	17,610	1%	24%
IE	428,914	32,942	8%	2%
IT	308,503	9,625	3%	23%
LT	435	0	0%	0%
LV	96,889	6,007	6%	2%
MT	48,143	0	0%	0%
NL	52,989	0	0%	0%
PL	2,479,669	7,358	0%	0%
PT	13,275	0	0%	0%
RO	1,574,258	0	0%	0%
SE	600	578	96%	96%

<sup>19</sup> The figures in the table only relate to indicators that have an IP label (total 1,998).

MS	Sum of Target 2023	Sum of Cumulative achievement value	Target achievement per MS total	Average of Target achievement per indicator
SI	4,663	0	0%	0%
SK	649,591	0	0%	0%
UK	1,385,435	116	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,914,001</b>	<b>332,440</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

In table 3.19 an overview is provided of the average success rate of programme specific result indicators, for which we could compare the cumulative achievement of the programme specific result indicator with the reference output indicator. For these indicators, we also calculated the success rate the programmes' aims that are to be achieved (by comparing the target value of the programme specific result indicator, with the target value of the reference common output indicator). Only for 128 programme specific result indicators could a success rate be calculated, and this could only be done for BE, BG, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, NL, PL, UK. BE, DE, EE, ES, GR, PL report the highest success rates<sup>20</sup>.

**Table 3.19** Average success rate of programme specific result indicators by linking result achievement over 2014-2015 to the reference output values

Row Labels	Average of Current success rate	Average of Success Rate Target (Target value SRI / Target value SOI)	Count
BE	192%	127%	10
BG	0%	70%	2
DE	24%	46%	57
DK	5%	3%	2
EE	249%	16%	11
ES	21%	17%	9
FI	3%	27%	2
FR	1%	52%	4
GR	40%	87%	22
NL	0%	50%	4
PL	56%	34%	4
UK	0%	3000% <sup>21</sup>	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>128</b>

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

### 3.2.3 Reasons for over- or under performance

On top of the quantitative information on financial performance and programmes' outputs and results, AIR are supposed to provide a descriptive analysis of programme implementation and of issues affecting its performance.

In order to collect and systematize this information, narrative sections of the AIR (section 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) were carefully screened and the extracted information was categorised according to pre-defined categories.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> The high success rate for BE is explained by four indicators for the programme 2014BE05M9OP002 reporting all a success rate of going far beyond the 100%. Also for Estonia two indicators are reported for the programme 2014EE16M3OP001 that report a success rate far above the 100%. Leaving these indicators out, the success rate would be 31% and 22% respectively.

<sup>21</sup> The high success rate for targets is explained by one programme specific result indicator in the UK for PA 1 / IP8.ii of 2014UK05SFOP004 (indicator called: Participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving aged 16-24)). Reason: in the OP, the target value was set as an absolute value (8750) whereas the measurement unit was encoded as %...

Only a relatively small number of AIR (12) indicate that implementation is fully aligned with the original planning, while the majority (78) indicate that the implementation of the programme is mostly in line with planning (with some minor issues). Still, 68 AIR report a slower take up rate than expected, while 8 AIR indicate that implementation has not yet started. For 11 AIR, this information could not be extracted<sup>23</sup>. This is in sharp contrast with the YEI implementation for which AIR provide a more positive picture, with only a small number of AIR indicating a slower take up than expected.

Table 3.20 below provides an overview of the main challenges that programmes identified in their implementation (often leading to delays) and used as a reason for under-performance on target achievement.

---

<sup>22</sup> For the purposes of the qualitative analysis the reference cut-off date for the collection of relevant information from SFC2014 is June 21st 2016.

<sup>23</sup> 2014BE05SFOP002, 2014DE16M2OP001, 2014FR16M2OP011, 2014GR16M3TA001, 2014IT05SFOP008, 2014IT05SFOP015, 2014IT05SFOP020, 2014PL16M2OP005, 2014RO05M9OP001, 2014RO05SFOP001, 2014SK05M0OP001

**Table 3.20** Explanation provided for under performance over the programming period 2014-2015.

Reasons for under performance (categories)	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GR	HR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	UK	Total
Complications related to programming requirements/features (e.g. obligations of procedural nature/characteristics of the programme itself, i.e. timing/others)	1	1		1	4	13	1	1	20		18	16	2	2		5	1		1	1	13	5	2		1	2	2	113
National contextual factors (political, economic, legal etc.)		1	1	1	2	3		2	2	1	10	7		6	3	19				1	9	1				2	4	75
Delays at a governance level due to a focus on preparation / setting up organization / programme management, not yet on implementation			1	1	1	3	1	1	4		8	8	1	2		18		1			4	6	1	1	2	2	1	67
Complications related to IT systems	1				4	4			5	1	15	4	1	1		2					7	10	2	2	1	1		61
ESF2007-2013 still active		1	1	1		3	1		17		11	1		1		9			1			1					1	49
Late approval of OP				1					20		3	1				15					1	5					1	47
Limited interest/awareness/command of EU funds among actors/operators involved in the implementation			1		1	1		2	2	1	1	1	1	4		1	1									1	1	19
Limited interest/awareness among beneficiaries		1	1		2	3	1	1	1			3		1							2			1				17
Incorrect target setting			4			3		2	2			2										1						14
Not sufficient availability of matching funds					1	4			1												2		1				1	10
National contextual factors (political, economic, legal etc.)											2	1		2							4							9
Other							1		1		4					1					1							8
Priority given to YEI initiatives											2					4											1	7
Priority given to implementation of activities of other funds (relevant for multi-fund OPs)											1	1				1		1				2						6
Limits in addressing hard to reach individuals		1				2		1	1																		1	6
Delayed designation of the MA	2																											2
Incorrect target setting												2																2
Insufficient staffing																						2						2
Incorrect planning of actions						1																						1
Monitoring Authority ability to cope with implementation progress												1																1
Understanding of new rules / requirements																						1						1
Administrative / Operational Capability of MA				1																								1
Slow recruitment procedures for staff																						1						1
Incorrect identification of the target group						1																						1
Issues at procurement level								1																				1

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

It is important to highlight that the quality of reporting on AIR differ. Some of the AIR report on their implementation challenges in a detailed manner, others barely mention the challenges at all, or to a limited extent. The level of detail provided also differs to a great extent (sometimes reporting is too general and sometime too detailed), which doesn't provide clear information as to whether programmes are proceeding according to plan or not, and as to the actual consequences of the challenges identified. Some AIR keep sections blank or merely make some general comments on programme implementation or repeat general information from the OP or ESF regulation, while others provide detailed reflections on challenges faced and solutions found. Generally, the AIR that report larger progress in implementation seem to offer more detailed information on activities, as well as obstacles encountered and the reasons behind them. AIR which indicated that little progress had been made in their programme implementation generally fail to present much qualitative information.

Despite of these differences in how MS report on programme implementation, some key findings on reasons for under-performance can be identified:

**Programming requirements/features** (e.g. obligations of a procedural nature/characteristics of the programme itself, i.e. timing/others). A substantial number of AIRs report that the first two years of the programming period have been used for implementing the administrative requirements of the regulation and the guidance material, leading to some delays in commencing programmes. AIR refer to different specific elements that caused a delay in the implementation: difficulties to collect the micro data, as requested by the regulation; fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities; the development of an audit trail form and procedures for state aid rules (documentation requirements for public assistance); public procurement rules; implementing the compulsory use of simplified costs systems; new assessment procedures for project applications; and new reporting requirements for beneficiaries (in terms of evidence to prove their eligibility, data collection, storage and validation tasks). Some AIR report that these requirements hamper participation; in Germany it was reported that the mandatory ESF letter of agreement for the collection of the participants' data raised barriers for the participants to take part in supporting actions. AIR from some particular countries, such as IT, ES, GR, FR, tend to focus their qualitative information on compliance with administrative and regulatory requirements (while the link between these issues and progress towards implementation remains underexposed, making it more difficult to assess the level of progress made).

**National context (legal, political and economic).** AIR also report specific challenges in the national context, such as adopting the legal and policy framework to comply with the ex-ante conditionalities and requirements of the regulation (for instance AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, GR, HR, HU, IT, LT, MT, NL, POL, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK). In some cases, it was mentioned that legislation was not in compliance with the administrative procedures of ESF (for instance BG, DE, HU, IT, NL). In other cases, AIR report on decisions to interrupt certain policies/measures or provision of corresponding national funding, which clearly affected the implementation of certain OPs (for instance in BG, FR, GR, IT, PL, PT, UK). Changes in the political context (e.g. elections) are also mentioned as factor that led to modifications in OP (in ES, FR, and UK), in order to adapt it to the new political orientation. Moreover, for ES and IT challenges were mentioned relating to government reform and changing administrative structures (such as in the implementation of active labour market policies). In FR, various AIR indicate that the reorganisation of functions between the national and regional administrative levels, and the decision to transfer the management of funds to regional councils, led to challenges in programme implementation. Another point raised was the complexity of implementing multi-objective and multi-territory OP. Moreover, challenges were mentioned in relation to data protection regulation, which forbids collecting certain types of individual information or reaching out to certain target groups. The changing economic context also caused a quicker or slower than planned take up of projects (such as the improved labour market situation experienced in some countries and target groups during the past few years, but also the opposite situation). Some AIR also report on the reduction of public resources due to fiscal consolidation programmes or the impact of new policy frameworks for the public support of thematic areas that must be harmonised with the programme structure. For the UK, specific reference was made in the AIR on the uncertainties with regards EU membership.

**Programme management:** Other reasons for delays are connected with the governance of the programmes and the need to prepare/set up organizations/programme management: delays in designating MA and Intermediary Bodies (only 41 MA have been designated); reorganisation of MA and IB; late budget approval; late approval of criteria for the selection of operations; late adoption of and lack of clarity on eligibility rules for applicants; a lack of clarity on types of actions to be supported; development of procedures for communicating to and informing applicants; and lengthy procurement procedures.

**IT systems:** complications were reported, which were related to the set-up of control / management / IT / accounting systems to the new ESF 2014-2020 requirements. Additional regulations, guidelines and the requirements of e-Cohesion have significantly increased demands on the scope and quality of data collection, and caused considerable additional expenditure in setting up the IT systems. A major issue in the implementation of the programme consisted in the requirement to comply with Art. 122(3) of Reg. (EU) 1303/2013 on the IT system for exchanging information on beneficiaries. AIR report on the difficulties encountered during the data collection process, with some complex indicators (sometimes requesting a new data collection process). MA face problems to report on all common indicators required (in some MS it is not possible to report on migrants and ethnic minorities, as national legislation forbids them to collect, such as the case for France and Germany). In Sweden for instance, difficulties were reported to capture the long term results after six months, due to declining response rates.

Other challenges mentioned relate to the finalisation of the previous programming period, late approval of OP, limited interest/awareness/command of EU funds among actors/operators involved in the implementation, limited interest/awareness among beneficiaries, and incorrect target setting.

AIR indicate several steps that were taken to counter the issues mentioned above. Most of the steps relate to (1) concrete activities to strengthen and fine-tune structures, procedures, tools and competences (e.g. trainings, IT tools enhancement, adjustment of requirements), followed by (2) organizational measures at MA / IB level, improved engagement of stakeholders at a design/strategic level, and (3) promotional measures taken (to encourage projects, improve information provision, facilitate additional stakeholder involvement). In total, 7 AIR indicate that no measures have been taken so far (in DE, ES, GR, IT). Only in 5 AIR, MA adjusted the budget, target groups and targets (in BG, and 4 OP in DE).

### **3.2.4 Performance towards milestones of the performance framework**

As we have already seen in Section 3, one of the main innovations of the 2014-2020 programming period is the introduction of the performance framework that requires setting targets at the level of the priority axes (both in terms of physical as well as financial indicators) in the form of mid-term goals to be achieved by the end of 2018, and final targets to be reached at the end of 2023. Performance against these goals is linked to the performance reserve as defined in Article 22 of the CPR. This allows for regular monitoring and debate on how financial resources are used. Of all 1,231 performance framework indicators, 980 are yet to report an achievement (79.6%). The table below provides an overview of the average milestone achievement for each MS and category of region (including all 1,231 indicators), showing that on average 14% of milestone targets for 2018 have already been achieved at EU level<sup>24</sup>. Note that the targets set in the performance framework most often refer to output indicators; only 11 result indicators were included in performance framework (in BG, FR, FI, HU). These are all analysed together in this section.

The more developed regions report the largest progress towards milestone achievement, followed by the transition regions, and the less developed regions. When taking a closer look at the individual performance of MS, one sees that Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Estonia and Greece show the largest progress, while no achievements are reported for BG, LU, RO, NL, MT, CY, AT, HU (all 0%). In case we only include the performance framework indicators in the

---

<sup>24</sup> The average at SMMS and EU level is calculated based on the average of all individual achievement rates of performance framework indicators.

analysis that reports an achievement, the average milestone achievement is much higher (62.7%), with BE, DK, ES, GR as outperformers.

**Table 3.21** Progress towards milestone achievement 2018 of programme performance indicators (average % of milestone target achievement) over the period 2014-2015.

MS	Less developed	More developed	Transition	YEI	Total
AT	NA	0%	0%	NA	0%
BE	NA	66%	111%	34%	77%
BG	0%	NA	NA	0%	0%
CY	NA	0%	NA	0%	0%
CZ	2%	4%	NA	0%	3%
DE	NA	15%	5%	NA	11%
DK	NA	47%	38%	NA	43%
EE	29%	NA	NA	NA	29%
ES	8%	86%	19%	0%	57%
FI	NA	19%	NA	NA	19%
FR	0%	10%	18%	41%	11%
GR	8%	30%	37%	39%	28%
HR	0%	NA	NA	0%	0%
HU	0%	0%	NA	0%	0%
IE	NA	15%	NA	52%	22%
IT	1%	9%	2%	19%	5%
LT	12%	NA	NA	0%	11%
LU	NA	0%	NA	NA	0%
LV	3%	NA	NA	34%	5%
MT	NA	NA	0%	NA	0%
NL	NA	0%	NA	NA	0%
PL	2%	5%	NA	0%	2%
PT	5%	0%	0%	35%	4%
RO	0%	0%	NA	0%	0%
SE	NA	0%	NA	31%	8%
SI	0%	0%	NA	1%	0%
SK	1%	0%	NA	1%	0%
UK	0%	0%	12%	0%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>14%</b>

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2014-2015

## **4 Financial progress**

The main purpose of annual implementation reporting is to inform the EC on the progress made by the programme. This section presents the overall progress of financial absorption in relation to the allocated budgets in the OP for ESF and YEI together in section 4.1, and by theme in 4.2. Subsequently the chapter analyses progress of absorption in relation to the allocated budgets and the financial milestones set for 2018 for ESF and YEI separately in section 4.3 and 4.4 respectively.

## 4.1 Overall progress in implementation

The main indicator for assessing the rate of implementation of ESF programmes across the EU is the implementation rate, which is calculated as the share of eligible expenditure declared to the EC over the total allocated budget.

**Table 4.1** Progress financial implementation - Total (ESF + YEI)

MS	Allocated budget (x€1,000,000)	Contracted amount by beneficiaries (x€1,000,000)	% of budget contracted by beneficiaries	Expenditure declared to EC (x€1,000,000)	% implementation
AT	875.7	113.1	12.9%	0.0	0.0%
BE	2,323.1	1,411.8	60.8%	0.0	0.0%
BG	1,843.0	239.3	13.0%	6.5	0.4%
CY	163.3	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
CZ	4,232.2	162.8	3.8%	38.8	0.9%
DE	12,570.5	3,842.9	30.6%	417.0	3.3%
DK	399.2	65.3	16.4%	3.0	0.8%
EE	690.6	476.4	69.0%	4.3	0.6%
ES	11,774.6	1.3	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
FI	1,030.7	293.3	28.5%	16.5	1.6%
FR	10,822.9	1,779.3	16.4%	10.1	0.1%
GR	4,921.0	559.7	11.4%	179.0	3.6%
HR	1,849.7	1,725.9	93.3%	0.0	0.0%
HU	5,753.1	180.9	3.1%	0.0	0.0%
IE	1,153.0	1,151.5	99.9%	0.0	0.0%
IT	19,122.1	954.4	5.0%	58.6	0.3%
LT	1,358.0	249.6	18.4%	4.5	0.3%
LU	40.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
LV	780.3	264.1	33.8%	0.0	0.0%
MT	132.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
NL	1,024.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
PL	15,766.5	761.9	4.8%	70.2	0.4%
PT	9,275.4	1,206.5	13.0%	602.8	6.5%
RO	5,717.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
SE	1,592.9	351.9	22.1%	16.2	1.0%
SI	905.4	57.6	6.4%	0.0	0.0%
SK	2,677.3	397.9	14.9%	0.0	0.0%
UK	9,339.2	3,716.9	39.8%	11.1	0.1%
<b>EU28</b>	<b>128,134.5</b>	<b>19,964.4</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>1,438.8</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
Region	Allocated budget (x€1,000,000)	Contracted amount by beneficiaries (x€1,000,000)	% of budget contracted by beneficiaries	Expenditure declared to EC (x€1,000,000)	% implementation
Less developed	59,957.7	5,640.2	9.4%	560.9	0.9%
More developed	44,754.3	8,804.5	19.7%	494.1	1.1%
Transition	15,749.0	2,752.2	17.5%	77.1	0.5%
No region (YEI)	7,673.5	2,767.5	36.1%	306.7	4.0%

Totals refer to ESF + YEI (YEI specific and ESF matching support to YEI)

All values refer to the total amount (EU+national)

All values are based on AIR table 7 to ensure coherence with totals in other tables presented

Values include TA

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

The budgets allocated / implemented related to YEI are not labelled to any of the type regions

Overall the figure shows a low implementation rate, at 1.1% of the allocated budgets at EU level, with only marginal differences among categories of regions. Most MS do not yet report eligible expenditures (AT, BE, CY, ES, HR, HU, IE, LU, LV, MT, NL, RO, SI, SK). These low expenditures declared to the EC can be related to a variety of causes. The first is that some OPs were only adopted in the second half of 2015 and therefore are at the very beginning of their implementation. Another important explanatory factor for these low values refers to the

pending finalisation of the administrative process for the designation of the Managing Authorities in line with the Regulations, including the Certifying Authority, for a relatively high number of MS/OPs (AT, BE, CZ, DE, FI, FR, HU, IT, PL, PT, SE, SI, UK), without which no certification of expenditure can take place. For 39 OPs in these MS, no Certifying Authority had been established at the time of submitting the AIRs in 2015. This could be due to several reasons: MS report in their AIR for example the late publication of EC guidelines for designation procedures, other reasons mentioned refer to the still ongoing process of setting up systems of administrative monitoring. As such, the low expenditure declared to EC can largely be attributed to the still missing designation of MAs in the above OPs; there are only 10 OPs (in CY, ES, HU, MT, RO and SK) where no expenditure has been declared to the EC, while the designation of authorities has been completed; no explanation has been provided by the MS on the lack of reported progress.

In alternative to declared expenditures to the EC, the amounts contracted by beneficiaries could be considered as a relatively good proxy of financial implementation. These are already reported for most MS (except for CY, LU, MT, NL, RO), in IE already to the extent of the entire budget. It is unclear what causes these large differences, as MS do not report on their methodology for reporting amounts contracted by beneficiaries. More developed regions report the contracted amount by beneficiaries at 19.7% of the total allocated budgets, while less developed regions stand at 9.4%. Though still a relatively small difference, it is important that the EC monitors the development of project selection in the coming years to ensure that the difference does not increase.

## **4.2 Implementation progress across themes**

This section explores the implementation of ESF/YEI investments from a thematic perspective. MS allocate their OP budgets to the various intervention fields defined by EC Implementing Regulation 215/2014. As the expenditure declared to the EC by MS are so low (see above), a comparative analysis of this figure across themes is not worthwhile<sup>25</sup>. Instead, we present the amount contracted by beneficiaries (eligible costs) reported in the AIR 2015 for each thematic objective against the amounts reported in the OP.

---

<sup>25</sup> For future annual synthesis reports, we will present the expenditures declared to the EC instead of the amounts contracted by beneficiaries.

**Table 4.2** Overview allocated budget versus amounts contracted by beneficiaries – by thematic objective per MS and EU28 (in million Euros) – ESF only

MS	TO8 Allocated	% budget contracted	TO9 Allocated	% budget contracted	TO10 Allocated	% budget contracted	TO11 Allocated	% budget contracted
<b>EU</b>	<b>40,267.2</b>	11.6%	<b>31,159.0</b>	15.9%	<b>39,207.5</b>	15.5%	<b>4,674.7</b>	9.8%
AT	128.50	12.0%	274.40	11.3%	420.75	15.6%	-	
BE	762.40	19.4%	718.69	60.4%	641.51	59.3%	-	
BG	452.62	4.3%	471.43	26.9%	345.65	0.0%	295.76	3.1%
CY	68.15	0.0%	31.76	0.0%	30.59	0.0%	5.95	0.0%
CZ	1,581.28	9.5%	1,016.64	1.3%	1,322.27	0.0%	163.31	0.0%
DE	3,785.43	21.1%	4,192.13	42.5%	4,085.97	27.4%	-	
DK	150.25	31.2%	80.14	5.4%	150.27	6.9%	-	
EE	268.38	82.8%	157.36	72.9%	229.28	53.2%	35.54	48.6%
EL	3,687.69	0.0%	2,871.81	0.0%	2,863.00	0.0%	-	
ES	469.35	26.7%	199.91	28.2%	330.29	24.6%	-	
FI	1,122.59	9.9%	3,456.03	2.7%	3,085.59	20.6%	24.90	0.0%
FR	1,743.62	6.9%	1,014.15	8.5%	1,227.32	3.3%	366.31	15.4%
HR	471.27	75.3%	385.88	83.3%	529.41	107.7%	225.03	127.1%
HU	2,002.91	2.9%	1,293.87	0.0%	1,473.45	2.9%	874.59	0.0%
IE	325.57	99.8%	387.62	99.9%	215.40	99.8%	-	
IT	6,668.48	2.8%	3,738.43	0.9%	5,589.12	3.2%	966.16	8.6%
LT	286.73	30.0%	259.17	33.4%	535.66	1.5%	176.89	0.0%
LU	21.66	0.0%	8.02	0.0%	8.02	0.0%	-	
LV	131.94	70.0%	264.90	35.4%	273.83	3.3%	21.25	0.0%
MT	26.00	0.0%	40.00	0.0%	47.42	0.0%	11.00	0.0%
NL	252.00	0.0%	722.05	0.0%	-		-	
PL	5,554.95	4.1%	3,259.46	1.0%	4,762.72	2.3%	202.00	1.5%
PT	1,918.54	0.0%	1,986.45	3.4%	4,579.26	19.0%	294.35	0.0%
RO	1,718.01	0.0%	1,322.17	0.0%	1,483.71	0.0%	612.12	0.0%
SE	672.16	19.2%	309.07	17.4%	413.66	15.9%	-	
SI	348.16	6.1%	181.56	0.0%	261.25	0.0%	77.59	0.0%
SK	949.97	18.9%	532.20	22.2%	549.09	0.0%	321.96	0.0%
UK	2,698.59	38.4%	1,983.73	50.6%	3,753.02	41.2%	-	
Less	19,864.76	7.9%	3,338.95	8.7%	20,089.99	10.3%	3,836.55	9.7%
Trans	15,324.78	16.6%	3,162.04	21.7%	13,830.34	20.6%	680.36	10.6%
More	5,077.63	10.7%	4,658.04	19.8%	5,287.17	21.9%	157.80	8.5%

All values refer to the total amount (EU+national)

Allocation to Thematic Objective based on Intervention field selected in OP / AIR

Table excludes all YEI allocated budgets and amounts contracted by beneficiaries, including YEI interventions supported with ESF funds. See for a comparison of amounts contracted by beneficiaries / allocated budgets for YEI supported interventions section 4.2.

Source: Operational Programmes & AIR 2015

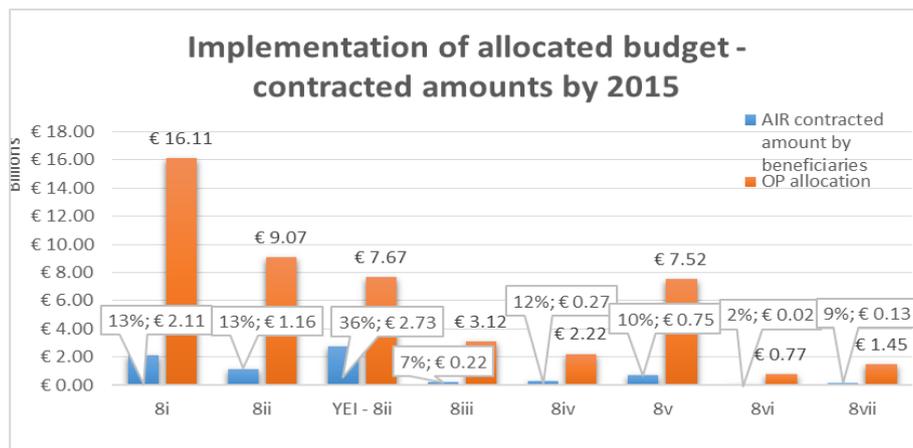
The differences among MS in the extent to which amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries is already discussed in the previous section, and can be seen in the table above as well. This table shows that slightly higher shares of budgets are contracted by beneficiaries for Thematic Objective 9 / 10 (15%), while the investments under thematic objective 8 and 11 have a slightly lower take-up rate, with 11.6% and 9.8% respectively. In a few cases MS have started reporting contracted amounts by beneficiaries for some thematic objectives, and not for others (BG, CZ, HU, LV, PT, SI, SK). This may indicate some delays in the start-up of specific operations, which is not related to the reporting mechanism.

When analysing the table above, it is necessary to take into account the fact that it is based on MS allocation of costs to intervention fields that are also referred to in Operational Programmes. An in-depth analysis of the categories of intervention selected for costs shows that only in a very small number of cases MS the categories in OP Pdo not match the AIR

(mainly in FI); intervention fields in AIR that were not related to intervention fields allocated in the OP for a total value of 11.7 million euros<sup>26</sup>. In a larger number of cases, for a total value of 334.7 million euro (1.9% of all amounts contracted by beneficiaries), MS did not report the intervention field at all and could therefore not be linked to the intervention fields or broader thematic objectives in the OP<sup>27</sup>. These were therefore excluded from the analysis.

Table 4.2 above provides an overview of the absorption by MS across the various thematic objectives. Below, it is further explored whether differences in implementation exist among the various investment priorities. These differences are explored in more detail and in relation to the results reported in chapter 8.

**Figure 4.1** Absorption of budgets to IPs under TO8



Source: AIR 2015<sup>28</sup>

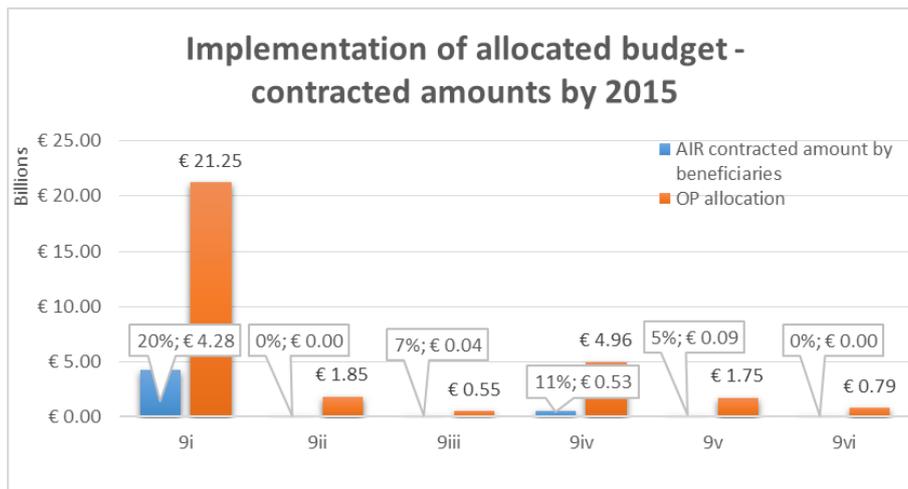
Figure 4.1 indeed shows some variations between the investment priorities under the Employment objective. First of all, the absorption of the budget allocated to YEI is at 36% of the total budget and considerably higher than that for the other investment priorities, or the youth unemployment interventions (8ii) that are not part of YEI. As already indicated in the dedicated section to YEI above, this should also be expected, and in fact is relatively low, given that two of the five years for implementation have already passed. Contracted amounts by beneficiaries have been absorbed in relatively similar amounts in IP 8i, 8ii, 8iv, 8v, 8vii, while implementation of 8iii (self-employment) and 8vi (active ageing) are slightly lower.

<sup>26</sup> This is the case for PA 2 in 2014BE05M9OP001 and PA 3,4,5 in 2014FI16M2OP001.

<sup>27</sup> This is the case for 28 OP in BE, FR, GR, and IT

<sup>28</sup> YEI presented as separate funding for IP8ii. IP 8ii-YEI includes (1) the dedicated EU budget line, (2) mirrored by the ESF share dedicated to YEI, and (3) national co-financing to this ESF share. Investments reported under IP8ii (non-YEI) are not related to YEI, and only consist of ESF funding.

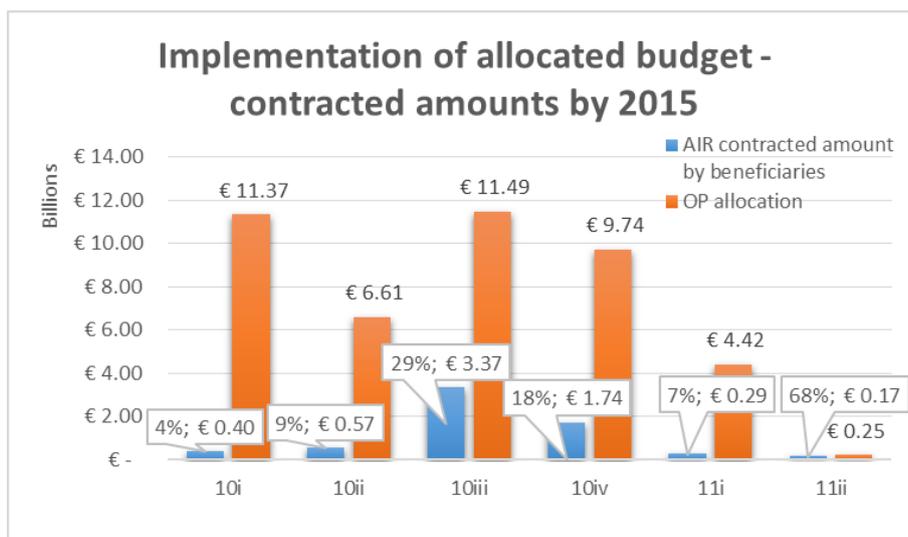
**Figure 4.2** Absorption of budgets to IPs under TO9



Source: AIR 2015

Under the investments for promoting social inclusion, the highest absorption is found for the largest priorities, which are 'active inclusion' (9i) and 'access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services' (9iv). Implementation of priorities with smaller budget allocations are considerably lower, while no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries for 'integration of marginalised communities' (9ii), and 'community-led local development strategies' (9vi).

**Figure 4.3** Absorption of budgets to IPs under TO10 / TO11



Source: AIR2015

The shares of allocated budget contracted by beneficiaries under TO10 are more evenly spread across IPs. Particularly investments that seek to 'enhance equal access to lifelong learning' (10iii) have already been contracted by beneficiaries, already reaching 29% of the allocated budget. However, at the same time, only 4% of the allocated budget to 'reducing and preventing early school leaving' (10i) has been contracted by beneficiaries. The shares of allocated budget contracted by beneficiaries for 'improving labour market relevance of education and training systems' (10iv) and 'improving the quality and efficiency of tertiary education' (10ii) are also below the average level of implementation of the various investment priorities. TO 11, also presented in figure 4.3, shows an overall slower take up rate, although the contracted amounts for IP11ii ('capacity building for stakeholders') have already reached 68% (however, these represent a relatively marginal share of the total budget under TO11).

### 4.3 Financial progress of ESF

This section summarises the financial progress of ESF against the allocated budgets (4.3.1). Secondly, it addresses the targets set for the performance framework in section 4.3.2 and subsequently assesses performance against the milestone values set for 2018 in 4.3.3.

#### 4.3.1 Implementation against allocated budget

This chapter starts with an overview of the implementation of ESF programmes against the allocated budgets, as summarised in the table below.

**Table 4.3** Progress financial implementation - Total (ESF only)

MS	Allocated budget (x€1,000,000)	Contracted amounts by beneficiaries (x€1,000,000)	% of budget contracted by beneficiaries	Expenditure declared to EC (x€1,000,000)	% implementation
AT	875.7	113.1	12.9%	0.0	0.0%
BE	2,195.8	1,167.8	53.2%	0.0	0.0%
BG	1,722.9	167.2	9.7%	6.5	0.4%
CY	138.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
CZ	4,202.6	162.8	3.9%	38.8	0.9%
DE	12,570.5	3,842.9	30.6%	417.0	3.3%
DK	399.2	65.3	16.4%	3.0	0.8%
EE	690.6	476.4	69.0%	4.3	0.6%
ES	9,721.1	1.3	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
FI	1,030.7	293.3	28.5%	16.5	1.6%
FR	10,099.5	1,095.7	10.8%	9.9	0.1%
GR	4,528.2	408.5	9.0%	92.5	2.0%
HR	1,705.7	1,626.9	95.4%	0.0	0.0%
HU	5,644.8	99.5	1.8%	0.0	0.0%
IE	948.6	947.1	99.8%	0.0	0.0%
IT	17,608.7	596.6	3.4%	50.1	0.3%
LT	1,288.8	180.4	14.0%	4.5	0.4%
LU	40.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
LV	717.1	200.7	28.0%	0.0	0.0%
MT	132.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
NL	1,024.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
PL	15,217.1	606.7	4.0%	30.2	0.2%
PT	8,925.5	951.6	10.7%	436.8	4.9%
RO	5,487.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
SE	1,460.4	258.0	17.7%	10.6	0.7%
SI	884.6	36.9	4.2%	0.0	0.0%
SK	2,461.3	297.9	12.1%	0.0	0.0%
UK	8,739.2	3,600.4	41.2%	11.1	0.1%
<b>EU28</b>	<b>120,461.0</b>	<b>17,196.9</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>1,132.0</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Regions	Allocated budget (x€1,000,000)	Contracted amounts by beneficiaries (x€1,000,000)	% of budget contracted by beneficiaries	Expenditure declared to EC (x€1,000,000)	% implementation
Less developed	59,957.7	5,640.2	9.4%	560.9	0.9%
More developed	44,754.3	8,804.5	19.7%	494.1	1.1%
Transition	15,749.0	2,752.2	17.5%	77.1	0.5%

Totals refer to ESF only (excludes YEI, and ESF contribution to YEI)

All values refer to the total amount (EU+national)

All values are based on AIR table 7 to ensure coherence with totals in other tables presented

Values include TA

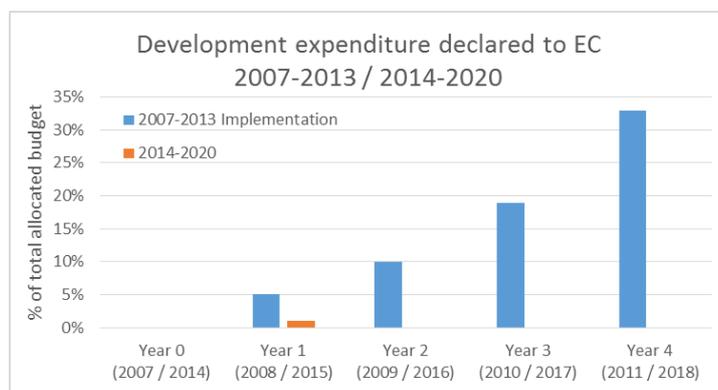
Project selection and implementation rates are calculated at MS level; the total costs / expenditure at MS are divided by the total allocated budget at MS level

The table confirms the low levels of expenditure declared to EC already observed in the previous paragraphs. After the first two years, the implementation rate at EU level for ESF

funded interventions is 0.9%. Transition regions show the lowest performance with 0.5% of budgets implemented, but the more developed regions hardly perform better with 1.1%.

Also in comparison to the previous programming period 2007-2013, the implementation rates are low. The figure below compares the development of the two programming periods over time, and shows that ESF 2014-2020 has a considerable amount of catching up to do in the coming years in comparison to ESF 2007-2013.

**Figure 4.4** Expenditure declared to ECs as implementation rate: 2007-2013 / 2014-2020



Source: AIR 2015 (SFC2014)– Ex Post synthesis evaluation ESF 2007-2013 (SFC2007)

### 4.3.2 Target setting in Operational Programmes

The targets for financial implementation in the performance framework are a crucial frame of reference. This section explores a number of issues related to target setting in the OPs, while the next section (4.3.3) discusses performance against these targets. The table below summarises the financial targets set for 2018 (milestone target) and 2023 (total target), as reported in the latest version of the OP. These are subsequently compared against the total allocated budget to ESF. Note that the total targets do not necessarily have to be equal to the total allocated budgets, as not all interventions need to be included in the performance framework. Note that all calculations on the absorption of allocated budgets exclude TA.

**Table 4.4** Overview ESF targets / allocated budget (EU+national) by MS

MS	Total 2018 Milestone target (x€1,000,000)	% of Total Target	Total Target Value 2023 (x€1,000,000)	% of total funding	Total Allocated budget (x€1,000,000)
AT	247.1	30%	823.6	100%	823.6
BE	742.9	35%	2,122.6	100%	2,122.6
BG	331.2	24%	1,371.3	88%	1,565.5
CY	69.6	51%	136.5	100%	136.5
CZ	682.3	18%	3,836.9	94%	4,083.5
DE	3,377.0	28%	11,987.9	99%	12,063.5
DK	88.8	23%	379.2	100%	380.7
EE	318.6	46%	690.6	100%	690.6
ES	2,189.9	23%	9,402.7	100%	9,422.5
FI	337.5	71%	473.3	47%	999.6
FR	991.1	23%	4,335.0	45%	9,689.1
GR	6,587.3	152%	4,328.7	99%	4,351.4
HR	402.9	25%	1,611.6	100%	1,611.6
HU	1,201.0	23%	5,241.4	93%	5,644.8
IE	159.8	18%	901.3	97%	928.6
IT	3,676.7	26%	14,014.8	83%	16,962.2
LT	324.6	26%	1,258.5	100%	1,258.5
LU	7.0	37%	18.8	50%	37.7
LV	206.1	30%	691.9	100%	691.9
MT	28.8	29%	99.5	80%	124.4
NL	130.4	27%	487.0	50%	974.1

PL	2,935.6	21%	13,779.1	100%	13,779.1
PT	3,323.6	38%	8,778.6	100%	8,778.6
RO	546.1	11%	5,038.0	98%	5,136.0
SE	388.5	28%	1,386.9	99%	1,394.9
SI	286.6	33%	868.6	100%	868.6
SK	522.0	22%	2,353.2	100%	2,353.2
UK	1,863.6	22%	8,435.3	100%	8,435.3
<b>EU28</b>	<b>31,966.6</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>104,852.8</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>115,308.6</b>

\* Note that TA PAs are not included in the Performance Framework.

Source: Operational Programmes as reported to SFC by 15-7-2016

Before assessing progress towards the targets, a number of issues with the current target setting must be considered. The table shows a number of additional inconsistencies in the current versions of OPs when comparing the financial milestones set against their total values. Most obviously, the Greek milestone targets are defined as higher than the total target values<sup>29</sup>. However, the milestone targets for 2018 are also unusually high in Finland (71%), in comparison to the total target for 2023, while the total target itself is remarkably low in comparison to the total budget (47%). These errors seem caused by the fact that the number entry for milestone targets (financial and outputs) does not seem require similar validation as the other data entry fields. In this field, MS have entered milestones with an inconsistent use of commas (,) and periods (.) to separate thousands and decimals, thus creating the potential to distort aggregation at a larger scale. These need additional verification in FI and GR.

A number of other issues are worth mentioning when it comes to the total target setting in comparison to the total funding. First of all, the table shows that AT, BE, CY, EE, ES, HR, LT, LV, PL, PT, SI, SK have included their entire non-TA budgets in the performance framework, while others have opted to include a slightly lower percentage of the total allocated budget in the performance framework. It is unclear as to why MS have left particular investments outside the performance framework; this therefore requires additional verification.

Secondly, the target of only 45% of the total budget for France is almost fully explained by the fact that its national OP on employment and inclusion (with a total budget of 5.47 billion euros) did not programme financial targets for the performance framework in the latest approved version of the OP<sup>30</sup>.

There are also a number of minor issues, where the targets set within priority axes of the OP exceed the total budget available<sup>31</sup>, or where extremely low targets (<1% of the total budget) have been set, possibly due to omitting 1.000 from the target<sup>32</sup>.

Though masked by the aggregation, various OPs have set financial targets that are exactly the same as the allocated EU amount only, rather than the total budget. While this can be a deliberate choice in programming, it seems that this is entered into SFC incorrectly, which is possibly due to a lack of guidance on what amounts should be included. This causes problems in comparison as most OP have set their targets measured in total budget (EU and national share together).

**Table 4.5** Overview of OP with incorrect target setting

MS	CCI	PF target as share of total budget (excl. TA)	Co-financing rate
BG	2014BG05M9OP001	85%	85%
BG	2014BG05SFOP001	85%	85%
FR	2014FR05SFOP002	50%	50%
FR	2014FR05SFOP004	75%	75%

<sup>29</sup> The higher value is caused fully by milestone data entered inconsistently (period used instead of comma to separate decimals) in PA 2 of 2014GR05M9OP001.

<sup>30</sup> 2014FR05SFOP001

<sup>31</sup> 2014DK05SFOP001 – PA2, 2014DE05SFOP013 – PA3, 2014ES05M9OP001 – PA7b, 2014ES05SFOP012 – PA1c, 2014FR16M0OP001 – PA2, 2014FR16M0OP002 – PA2 / 7, 2014FR16M2OP003 – PA 4, 2014FR16M0OP011 – PA11, 2014FI05M2OP001 – PA2, 2014LV16MAOP001 – PA7,

<sup>32</sup> 2014IT05SFOP001, 2014IT05SFOP008, 2014IT05SFOP010 – PA2, 2014FI16M2OP001 – PA 4&5.

MS	CCI	PF target as share of total budget (excl. TA)	Co-financing rate
HU	2014HU05M2OP001	85%	85%
HU	2014HU05M3OP001	85%	85%
IT	2014IT05SFOP006	50%	50%
IT	2014IT05SFOP012	50%	50%
IT	2014IT05SFOP013	50%	50%
IT	2014IT05SFOP016	50%	50%
IT	2014IT05SFOP021	50%	50%
LU	2014LU05SFOP001	50%	50%
MT	2014MT05SFOP001	80%	80%
NL	2014NL05SFOP001	50%	50%
RO	2014RO05SFOP001	82.5%	82.5%
SE	2014SE16M2OP001	50%	50%

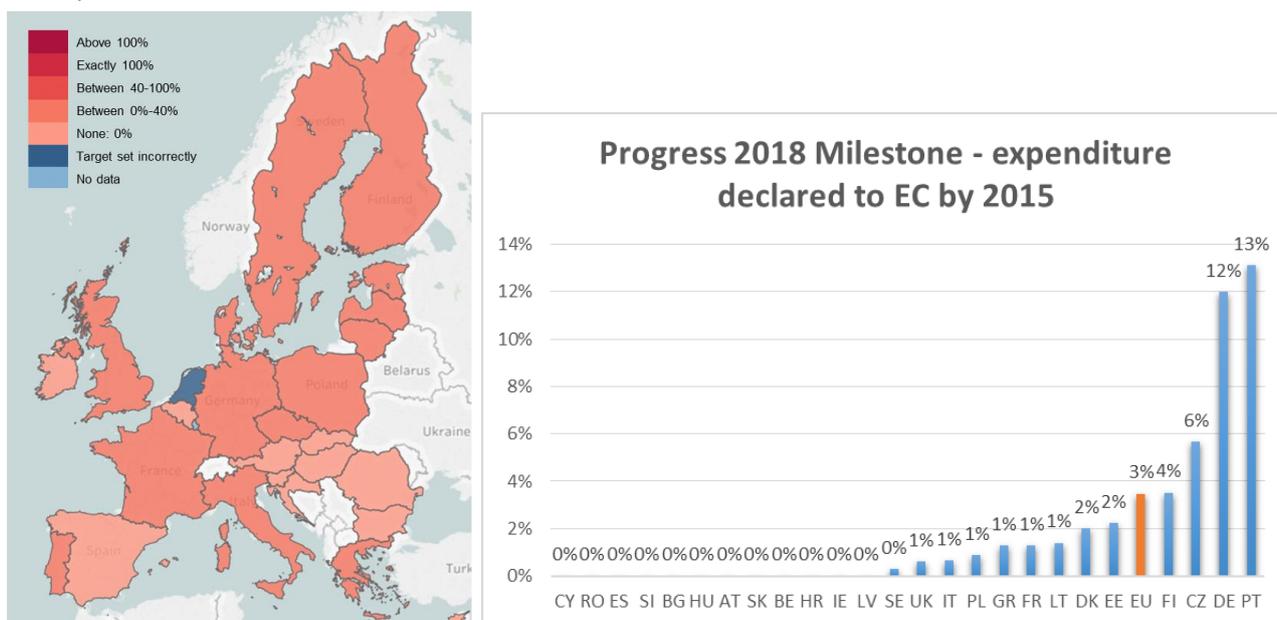
Source: AIR2015

### 4.3.3 Progress in financial absorption towards financial milestones

With the above mentioned caveats in mind, this section moves on and compares progress towards financial milestones and targets as reported in the 2015 AIRs<sup>33</sup>.

**Figure 4.5** Expenditure declared to EC vs financial milestones ESF

ESF % 2018 Milestone declared to EC as expenditure



Source: AIR 2015<sup>34</sup>

In the first instance, the **total expenditure declared to EC** is compared against the financial milestone values set for 2018. The figure shows that the highest shares of the milestone values are achieved by PT (13%) and DE (12%). These values are comparatively low; it means that in the last remaining 3 years until 2018, 87% and 88% of the respective expenditure needs to be declared to the EC. In 12 MS, no expenditure has been declared to the EC.

Formally, expenditure declared to EC (as presented above in figure 4.5) should be the only frame of reference for absorption. However, to gain a better understanding of the actual and

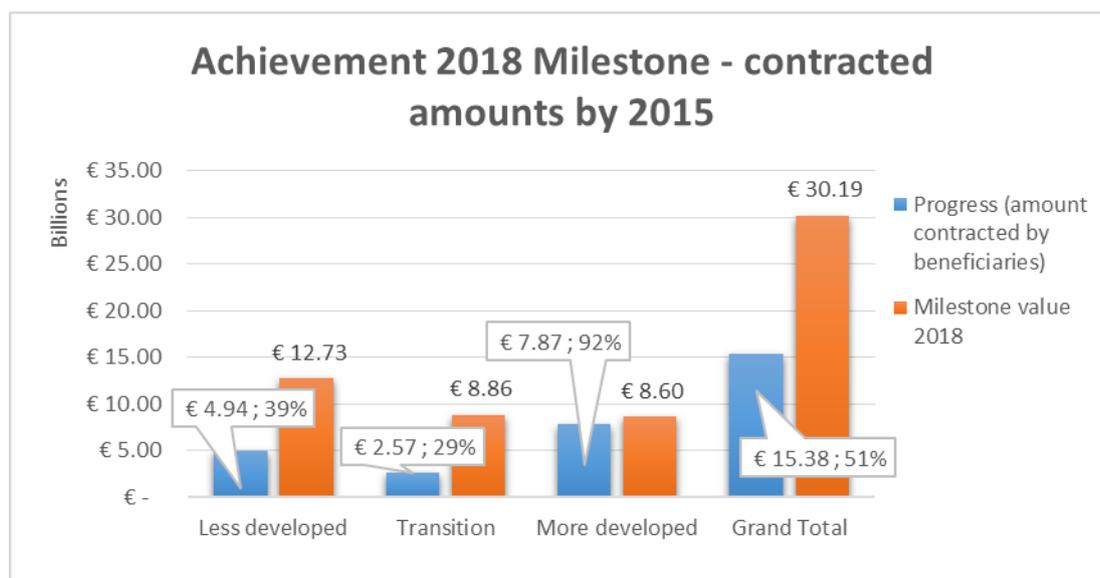
<sup>33</sup> Note that the PA in OP with incorrect target setting were excluded from the analysis.

<sup>34</sup> PA with incorrect target setting excluded. Excluded PA consist 3.9% of the expenditure declared to the EC and 6.7% of the total financial milestone.

ongoing progress of ESF programmes, in this early stage of implementation the contracted amounts by beneficiaries (project selection) are also considered. Only 8 OPs (one in ES and PT, 2 in HU, and 4 in IT) have not started implementation yet<sup>35</sup>. Based on the experience from the previous programming periods, it is likely that after the Certifying Authority has been designated, a backlog of declarations for concluded operations can be administered and certified in 2016, so that in the last remaining years the expenditure declared to EC will show a better progress towards the achievement of the financial milestones.

The figure below reports on the share of total **amounts contracted by beneficiaries** in relation to the milestone values (different from the **expenditure declared to the EC**).

**Figure 4.6** Amounts contracted by beneficiaries per region by 2015 vs achievement of financial milestone



Source: AIR 2015<sup>36</sup>

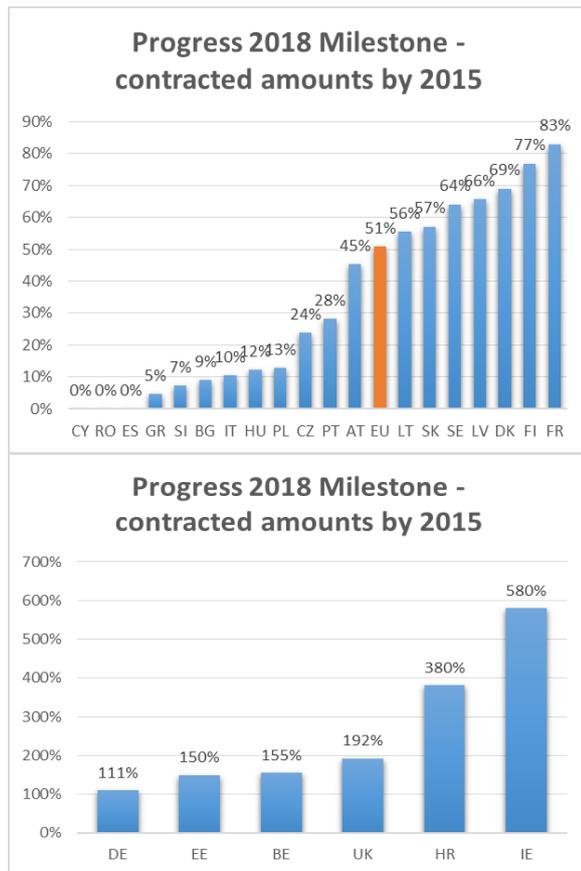
The blue bars in the figure above represent the absolute amounts contracted by beneficiaries for project implementation. Overall, slightly over half of the financial milestone value has already been committed to ongoing operations (51%, amounting to 15.38 billion euros). However, there are considerable differences between regions. While the more developed regions have already contracted 92% of the financial milestone value, this is 29% in transition regions. Beneficiaries in less developed regions contracted a relatively higher share of the 2018 milestone (39%) than transition regions, and seem in a better position to meet the milestone target set for 2018.

Figure 4.7 presents the amounts contracted by beneficiaries as a share of the 2018 milestone at MS level, which helps to better understand the regional differences illustrated above. It shows significant differences among MS in terms of financial implementation, from 0% (CY, RO, ES), to well over 100% (DE, EE, BE, UK, HR, IE). Overall, at the EU level, 51% of the aggregated amount of financial milestones has already been contracted by beneficiaries.

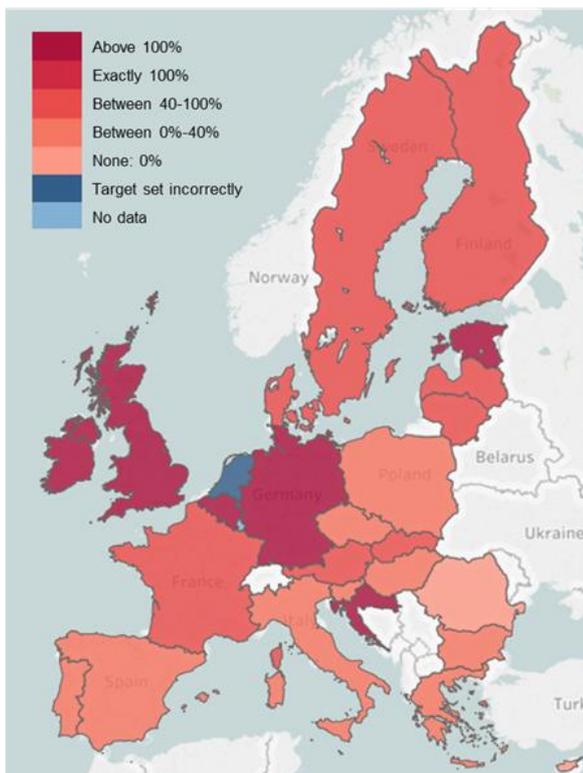
<sup>35</sup> This is the case for 2014ES05SFOP018, 2014HU05M3OP001, 2014HU16M2OP001, 2014IT05SFOP014, 2014IT05SFOP017, 2014IT16M2OP004, 2014IT16M2OP006, 2014PT16M2OP004

<sup>36</sup> PA with incorrect target setting excluded. Excluded PA consist 4.7% of the total amount contracted by beneficiaries and 6.7% of the total financial milestone.

**Figure 4.7** Achievement financial milestone vs. amounts contracted by 2015



**ESF % 2018 Milestone contracted by beneficiaries**



Source: AIR2015<sup>37</sup>

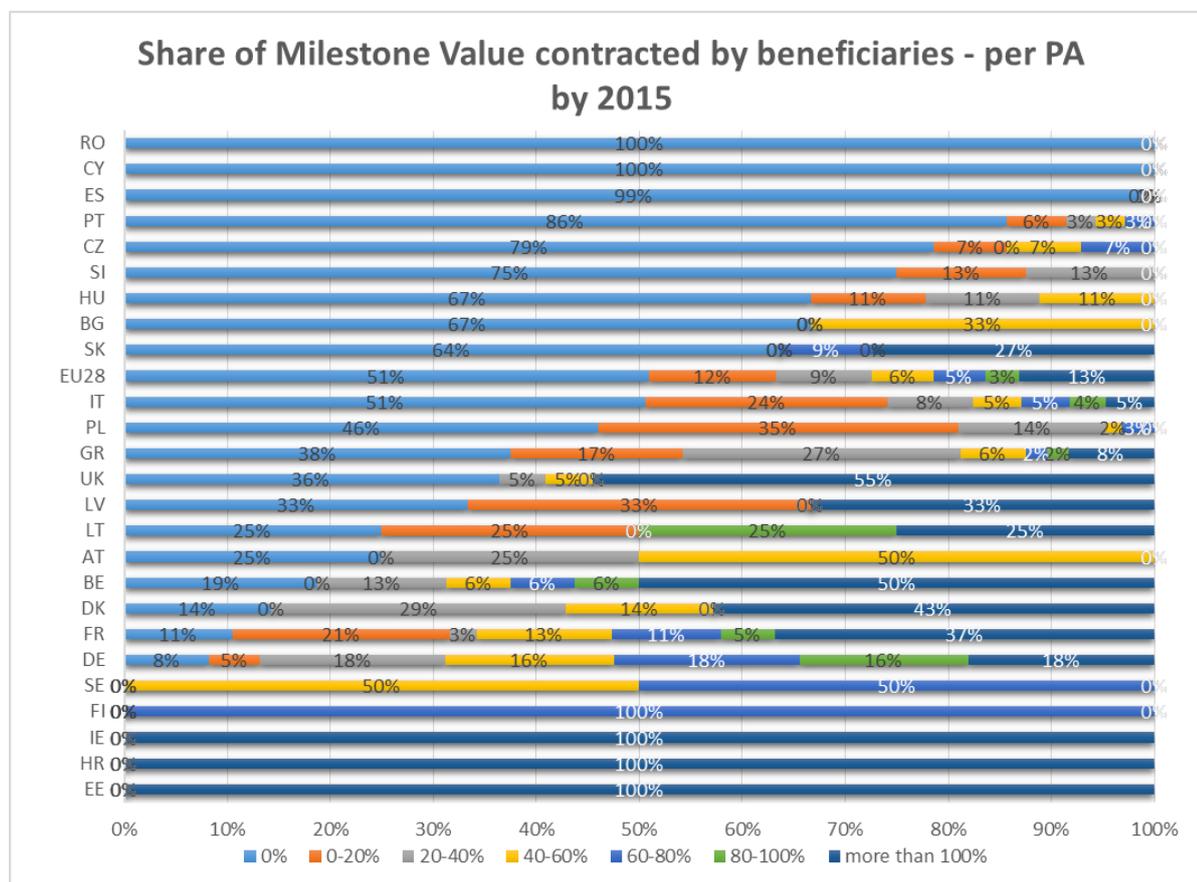
No explicit reasons are found for the fact that no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries yet in RO; delays have been reported due to the ongoing work on fulfilling ex ante conditionalities and the operationalisation of the national monitoring system. In CY, despite the lack of reported costs, the AIR suggests that implementation is still underway as planned. In CY, the AIR reports that actions implemented during 2014 and 2015 were preparatory to the implementation of the programme. In the years to come implementation is still planned to proceed as foreseen. NL (not included in the figure due to incorrect target setting), also reports no contracted amounts, but, like CY, does not report any particular

<sup>37</sup> Percentages are calculated on the basis of the weighed average, i.e. the total costs divided by the total target per MS. PA with incorrect target setting excluded.

delays in implementation<sup>38</sup>. About half of the OPs in ES indicate to be well underway with implementation, while another half reports some implementation challenges. A relatively large part of the ongoing work in these OP is focused on setting up the administrative systems and institutional bodies. The majority of Spanish OP report programming complications, such as a relatively late approval of the OP which led to delayed implementation. In addition, the majority of OP highlighted that the ESF programming for 2007-2013 was still ongoing. There are a number of OP that report higher operation costs than the 2018 milestone. In IE, this is explained by reported costs that will in fact be claimed under the 2007-2013 programming period. Although this may also be the case in other MS, no other explanations have been offered by other MS.

Below, we present in more detail the state of play of reaching milestone values. The development towards the milestone target have been presented for each PA individually and subsequently grouped in one of the categories below. It allows for a closer look at the individual state of implementation for an individual PA (rather than at MS level as presented in the figure 4.8), and also makes clear which MS still have PA where the amounts contracted by beneficiaries are equal to or less than 40% of the financial milestone value by the end of 2015. Although there may be good reasons for the slower implementation, an additional effort will be necessary to reach the milestone in 2018 for these PA.

**Figure 4.8** Share contracted by beneficiaries of milestone value – per PA by 2015



Source AIR2015

At EU level for instance, this figure shows that no amounts have been contracted yet in 51% of all Priority Axes (PAX) across the EU. Less than 20% of the milestone targets has been contracted in another 12% of all PA. With three years before the deadline for reaching the financial milestone, and assuming linear implementation, we should expect that MS have reached at least 40% of their milestone target in 2015. However, as the figure shows, only

<sup>38</sup> In fact, the fields to report on the challenges in implementation of the Dutch AIR have been left empty.

27% of all PAs have amounts contracted by beneficiaries at this level compared against the milestone target. The figure also confirms the unusually high levels of implementation in IE, HR, and EE, as reported in figure 4.8; it shows that the amounts contracted by beneficiaries in all PA in these MS have already passed the milestone mark.

#### 4.4 Financial progress of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

This section explores the progress of implementation of interventions funded under YEI. YEI provides financial support to MS worst hit by youth unemployment, according to set percentages of youth unemployment at the regional level<sup>39</sup>. The YEI resources consist of (1) a dedicated budget line made available for fighting youth unemployment of 3.2 billion euros, (2) a matching ESF allocation of 3.2 billion euros, which are subsequently matched with (3) national co-financing for the ESF matching allocation; the YEI specific allocation is not subject to national co-financing<sup>40</sup>. In total, this adds up to 7.67 billion euros. Despite these different types of budgets that make up the funding for YEI, this section refers to the total budget of these 3 resources combined as YEI<sup>41</sup>.

##### 4.4.1 Implementation against allocated budget

This section presents an overview of the implementation of YEI against the allocated budget in the table below.

**Table 4.6** Progress financial implementation - Total (YEI + ESF contribution YEI only)

MS	Allocated budget (x€1,000,000)	Contracted amounts by beneficiaries (x€1,000,000)	% of budget contracted by beneficiaries	Expenditure declared (x€1,000,000)	% implementation
BE	127.3	244.1	191.7%	0.0	0.0%
BG	120.1	72.1	60.0%	0.0	0.0%
CY	25.2	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
CZ	29.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
ES	2,053.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
FR	723.4	683.5	94.5%	0.1	0.0%
GR	392.7	151.2	38.5%	86.5	22.0%
HR	144.0	99.0	68.8%	0.0	0.0%
HU	108.3	81.4	75.1%	0.0	0.0%
IE	204.4	204.4	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
IT	1,513.4	357.8	23.6%	8.4	0.6%
LT	69.2	69.2	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
LV	63.1	63.4	100.4%	0.0	0.0%
PL	549.4	155.2	28.2%	40.1	7.3%
PT	349.9	254.9	72.9%	166.0	47.4%
RO	230.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
SE	132.5	94.0	70.9%	5.6	4.2%
SI	20.7	20.7	100.0%	0.0	0.0%
SK	215.9	100.0	46.3%	0.0	0.0%
UK	600.0	116.6	19.4%	0.0	0.0%
<b>EU28</b>	<b>7,673.5</b>	<b>2,767.5</b>	<b>36.1%</b>	<b>306.7</b>	<b>4.0%</b>

<sup>39</sup> Art. 16 ESF Regulation

<sup>40</sup> Article 22(3) ESF Regulation

<sup>41</sup> See also European Commission (2014) GUIDANCE ON IMPLEMENTING THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE – EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND THEMATIC PAPER.

Totals refer to YEI (includes dedicated YEI, and ESF contribution to YEI)  
 All values refer to the total amount (EU+national)  
 All values are based on AIR table 7 to ensure coherence with totals in other tables presented  
 Project selection and implementation rates are calculated at MS level; the total costs / expenditure at MS are divided by the total allocated budget at MS level  
 The budgets allocated / implemented related to YEI are not labelled to any of the type regions

The table shows an overall implementation rate of YEI funding across the EU of 4%. Only in PT and GR considerable progress can be observed in terms of expenditure declared to the EC, with 47% and 22% implementation rates respectively. Given the fact that all YEI funding should be spent by 2018, a considerable increase in implementation rates still needs to take place. It is underlined here, as elsewhere in this report, that this low level of implementation is mainly related to the delays in designating relevant certifying authorities across the EU.

The progress in amounts contracted by beneficiaries shows that quite a number of operations are ongoing, as 36.1% of the EU budget has been committed to operations at this stage.

#### 4.4.2 Target setting in YEI PAX

YEI is included in the performance framework (as per Article 22 (1) CPR), and relevant financial milestones can be therefore used to monitor the progress of YEI. According to this logic, the total allocated budget to YEI is compared against the milestone values, as shown in the table below. Note that YEI is frontloaded in the ESF 2014-2020 programming, and requires MS to commit the YEI specific allocation in 2014 and 2015. In line with the N+3 rule, this means that YEI funds must be spent by 2018, and therefore the YEI milestones set for 2018 should in fact be considered the final targets for YEI. Nevertheless, the table clearly shows that the targets set in the Performance Framework do not always properly reflect this. Since YEI is excluded for the purpose of calculating the performance reserve, the final targets should correspond to 100% of the allocated budget<sup>42</sup>.

**Table 4.7** Overview total budgets YEI / Milestone target

MS	Milestone target YEI (in €)	Total allocated budget YEI (in €, EU + national)	% Target of total funding
BE	90,741,250	127,305,210	71%
BG	110,377,490	120,116,680	92%
CY	25,186,337	25,186,338	100%
CZ	26,639,969	29,599,966	90%
ES	1,886,992,630	2,053,491,980	92%
FR	181,542,162	723,399,336	25%
GR	392,719,096	392,719,096	100%
HR	144,032,608	144,032,608	100%
HU	108,312,834	108,312,834	100%
IE	185,941,048	204,436,257	91%
IT	100	1,513,363,329	0%
LT	69,173,966	69,173,966	100%
LV	63,140,803	63,140,803	100%
PL	549,423,495	549,423,495	100%
PT	349,915,897	349,915,897	100%
RO	230,693,510	230,693,510	100%
SE	132,489,288	132,489,288	100%
SI	20,725,956	20,725,956	100%
SK	215,910,858	215,910,858	100%
UK	553,718,786	600,028,486	92%
<b>EU</b>	<b>5,337,678,082</b>	<b>7,673,465,893</b>	

Source: Operational Programmes as reported to SFC by 15-7-2016

A more in-depth analysis of the milestone targets reveals the following issues that may need additional verification with the concerned MAs.

<sup>42</sup> See Art. 20 of the Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

- The low value reported for FR (with the YEI financial milestone covering only 25% of overall YEI allocation) is related to the fact that its national OP for fighting youth unemployment (with a total budget of 470 million euros) did not select financial targets in the latest approved version of the OP, even though output indicators have been defined for the performance framework<sup>43</sup>. A similar case seems to be the case in IT, where instead of the financial target value, a milestone value of 100 was entered into SFC for the National OP funded through YEI. While this probably is meant to refer to a 100% value, rather than an absolute figure, this is inconsistent with the reporting by other OP, both within IT and across the EU, and causes possible problems in aggregations.
- Various OPs have set financial targets that correspond to the allocated EU amount only, rather than the total YEI budget. This causes problems of comparison as most OP have set their targets measured in total budget (EU and national share together), and should be marked for further verification. This issue has been flagged for BE, BG, ES, FR, UK.
- Thirdly, some OPs have defined different target values for the YEI 2018 milestone and the final YEI financial target for the Performance Framework. As described above, this should not be the case for YEI funding, and need further verification in CZ, FR.

#### 4.4.3 Progress in financial absorption towards financial milestones

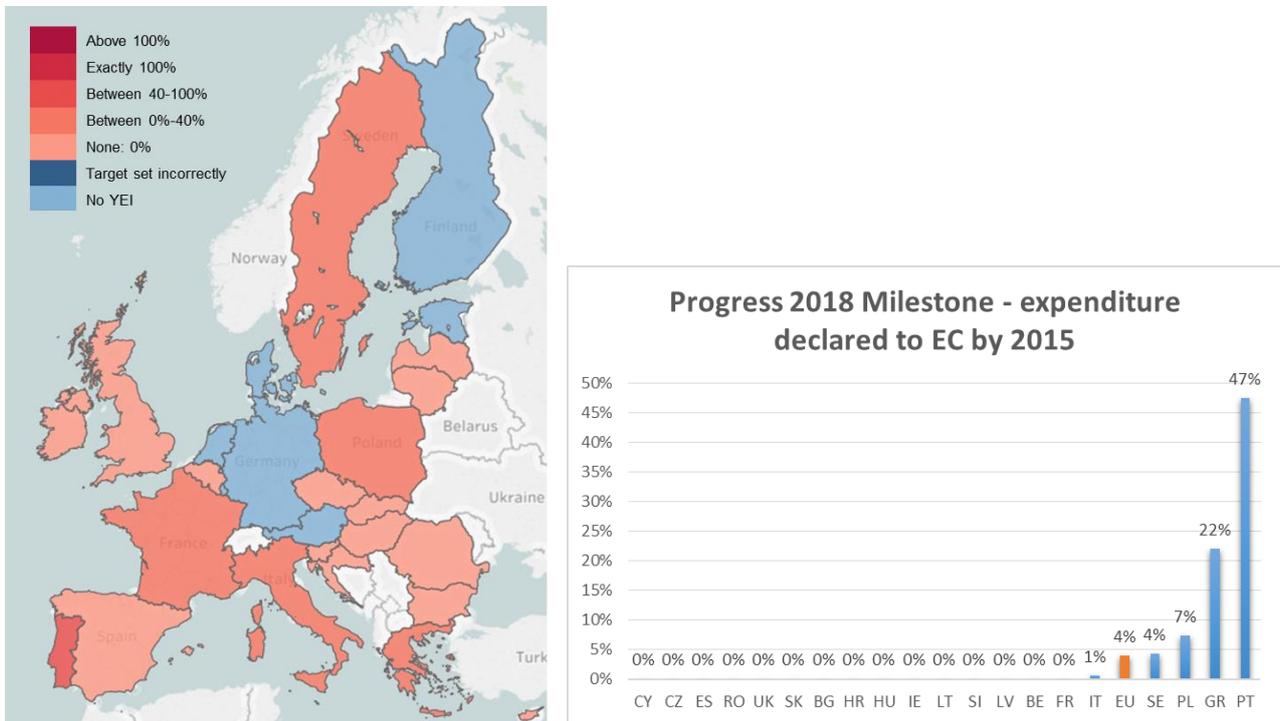
As described above there is a considerable number of YEI-relevant PAX/OP where the milestone targets set out in the OP are not consistently set. Instead of excluding these outliers from the analysis (which would leave us with only half of the PAX), this section proceeds by comparing financial absorption against the total allocated budget. This can be done here, because pursuant to the relevant Regulations, the YEI milestone targets for 2018 should be 100% of the allocated budget. First of all, we look at the total **eligible expenditure declared** to the EC against the total allocated funding.

---

<sup>43</sup> 2014FR05SFOP001

**Figure 4.9** Achievement Financial Milestone YEI – eligible expenditure declared to EC

YEI % allocated budget declared to EC as expenditure

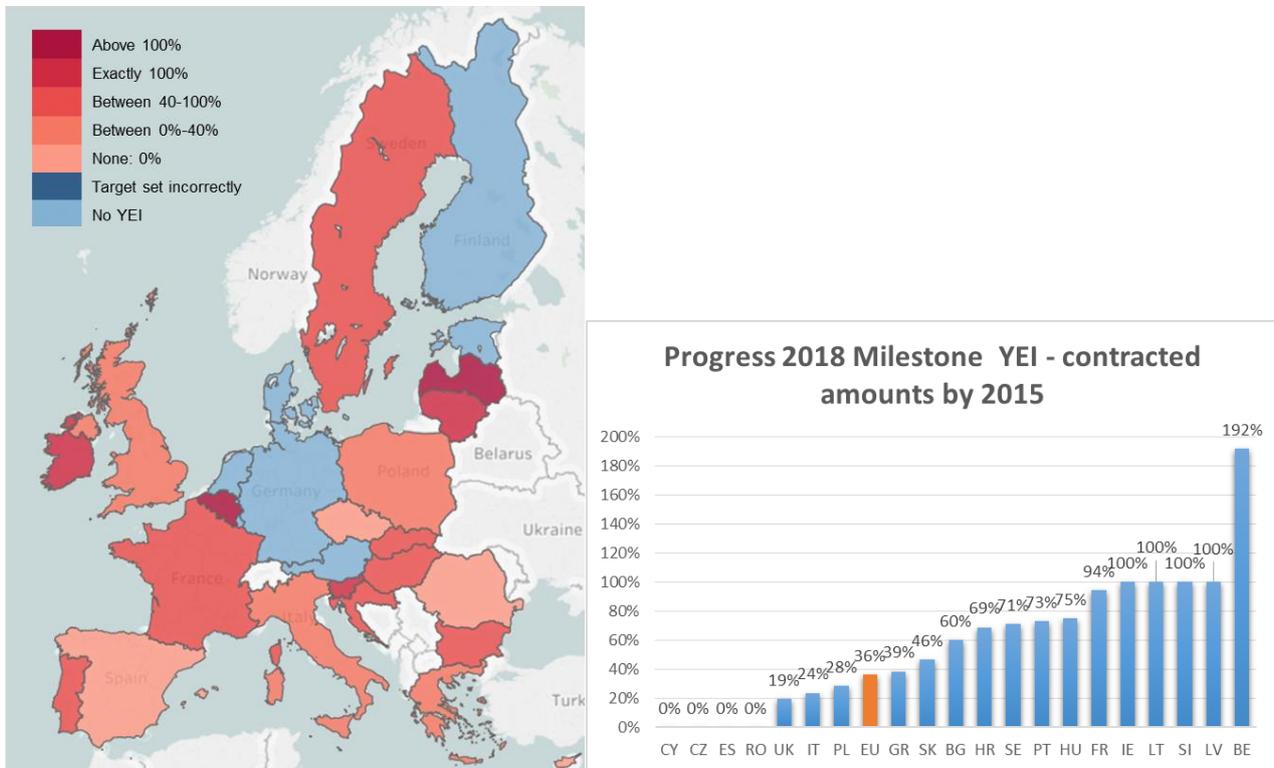


Source: AIR 2015

The figure presents the values already presented in section 4.4.1 and shows that the highest share of the milestone values are achieved by PT (47%), which also scored the highest absorption rates in its ESF PA (see section 4.3). Other MS that declared eligible expenditures to the EC are GR (22%), PL (7%), SE (4%) and IT (1%). None of the other MS with YEI have declared eligible expenditure to the EC in 2015. While PT seems slightly ahead of schedule (assuming 40% after 2 / 5 years of implementation), the progress of other MS is remarkably low, as was also the case in other MS for the ESF PAs. As also done in section 4.1, it was also analysed to what extent the **contracted amounts by beneficiaries** are developing. Although this cannot be equalled to formal absorption, it gives a better insight in ongoing operations than the formal **eligible expenditures declared** (which are at this stage still 0% in most MS, due to lack of a Certifying Authority). For this reason, the share of **contracted amounts by beneficiaries** against the total budget are analysed in the figure below.

**Figure 4.10** Achievement financial milestone YEI – amounts contracted by beneficiaries by 2015

YEI % allocated budget contracted by beneficiaries



Source: AIR 2015

Figure 4.10 makes clear that despite the lack of apparent progress in expenditure declared to the EC, beneficiaries have already contracted substantial amounts in various MS for the implementation of YEI projects, up to the total allocated budget. In IE, LT, SI, LV, already 100% of the allocated budgets are contracted by beneficiaries, while beneficiaries in BE contracted amount that are almost twice the initially allocated funding. BE does not provide explanations for this high value in the Walloon AIR, and reports that the YEI implementation overall proceeds as expected. At the EU level, a total of 36% of the total allocated YEI budget has been contracted by beneficiaries in the various MS. This is a relatively low value, particularly in comparison to the contracted amounts by beneficiaries reported for non-YEI ESF budgets (which is currently at 51%, see section 4.3.3). Moreover, for YEI as for ESF operations, CY, CZ, ES, and RO still report no contracted amounts. As other parts of this report show, this does not necessarily mean that these programmes have not yet started. Once these systems are in place, these MS can start working through the backlog of administrative procedures and report their progress in the next years.

## 5 Efficiency

The unit costs of programmes, both within and across MS and policy themes, are a relevant indicator for monitoring implementation of programmes. This chapter explores the development in unit costs, to help understanding the extent to which expenditure and participants are recorded in a balanced way. Section 5.1 starts by exploring the costs per individual output, and section 5.2 further explores the costs per result.

In the context of monitoring data for ESF, some MS only started reporting on participants, while no expenditures have been declared to the EC. In other cases, expenditures may have been declared, but data on participants may still need to be collected, organised and entered into a monitoring system. All of this can greatly distort the unit costs, and render any comparison problematic. An analysis of unit costs allows to compare the performance of MS on these processes, and helps to understand the development of reported costs or participants and result in relation to each other.

The reported **contracted amounts by beneficiaries** are a good measure of the extent to which programmes have started up, and served as relevant variable in assessing the progress of programmes from a financial side (see chapter 3). However, these are not a good measure to compare against number of participants or results, because these costs are often recorded before the participants are entered. This chapter will analyse and compare unit costs, and does so by referring only to the **eligible expenditures declared** to the EC. At a later stage in the implementation of programmes, when more operations are fully implemented and findings are less distorted by different proportions of fully and partially implemented operations, unit costs can be better compared and serve as the basis for assessing the efficiency of programmes.

### 5.1 Costs per output

To calculate the costs per output, first of all, MS with no reported participants were excluded (AT, CY, HR, HU, LU, MT, RO). Some MS did report participants in interventions, but did not yet declare eligible expenditure to the EC (BE, ES, IE, LV, SI, SK); these were also excluded. In LV, only EUR 14.5 thousand was declared as eligible expenditure to the EC, which is therefore also excluded. The results for comparing the number of individual participants registered against the total eligible expenditure declared are presented in the table below<sup>44</sup>.

**Table 5.1** Eligible expenditures declared to EC per participant

MS	Total participants	Expenditure declared to EC (€ million)	Overall unit cost	Unit costs TO8 (€)	Unit costs TO9 (€)	Unit costs TO10 (€)	Unit costs TO11 (€)
BG	11,152	6.5	586	-	586	-	-
CZ	14,304	38.8	2,713	2,713	-	-	-
DE	212,317	303.6	1,430	2,074	1,904	863	-
DK	243	1.5	6,230	6,230	-	-	-
EE	1,262	4.3	3,409	1,656	1,512	8,092	688
FI	17,467	7.2	413	438	912	185	-
FR	19,134	9.9	519	1,047	-	242	-
GR	82,495	84.9	1,030	1,803	-	387	387
IT	99,193	25.1	253	131	702	1,155	22
LT	11,387	4.5	399	399	-	-	-
PL	50,137	26.2	523	523	-	-	-
PT	77,879	425.9	5,469	-	-	5,469	-

<sup>44</sup> The total number of participants is calculated by summing common output indicators 1, 3, and 5, which present exclusive and complete types of output indicators for individuals participating in an intervention.

SE	1,676	1.1	627	490	441	1,483	-
UK	8,214	8.9	1,078	648	1,947	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>606,860</b>	<b>948.5</b>	<b>1,563</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>1,657</b>	<b>2,141</b>	<b>383</b>
Less dev.	190,106	541.1	<b>2,847</b>	1,112	637	4,704	686
More dev.	358,932	353.5	<b>985</b>	897	1,783	736	135
Transition	57,822	53.9	<b>932</b>	1,094	2,230	507	530
<i>Calculations are based only on IPs that report both participants and eligible expenditure declared to EC</i>							

Overall, the table shows a costs per participant of EUR 1,563, which is in fact in line with the figures reported for the ex post evaluations of ESF 2007-2013<sup>45</sup>. Nevertheless, this aggregated figure masks important differences across MS and thematic objectives. In relative terms FI, IT, LT have registered many more participants in 2014 / 2015 in relation to the expenditure declared to EC than other MS. DK, EE, PT on the other hand report relatively higher declarations of eligible expenditure per participant. As indicated above, these differences may be related to the ongoing nature of the entry of monitoring data, and may vary considerably each year. No particular reasons were mentioned in the AIR of these MS that could explain these relatively high figures.

However, the table also shows clear differences between the Thematic Objectives, which may not be fully related to different mechanisms of data entry between MS. First of all there is very little data available for TO11, so these values cannot be easily compared with the other TO. Overall, unit costs for interventions under TO8 and TO9 are considerably lower than for TO10. However, these higher unit costs are mainly caused by considerably higher unit costs of TO10 interventions in less developed regions; in transition and more developed regions these the unit costs are much lower for TO10 than for TO9. This can be explained due to the more structural funding, such as support for education structures, development of curricula in less developed regions. In this regard, the ex post evaluation of the previous programming period also points to contrasting figures, reporting higher unit costs for TO8 and TO9 related interventions than for TO10 related intervention. One possible reason for this difference can be the high number pupils and students that were indirectly targeted by ESF during 2007-2013 and counted as participants; this is no longer the case for 2014-2020. Another possible explanation is that the shorter-term nature of interventions in the field of employment and social inclusion, as compared to education, may partly explain this difference. Possibly, TO10 interventions in lesser developed regions tend to focus more on educational infrastructure and more systemic interventions, while these are more targeted towards individuals in transition and less developed regions.

## 5.2 Costs per result

A similar analysis has been performed to assess the costs for reaching immediate individual results (obtaining employment, qualification, entering education or searching jobs)<sup>46</sup>. Also for this analysis, the eligible expenditures declared to the EC are compared with the immediate individual results reported. This analysis can only be done for a limited number of MS, as most do not report both results and declared eligible expenditure. AT, BG, CY, HR, HU, MT, PT, RO,

<sup>45</sup> The synthesis report of the ex post evaluation of ESF 2007-2013 report an overall cost per participants of €897, with €1,113 for Access to Employment, €681 for Human Capital & Adaptability, and €1,763 for Social Inclusion.

<sup>46</sup> The total number of individual results was calculated by summing common result indicators 1-4, which all present 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 result at the same time.

SI, SK did not report any short-term results, and were therefore the first to be excluded. Secondly, MS that did not yet declare eligible expenditures to the EC could not be included either (BE, ES, IE, LV).

While already limited to an even lower number of MS than when investigating the costs per participant, this analysis for results has additional limitations. First of all, the costs declared for investment priorities are compared with the immediate results achieved. Information on the results in the longer-term is collected at a later stage (AIR2018) and is therefore not included here. However, a unit cost analysis of results (similar to an analysis of the unit costs for participants), can be insightful to compare MS with regard to the extent to which result and eligible expenditure are registered into SFC in relatively equal shares.

**Table 5.2** Eligible expenditures declared per short-term result achieved

MS	Total short term results	Expenditure declared to EC (€ million)	Overall unit cost	Unit costs TO8 (€)	Unit costs TO9 (€)	Unit costs TO10 (€)	Unit costs TO11 (€)
DE	42,937	238	5,538	3,821	12,549	3,352	-
DK	11	1	121,175	121,175	-	-	-
EE	88	4	42,583	17,131	22,854	376,227	6,048
FI	1,132	7	6,365	8,835	13,964	2,293	-
FR	8,053	10	1,226	36,624	-	386	-
GR	103	35	342,759	6,513,730	-	-	27,914
IT	4,906	8	1,655	990	-	3,314	5,971
LT	6,909	5	657	657	-	-	-
PL	22,470	26	1,167	1,167	-	-	-
SE	167	1	5,783	3,964	79,902	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,776</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>3,862</b>	<b>2,905</b>	<b>12,652</b>	<b>2,426</b>	<b>24,843</b>
Less dev.	26,641	61	2,283	2,164	22,854	376,227	6,048
More dev.	51,070	248	4,847	3,245	11,756	3,412	27,475
Transition	9,065	27	2,954	15,621	34,325	184	-

*Calculations are based only on IPs that report participants / results and declared eligible expenditure*

Source: SFC2014 - AIR 2014-2015

Overall costs per short term result for the MS in the analysis amount to EUR 3,862. Behind this value are substantially larger variations between MS and between Thematic Objectives than found in the analysis of costs per output (see table 5.1). These variations are mainly caused by the relatively fragmented way of reporting of individual short-term results in SFC, which most likely will improve in the coming years. This is illustrated for instance by the very low number of short term individual results achieved in DK, EE, GR, and SE that underlies the higher levels of unit costs per result in these MS. No particular reasons are reported in the AIR for these low levels. The unit costs per result are considerably higher under TO 11, which may be related to the nature of the interventions, which tend not to focus on individuals. An interesting finding is the higher costs for results achieved in TO9, while the costs per participant in TO8 and TO10 are considerably lower. Possibly this reflects the more difficult nature of interventions reaching positive results for socially excluded persons in comparison to persons out of employment (TO8).

The costs per result are also presented by region. However, these figures are even more difficult to compare than overall Thematic Objectives, due to the low amounts of eligible expenditures that have been declared to the EC in combination with individual results for less developed and transition regions (61 million euros and 27 million euros); such low values cannot compensate outliers, and are therefore likely to distort the data. In the coming years, as more expenditures and results are reported, a comparison of differences between regions and thematic objectives will prove to more insightful.

## 6 Overview of evaluations

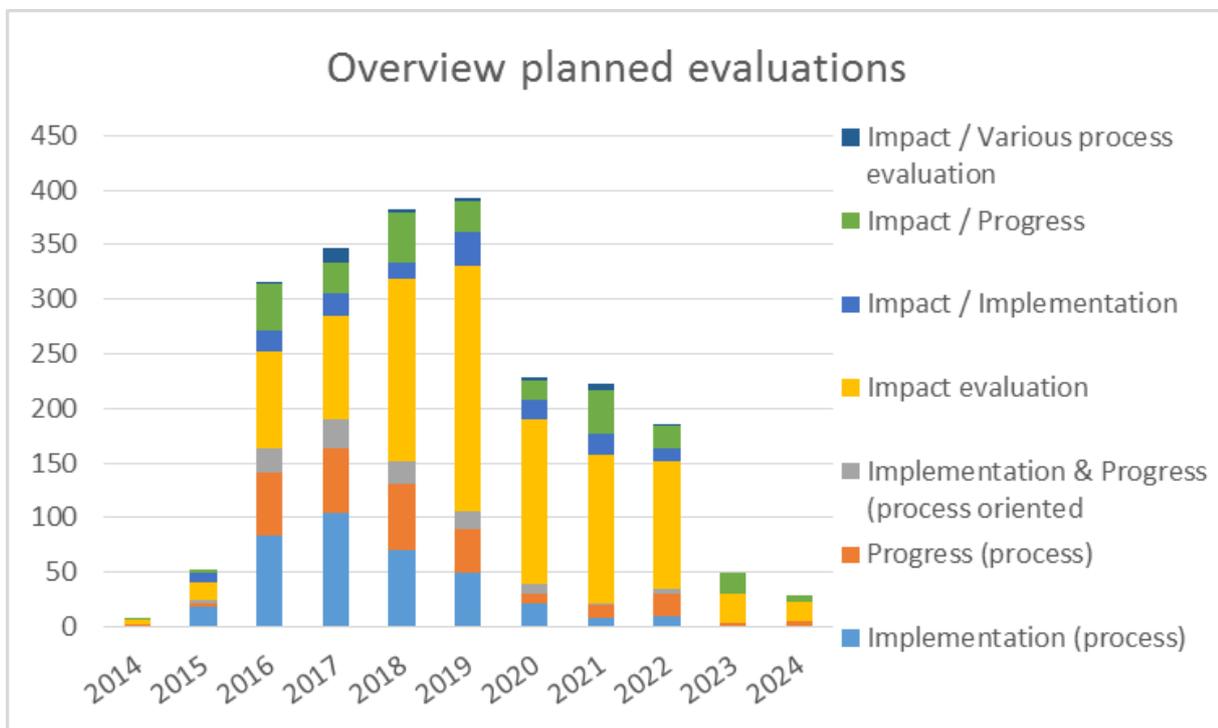
Ongoing evaluations of ESF programming are a crucial tool to monitor progress and adjust national or regional implementation of ESF in 2014-2020. The Common Provisions Regulation requires in article 56 that Managing Authorities adopt detailed evaluation plans. An analysis of these evaluation plans is provided in section 6.1. The CPR also requires MS to provide a synthesis of the findings in the evaluation conducted throughout the programming period. Section 6.2 provides additional details at the EU level of MS reporting towards this requirement.

### 6.1 Evaluation plans

Evaluation plans represent an important element towards the result-oriented approach characterising the 2014-2020 programming period. These are to be submitted for approval to the monitoring committee no later than one year after the adoption of programme (article 114). Based on the information provided by MS in their AIR, currently in 86 OP, the associated evaluation plans have been approved (48%). 36 AIR indicate that the evaluation plan has not yet been approved, but has been sent to the relevant monitoring committee (19%), and in the remaining 65 AIR (35%) nothing is mentioned about the approval status of the evaluation plan. Note however that one evaluation plan may cover more OPs.

Based on the evaluation plans available, the DG REGIO/EMPL Evaluation Helpdesk made an inventory of the type, number and thematic coverage of the evaluations planned. Note that for multi-fund OP, evaluations may also cover non-ESF thematic areas. Below, the figure presents the distribution of all planned evaluations. Only a very limited number of evaluations were already conducted in 2015, while a substantial number are foreseen to take place in the coming years.

**Figure 6.1** Overview planned evaluations over time



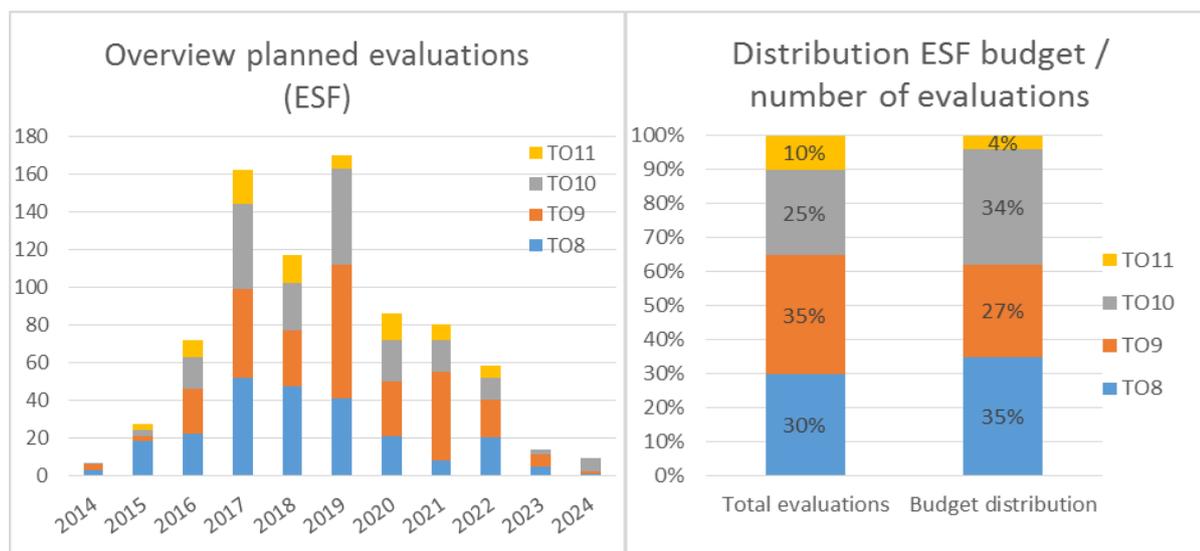
Source: Evaluation Helpdesk

Figure 6.1 differentiates the types of evaluation that are included in the various evaluation plans. However, one needs to take into account that this figure also includes evaluations in multi-fund OP that may not necessarily focus on ESF themes. The Common Provision Regulation seeks to strengthen the result orientation of policies, and requires that evaluations assess notably effectiveness, efficiency and impact. The figure shows that in the early

programming years, evaluations tend to be mainly process oriented. The initial focus of the majority of planned evaluations is on the extent to which funding is managed in implementation of projects (implementation), or the extent to which programmes meet the targets set by the various indicators (progress). From 2018 onwards, the situation is reversed and the majority of evaluations planned are more clearly result-oriented, and aim to measure the impacts achieved by the various programmes. The increasing importance of impact evaluations over time are in line with what could be expected; as the programmes come closer to their ends, impacts can be better evaluated. At the same time, process oriented evaluations are important during the start-up phase of programmes and the first period of implementation, as their lessons learned can still be taken onboard in adjusting the programming.

The schedule of evaluations also matches the reporting schedule foreseen by the Common Provision Regulation. Additional reporting requirements are foreseen for spring 2017 (AIR 2016), and the considerably higher number of evaluations planned for 2016 should be seen in this context. These should provide the input for the annual reporting, and should serve to verify to what extent programmes are on the right track to meet the 2018 milestone targets. Another crucial reporting milestone is in the spring of 2019, when the AIR2018 should be submitted. This round of reporting shall report on the extent to which the 2018 milestone targets have been met, and therefore provide crucial input on whether the performance reserves may be activated.

**Figure 6.2** Overview of planned evaluation on ESF themes



Source: Evaluation Helpdesk

Based on the data provided by the Evaluation helpdesk, it was also analysed to what extent MS have planned evaluations for the thematic objectives related to ESF. While in most years the evaluation seems relatively well spread out over the themes, the large share of evaluations targeting TO9 (Active Inclusion) in comparison to the other themes in 2019 is remarkable. No particular explanation exists for this larger level. The figure clearly shows a peak of evaluations starting in 2017, again, in order to provide the data for the reporting on the 2018 milestones. For 2015, 27 evaluations are planned with a focus on ESF objectives. In the AIR 2015, MS report that a total of 32 evaluations have been conducted over the course of 2015, which shows that overall MS seem to follow the initial planning relatively well. Overall, the number of evaluations per thematic objective is very well balanced against the financial significance of the allocated budgets. The figure to the right shows that the evaluations pay only marginally more attention to TO9 and TO11 than to the share of the total allocated budget.

## 6.2 Reporting on evaluation findings

Article 50 of the Common Provision Regulation requires MS to annually prepare a synthesis of all evaluations findings of the programme that have become available during the previous

financial year. As the current programming period is in a relatively early stage, few MS actually report synthesis evaluation findings. They rather provide a summary of their evaluation plans, the stage of implementing these plans, or findings from ex ante evaluation exercises. Below, the table summarises the type of information reported by MS in the AIR 2015.

**Table 6.1** Overview of reporting on evaluations (categories are not exclusive)

MS	Reasons for under - over performance	Key evaluation findings	Structure and progress of the evaluation plan	Ex ante evaluations or findings from previous evaluations	Nothing mentioned
AT				1	
BE		2	2		
BG			1	2	
CY		1		1	
CZ		2	2	1	
DE			13	3	4
DK			1		
EE			1		
ES		1	4	19	3
FI			2		
FR		9	15	2	7
GR	4	2	9	4	2
HR		1	1	1	
HU			5	5	
IE	1	1	1	1	
IT	1	2	22	7	2
LT		1	1	1	
LV			1	1	
MT			1	1	
NL	1	1			
PL		1	12	15	
PT		1	4	10	
RO					2
SE	1	1	2		
SI		1	1	1	
SK		2	1	2	
UK		1	1	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>22</b>

Source: AIR 2015

The table shows that for the majority (103) of the 187 OP, the AIR merely report on the procedural implementation of the evaluation plan. In 22 AIR, nothing is reported at all regarding evaluations, while almost all have already begun the implementation<sup>47</sup>. This is not surprising given the limited number of evaluations planned for 2015. For 27 OP the AIR make reference to actual evaluation findings. Where this is the case, these generally refer to evaluations of the YEI, and conclude that YEI has been relevant for the specific target groups addressed (BE, FR, and SE). In FR (Centre) it is concluded that despite successful first steps to gain an overview of the target group additional efforts are necessary to address NEETS living in rural areas. Only in 3 OP (in NL, IT, GR) are evaluation findings discussed that are not related to YEI. These findings focus on the relevance of the interventions, as no clear results and achievements have been reported yet.

The dominance of YEI evaluations is in line with the ESF Regulation, which explicitly requires all MA implementing YEI to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of YEI including for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee by December 31, 2015. Article 19(4) subsequently

<sup>47</sup> 2014DE05SFOP009, 2014DE16M2OP001, 2014DE05SFOP013, 2014DE05SFOP014, 2014ES05SFOP005, 2014ES05SFOP011, 2014ES05SFOP014, 2014FR05SFOP005, 2014FR16M0OP001, 2014FR16M0OP002, 2014FR16M0OP013, 2014FR16M2OP007, 2014FR16M2OP009, 2014FR16M2TA001, 2014GR16M2OP003, 2014GR16M3TA001, 2014IT05SFOP004, 2014RO05M9OP001, 2014RO05SFOP001, 2014UK05SFOP004, 2014UK05SFOP005

requires that the results of these evaluations are synthesised in the AIR 2015<sup>48</sup>. Despite this requirement, 9 OP that contain YEI, do not explicitly refer to findings of the mandatory 2015 evaluation of YEI. As presented in the table below, these 9 OP have a total budget of 834 million euros, which is the equivalent of 12.9% of the EU allocated YEI budget. Designation of relevant authorities is not necessarily the problem; only 2 of these OP had not finished the designation process.

**Table 6.2** OP with active YEI support, no evaluation results reported in line with Article 19(4) of ESF Regulation

OPs without YEI evaluation result	YEI budget allocation (€, EU amount)	% of total YEI allocation in EU (EU amount)
2014BG05M9OP001	110,377,490	1.7%
2014FR16M0OP001	20,108,246	0.3%
2014FR16M0OP007	5,094,014	0.1%
2014FR16M0OP009*	4,400,000	0.1%
2014FR16M0OP011	5,023,390	0.1%
2014HU16M0OP001*	99,530,712	1.5%
2014LV16MAOP001	58,021,278	0.9%
2014RO05M9OP001	211,988,630	3.3%
2014UK05M9OP001	319,576,848	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>834,120,608</b>	<b>12.9%</b>

\* These OP have not completed the designation of relevant authorities

Source: AIR 2015

MS that do report evaluation findings on YEI report positive effects of YEI on labour market outcomes of young people (BE, CY, CZ, ES, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK), as also presented elsewhere. In some cases, specific recommendations for improvement of future interventions are reported as well. In CY for instance, the evaluation finds that additional attention needs to be paid to increasing awareness and a recruiting plan for young people. In HU it is suggested that interventions need to be more focused to the local context and to align interventions by means of a more integrated approach. Thirdly, in IE, the evaluation highlights the need to better train staff in programme monitoring to ensure greater clarity in programming and target setting, and to better research the NEET cohort. For hard-to-reach groups over-ambitious targets had been set in some cases. In various MS, evaluators report that the lack of a measurable definition of "quality" employment presents a risk to the current system in place to monitor outcomes and impacts. This is an important point that remains relevant in the future monitoring, reporting and evaluation of YEI interventions; not necessarily all 'offers' are equal in quality or sustainability and a proper indicator to measure this is required.

<sup>48</sup> See article 19 of the ESF Regulation: Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 470–486.

## **7 Ex ante conditionality on statistical systems and result indicators**

In order to strengthen the result orientation of ESI funds and to create incentives for Member States that will ensure the effective progress towards the attainment of Europe 2020 objectives and targets through cohesion policy, the Common Provision Regulation defines a number of ex ante conditionalities that MS and MA must meet in order to qualify for support from the European Structural Funds. Section 7.1 further explores the definition and requirements of ex ante conditionalities in the CPR. Subsequently, section 7.2 explores to what extent MS have been able to meet these requirements in the first years of implementation.

### **7.1 Ex ante conditionalities in the CPR**

Ex ante conditionalities are key to ensure that all institutional and strategic policy arrangements are in place for effective investment and consist of thematic and general conditionalities. Thematic ex ante conditionalities include requirements such as the existence of personalised labour market services or the existence of a policy framework for poverty reduction. General ex ante conditionalities apply to all programmes and consist of requirements on procurement or the use of reliable statistics, for instance (conditionality 7). Through a process of self-assessment by MS and subsequent assessment and approval by the EC, applicable ex ante conditionalities are selected and included in every OP. As General Ex Ante Conditionality 7 (GEAC7) applies to all programmes, all OP must indicate whether the programme already fulfils this requirement. In order to allow monitoring of the implementation of the required ex ante conditionalities, CPR Article 19(2) requires MS to report on the actions to be taken, the bodies responsible and the timetable for implementation.

This report assesses the reporting by MS on general ex ante conditionality 7, which sets requirements on the statistical system and result indicators in place. More specifically, this ex ante conditionality requires MS to have the statistical basis in place to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes<sup>49</sup>. This section thus analyses the extent to which MS report on the fulfilment of general ex ante conditionality 7 in AIR2015. Since all ex ante conditionalities need to be fulfilled the latest by the end of 2016, information provided in AIR2014 and 2015 are an important opportunity to spot possible delays in implementation and take targeted action in 2016. However, the Common Provision Regulation leaves reporting on the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities in AIR2015 optional. MS are required to report on the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities in AIR 2016, to be submitted in the spring of 2017. For this reason, this report can only include an analysis of the progress reported by MS in AIR 2015. Based on the inputs to be collected in AIR 2016, more detailed analyses will be possible on the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities, types of actions conducted, and additional progress required.

### **7.2 Fulfilment of requirements on statistical systems and result indicators**

General ex-ante conditionality 7 sets a number of detailed sub-criteria for (statistical) data collection and result indicators. This is to allow for monitoring progress, undertaking evaluations and learning about the more effective actions. All sub-criteria defined should be finalised by the end of 2016, and require that:

- 7.1 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation.

---

<sup>49</sup> Based on part II of Annex XI in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013, O.J., L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320

- 7.2 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data.
- 7.3 - An effective system of result indicators including: the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme.
- 7.4 - An effective system of result indicators including: the establishment of targets for these indicators.
- 7.5 - An effective system of result indicators including: the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data.
- 7.6 - Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.

For each of these sub-criteria, the table below reports the stage of fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities by MS that have to report their progress on ex ante conditionalities. Table 7.1 below lists all the actions required to fulfil the sub-criteria that were not fulfilled at the time of finalising the partnership agreements. Note that where AIR of MS report on multi-fund OP, the ex ante conditionalities can also refer to actions that are not necessarily related to ESF implementation.

**Table 7.1** Number of actions (to be) taken towards fulfilment of general ExAC 7

MS	% result indicator with target	Fulfilled						To be fulfilled						Total
		7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	
AT	100%			Not reported						Not reported				
BE	95%			Not reported						Not reported				
BG	98%			Not reported						Not reported				
CY	91%							1		1	1	1	1	<b>5</b>
CZ	100%							6		3	4	3	3	<b>19</b>
DE	100%		1					2			1		1	<b>5</b>
DK	96%			Not reported						Not reported				
EE	70%									8				<b>8</b>
ES	100%			1	1	1	1							<b>4</b>
FI	92%			Not reported						Not reported				
FR	88%	2	1		9		1	2	2	1	18	1	3	<b>40</b>
GR	95%							153	51	17	49	17	34	<b>321</b>
HR	100%			Not reported						Not reported				
HU	72%	7	3	1	5	1	5	5	1	5	5	5	10	<b>53</b>
IE	100%							1				1	1	<b>3</b>
IT	96%				1			1	1	1	9	4	5	<b>22</b>
LT	100%			Not reported						Not reported				
LU	85%			Not reported						Not reported				
LV	100%			Not reported						Not reported				
MT	100%									1				<b>1</b>
NL	100%			Not reported						Not reported				
PL	85%				1					1	13	1		<b>16</b>
PT	72%			Not reported						Not reported				
RO	87%		1		1			2	1		1	2	2	<b>10</b>
SE	100%	1	1	1	1									<b>4</b>
SI	81%							1			1		1	<b>3</b>
SK	91%	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1			1	1	<b>13</b>
UK	100%										2			<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>529</b>

Source: AIR 2015

First of all, the table shows that over the past two years ES, FR, HU, SE, SK have succeeded fulfilling several ex ante sub-conditionalities. ES and SE reported to have fulfilled all the actions defined to fulfil obligations under ex ante conditionality. Particularly the performance of SE in this is noteworthy, as it had planned in its OP to fulfil the requirements only by September 2016. Three MS only have to complete actions in the area of criterion 7.4 (EE, MT, UK) Other MS have fulfilled one or several conditionalities, but still have a number of other actions planned before fulfilling the requirements by the end of 2016 (DE, FR, HU, IT, PL, RO, SK). Finally, a third set of MS did not report meeting any new sub-requirements to the statistical system in 2015, and still have to meet all their remaining requirements in the next year. Attention for implementation of the ex ante conditionalities is necessary particularly in FR, GR, HU, and IT, where for all requirements actions need to be developed<sup>50</sup>. Work also needs to be done in other MS, but at least some of the sub-categories have been completed.

As shown in the table, most of the actions planned to fulfil the requirements in 2016 can be found in the area of criterion 7.1 (175 entries). This criterion requires that mechanisms are set up to ensure statistical validation of the data collected, and that the sources of statistical data are clearly reported. Various actions have been planned by MS, from setting entire statistical monitoring systems (GR, SI), training staff in statistics (GR, FR, DE), scheduling surveys (HU, GR) or the mere approval of formal strategic documents that underpin the data sources to the OP (GR, SK, RO). Another sub-criterion under which many actions are planned for 2016 is conditionality 7.4 (113 entries), which requires that all result indicators in the programme are linked to targets. The actions foreseen under this requirement are more practical in nature, and generally refer to specific indicators in the OP that currently lack a target setting. In the actions planned for 2016 data is being collected to underpin the target values empirically. Progress towards this target is also presented by listing the share of programme specific result indicators that does not have a target. The table shows that this share is considerably higher for MS that do not have pending actions; in HU, EE, and PL and considerable number of actions are planned to resolve the relatively high number of result indicators without target setting. Because most MS tend to identify a different action for different indicators this value is relatively high, even though its workload may be rather limited, particularly in comparison to some of the actions under 7.1. It is important to find that BG, BE, DK, FI, LU, and PT have defined programme specific result indicators without target setting, while no actions have reported under ex ante conditionality 7.4 in AIR2015.

Under criterion 7.6, MS planned various actions towards ensuring that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators. Most of the work in this regard goes hand in hand with the preparation of the first years of Annual Reporting, in which MA may revise their reporting based on the comments and feedback received from their Steering Groups and the EC. A comparatively high number of actions are defined by GR and HU, which include various requirements for their OP revisions and reporting in AIR, which may not specifically need additional action. Instead, delivering the reporting in line with the requirements would automatically satisfy the ex ante requirement as well.

Criterion 7.2 requires MA to put in place arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data is dominated by actions in GR, with very limited actions planned by other MS. In fact, eleven MS do not foresee any actions under this criterion anymore for 2016. Indeed, the work to be done in this regard will be relatively limited; these requirements are met if the MA publishes the data reported to the EC online, which can even be in the format of the AIR<sup>51</sup>.

---

<sup>50</sup> This is the case for: 2014FR16M0OP002, 2014FR16M0OP004, 2014FR16M0OP006, 2014FR16M0OP007, 2014FR16M0OP008, 2014FR16M0OP013, 2014FR16M2OP002, 2014FR16M2OP006, 2014FR16M2OP009, 2014FR16M2TA001, 2014GR05M2OP001, 2014GR05M9OP001, 2014GR16M2OP001, 2014GR16M2OP002, 2014GR16M2OP003, 2014GR16M2OP004, 2014GR16M2OP005, 2014GR16M2OP006, 2014GR16M2OP007, 2014GR16M2OP008, 2014GR16M2OP009, 014GR16M2OP010, 2014GR16M2OP011, 2014GR16M2OP012, 2014GR16M2OP013, 2014GR16M2OP014, 2014GR16M3TA001, 2014HU05M3OP001, 2014HU16M0OP001, 2014HU16M2OP001, 2014HU16M2OP002, 2014IT05SFOP001, 2014IT05SFOP007, 2014IT05SFOP016, 2014IT16M2OP001, 2014IT16M2OP004, 2014IT16M2OP006

<sup>51</sup> See EC (2014) FAQ ON EX ANTE CONDITIONALITIES RELATING TO STATISTICS, see [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index.cfm/en/information/legislation/guidance/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/information/legislation/guidance/)

Finally, the lowest number of actions were defined for criterion 7.3 (requiring that each programme sets specific result indicators), and criterion 7.5 (calling for robust data collection and validation). It is reassuring to find the least actions under these elements, and apparently most of the work in this regard has already been done in the preparation of the programming documents and the Partnership Agreement. If at this stage of implementation programmes still lack clear result indicators that reflect the policy objectives, the various rounds of feedback on Operational Programmes have not been sufficiently thorough. Indeed, the nature of actions to be implemented in this regard are merely worded as final assessment to confirm that the objectives and indicators are in line (7.3) and sufficiently robust (7.5), rather than anything else. With regard to criterion 7.5 it should be noted though that some actions are still foreseen for a relatively large number of countries; table 7.1 shows that 10 out of 17 MS have planned such actions (CY, CZ, FR, GR, HU, IE, IT, PL, RO, SK).

**Table 7.2** Actions for GExAC 7 to be taken – by year of deadline<sup>52</sup>

MS	2014		2015		2016	
	Not completed	Completed	Not completed	Completed	Not completed	Completed
CY	2		3			
CZ			12		7	
DE			3	1		
EE			5		3	
ES			4			
FR	1		24	10	4	1
GR	95		140		86	
HU	10	15	14	5	4	3
IE					3	
IT			13	1	8	
MT			1			
PL			13	1	1	
RO			8	2		
SE					2	2
SI			1		1	
SK	3		1	9		
UK						2
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>8</b>

For each of the actions planned in the OP a deadline has been set, indicating when the action should be completed. Table 7.2 above lists the deadlines of all actions by year, and shows that for a majority of all actions the initially agreed deadline has already expired. 111 actions with a deadline in 2014 still await finalisation, while on 15 actions (in HU) have been completed. Only 29 actions of actions with a deadline in 2015 have been completed, while another 242 actions set for implementation by 2015 are pending. For 2016, only 8 actions have been completed, while 119 actions still need to be completed. This shows that much work remains to be done before the final deadline of December 2016, when all actions are supposed to be completed and all ex ante conditionalities are supposed to be met.

<sup>52</sup> Note, for 5 actions, no deadlines have been specified in the Operational Programmes. Three have these have already been completed and therefore do not need a deadline; 2014PL16M2OP006 and 2014SI16MAOP001 contain actions for GExAC 7 without a deadline.

## 8 Contribution of ESF to EU policies

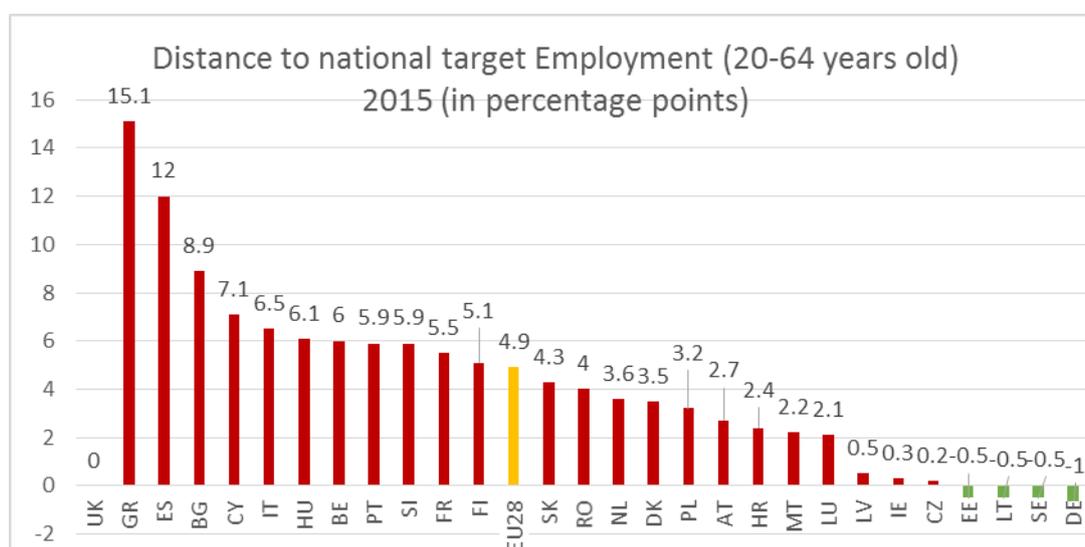
Cohesion policy represents a key instrument for achieving the Europe 2020 objectives and targets. The thematic objectives and underlying investment priorities set by the ESF Regulation serve to make this link to Europe 2020 explicit. This chapter assesses the progress towards the specific thematic objectives of current implementation of ESF 2014-2020. Section 8.1 reports progress under TO8, section 8.2 progress under TO9, section 8.3 for T010, and section 8.4 for T011.

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

The EU2020 Headline target aims to bring the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to 75% by 2020, including through the greater participation of youth, older workers and low skilled workers and the better integration of legal migrants. To reach this objective, thematic objective 8 of ESF 2014-2020 has been formulated. By promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility, ESF seeks to contribute to the EU 2020 objectives for Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. As part of the EU2020 strategy national targets have been set for individual MS. MS have the possibility to use ESF to complement their national efforts towards meeting these targets.

When assessing MS performance on their progress towards reaching the national target for the employment rate (see figure 8.1), one sees that countries can be clustered into two main groups. First of all, there is the group that is still far from reaching the national targets; this group includes GR, ES, BE, BG, HU, PT, CY, SI, IT, FR, FI. The eleven countries in this group are all more than 5 percentage points below their national target, while the distance to the target for the EU as a whole is 4.9 percentage points. The second group consists of countries that are closer to the national targets, such as SK, RO, NL, DK, PL, AT, HR, MT, LU, LV, IE, CZ. Finally, four countries - EE, LT, SE, DE- have already reached their employment targets<sup>53</sup>.

**Figure 8.1** % Headline target national Employment (20-64 years old) - 2015 – distance from national target (%)(in percentage points)



Source: Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>)

To a large extent, the EU's prospects for employment growth depend on its capacity to generate economic growth through appropriate macroeconomic, industrial and innovation policies (going beyond the scope of ESF support). At the same time, it calls for employment policies that generate favourable conditions for job creation. It can do so by facilitating positive

<sup>53</sup> For the UK no target has been included in Eurostat concerning this indicator

transitions, increase the labour supply, and improve the geographic and skills matching with labour market needs. This would imply that the group of MS above the EU average use ESF to invest in progress towards the national employment objective more often than other MS.

The various investment priorities, as defined by the ESF Regulation, further narrows down the objective and type of intervention in order to move closer towards the national employment targets. Article 3 in the ESF regulation restricts interventions under Thematic Objective 8 to the following categories :

- (8i). 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). 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). Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises;
- (8iv). 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). Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change;
- (8vi). Active and healthy ageing;
- (8vii). 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.

### **8.1.1 IP8i. Access to employment**

Most interventions in the field of IP8.i relate to the mainstream type of ALMP activities such as providing individual guidance to job seekers, providing integrated approaches, VET training, and providing hiring incentives to employers or supporting apprenticeships / traineeships and self-employment. Interventions in this IP tend to target a relatively diverse range of target groups, such as unemployed in general; long term unemployed; disadvantaged; older persons; inactive; women; young unemployed; low skilled; employment services; migrants; and enterprises.

Except DK, all MS have allocated investments in this investment priority. Twelve EU MS (BG, DE, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, LT, PT, RO, SK, SL) over the 2014-2015 period received a CSR on improving access to employment. These CSR generally recommend improving the labour market prospects of unemployed by strengthening labour market policies through activation measures with either a focus on vocational training, the improvement of job counselling or on other forms of assistance tailored to individual needs. BG, IE, and SK received for both years' recommendations in this field while DE, FI, HU, LT, PT and RO only received recommendations for 2014. For five EU MS (FI, IE, PT, SK and SL), the recommendations were specifically focused on the long-term unemployed; in these MS the number of longer-term unemployed reached by ESF is also higher than the EU average of 25%, with 27% in FI, 51% in IE, and 46% in SK (no participants were recorded yet in PT and SI).

Overall, the table shows that all MS that received CSR in the field of employment have allocated ESF investments to this priority as well; in fact only DK has not allocated investments to this priority. However, from the MS that received CSR in the field of employment in 2014 and 2015, BG, HU, PT, RO do not yet report progress in their ESF programming; no participants have been recorded in these MS as of yet, and no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries either. At this stage, the contracted amounts by beneficiaries form a good measure of planned and ongoing interventions. Generally MA only report on the number of participants and result after concluding the interventions. It shows that IE, LV, EE and HR already report large shares of the allocated budgets as amounts contracted by beneficiaries. IE also reports a considerable number of participants and results for interventions in this field, which is in line with the national needs, as emphasised by the CSR in 2014 / 2015.

**Table 8.1** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8i

MS	CSR	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT		20.1							
BE		435.9	25.6	5.9%	18,941	86.8%	3,306	58.5%	17.5%
BG	*	291.5							
CY	*	44.4							
CZ		695.4	148.4	21.3%	14,304	5.7%	0	0.0%	0.0%
DE	*	98.2	30.7	31.2%	4,974	31.1%	1,032	7.3%	20.7%
DK									
EE		268.4	222.3	82.8%	269	0.8%	26	45.0%	9.7%
ES	*	2,194.9			381,833	13.5%	53,188	2.9%	13.9%
FI	*	328.3	45.9	14.0%	4,738	1.5%	346	0.2%	7.3%
FR		793.7	54.2	6.8%	16,948	1.2%	5,261	0.7%	31.0%
GR		649.1							
HR	*	294.2	199.2	67.7%					
HU	*	1,231.3							
IE	*	325.6	325.1	99.8%	38,689	34.2%	15,463	0.0%	40.0%
IT	*	2,058.5	78.5	3.8%	65,418	1.8%	3,853	0.0%	5.9%
LT	*	266.2	86.1	32.3%	11,387	5.6%	6,909	5.3%	60.7%
LU		8.0							
LV		98.4	92.4	93.9%	13,864	16.5%	3,539	10.1%	25.5%
MT		20.0							
NL		50.0							
PL		1,862.8	133.7	7.2%	22,794	4.8%	7,113	25.4%	31.2%
PT	*	261.5							
RO	*	541.8							
SE		284.3	75.7	26.6%	98	0.2%	18	0.0%	18.4%
SI	*	213.8	15.3	7.2%	0	8.5%	0	0.0%	
SK	*	817.0	150.0	18.4%	5,062	1.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%
UK	*	1,961.4	428.4	21.8%	5,548	2.7%	98	0.8%	1.8%
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>16,114.9</b>	<b>2,111.6</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>604,867</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>100,152</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>16.6%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		7,932.0	1,021.2	12.9%	56,838	2.1%	17,587	18.1%	30.9%
More dev		6,108.1	967.6	15.8%	317,576	18.2%	27,238	7.0%	8.6%
Trans		2,074.9	122.8	5.9%	230,453	7.6%	55,327	3.4%	24.0%

Source: AIR 2015

Overall, across the EU 604,867 individuals have been reached by 2015, most of which in ES, IT, and IE. It is striking that no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries in ES in the field of employment measures despite the participation of 381.833 participants<sup>54</sup>. In HR and SI, project investments are already contracted by beneficiaries, but no participants are reported yet, as the interventions are still ongoing. At the same time, the table shows that, despite high amounts of amounts already contracted, this does not necessarily match the achievement of output targets in 2014 / 2015; while around 20% of the budget has contracted by beneficiaries in CZ, LT, SE and the UK, no more than 6% of the output target has been achieved in these MS.

When comparing the progress of employment interventions (IP8i) against their target settings, BE, DE, and IE in particular are well on their way towards reaching their targets (output

<sup>54</sup> This issue has been reported for ES elsewhere in this report as well.

indicators have achieved more than 30%). In BE, the progress towards the targets set for output achievements (86.8%) and result indicators (58.5%) is comparatively high. However, the low share of amount contracted by beneficiaries in this stage (5.9%), and the relatively limited number of individuals (measured in absolute values) recorded, suggest that these figures are distorted by some indicators with low targets.

At first sight in PL, the targets set for result and output targets seem out of balance; result indicators have already achieved 25.4% of their targets set, even though progress towards the output targets is only at 4.8%. However, this happens to be where targets for result indicators are set as percentages of output indicators, while the results are actually measured in absolute figures. This means that, *for the* current number of individuals (output), 25.4% of the results have been achieved. When a programme set all targets in absolute figures, the target achievement would refer to the absolute target of results. This is further confirmed by the absolute figures presented in table 8.1, which show that the output and results are in fact in balance for PL. This effect also continues when comparing the target achievements across different regions; lesser developed regions report achievement, while this is the other way around for transition and more developed regions.

In order to measure the balance between individual participants and results, the last column presents the share of individual results for every individual participant. At EU-level, one individual result has been achieved for every six individuals participating (16.6%), which is relatively low. Based on the results of the 2007-2013 ESF programme, the balance should be expected to be between 30%-40% for employment interventions. However, as the table shows, many programmes already reported participants, while no results have been reported yet. Therefore the EU-level is not very insightful. For individual MS however, this figure gives an insight into the reporting; LT reported a comparatively high share of individual results for its number of participants; a result has been achieved for 60.7% of individual outputs. On the other end of the spectrum, UK scores very low, with only 98 individual results for 5,548 individual participants (1.8%).

### **8.1.2 IP8ii. Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people**

Employment of young people has received a substantial level of policy attention, not least through the additional allocations under the Youth Employment Initiative. Progress achieved by YEI funding is already discussed in the chapters above, and this section only includes amounts and participants to ESF interventions in the field of youth unemployment that are not supported by YEI. No less than twenty-one EU MS (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DK, ES, FI, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, SL and UK) received country-specific recommendations in relation to youth employment. In order to improve the labour market access for young people, it was recommended to reach out to non-registered young people not in employment (BG, ES, HR, IT, PT, RO, SE and SL). Offering good quality offers of employment, apprenticeships or traineeships for young people as a way to improve their employability were also made (ES, IT, LT and PL).

**Table 8.2** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8ii

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve ment	Individual results	Result target achieve ment	Individual result / output
AT	*								
BE	*	132.9	63.2	47.6%	25,473	59.7%	12,497	37.2%	49.1%
BG	*	37.4	19.4	52.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY		17.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ	*								
DE		803.2	106.4	13.2%	8,868	21.2%	3,626	5.5%	40.9%
DK	*								
EE									
ES	*	686.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FI	*	0.4	40.5	10132%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FR		232.3	1.0	0.4%	0	1.1%	0	0.0%	
GR		64.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR	*	80.8	71.9	89.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU	*	598.8	50.9	8.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE	*								
IT	*	2,906.2	62.7	2.2%	52,157	3.9%	3,411	81.7%	6.5%
LT	*	20.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU	*	13.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LV	*	10.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT		6.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL	*	1,506.3	95.6	6.3%	42,478	4.5%	18,962	26.3%	44.6%
PT	*	228.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO	*	549.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE	*	387.8	53.5	13.8%	1,222	3.1%	145	0.0%	11.9%
SI	*	91.3	5.8	6.3%	0	18.0%	0	0.0%	
SK	*								
UK	*	697.2	592.6	85.0%	0	0.3%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>9,071.2</b>	<b>1,163.6</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>130,198</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>38,641</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>29.7%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve ment	Individual results	Result target achieve ment	Individual result / output
Less dev.		4,763.3	332.8	7.0%	33,035	0.3%	16,134	2.6%	48.8%
More dev		3,649.1	735.2	20.1%	83,556	9.8%	13,769	60.3%	16.5%
Trans		658.8	95.6	14.5%	13,607	8.9%	8,738	8.3%	64.2%

Source: AIR 2015

The table points to a data issue in FI, which sometimes provides incorrect links between allocated budgets and intervention fields<sup>55</sup>. In total, 38.641 positive results were achieved under this priority, mostly in MS that also received CSR. DE is the exception; it did not receive a CSR in this area, yet allocated a considerable budget, and already reports amounts contracted by beneficiaries, individual participants and results.

The table does show that the implementation of youth employment interventions outside the scope of YEI have a rather slow start; only in BE, DE, IT, PL and SE have individual participants and results been reported until 2015. In less-developed regions, implementation has only reached 0.3% of the output targets, mostly due to ongoing YEI interventions. On the other hand, implementation did take off in BE and has already reached 59.7% of the output targets for the entire period. The balance between individual results and participants is relatively similar; only in IT is the number of results per participant considerably lower than in other MS. Note that the result target achievement in IT is very high (81.7%). This is again

<sup>55</sup> Note that this is recurrent issue for FI that is also discussed elsewhere in this report.

related to the fact that its targets are measured by percentages; this shows that the result targets are almost being met *given the current number of participants*.

### **8.1.3 IP8iii. Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation**

IP 8.iii mainly supports actions to support start-ups / self-employment (financial support, guidance and training), followed by career support and guidance for individuals, social innovation, and the development of new programmes, tools and instruments. These interventions focus on the unemployed (starting up their own enterprise), women, disadvantaged, enterprises, long term unemployed, older workers, the inactive, young unemployed and workers.

In 2014 and 2015, EE and HR received Country-specific recommendations that suggested broader attention should be given to improving the business environment in the country. While various MS have included interventions that seek to promote self-employment, up to 3.12 billion euros in 2014-2020, as shown by the table below, EE and HR did not direct ESF interventions to this field of intervention.

Various MS have allocated budgets to this investment priority, but either have not yet started the implementation of operations, nor did they finish the designation of authorities, as judged by the lack reported costs or participants (BE, BG, GR, IT, PL, PT, RO). Furthermore, in terms of progress towards the targets set, implementation in this IP is relatively slow. FR and ES already achieved a high number of participants: FR achieved no less than 5,746 results that show an improved position for individual participants. In ES, a high number of individuals have been reached (84,527), but a very low number of individual results have been achieved (only 1 result has been achieved for every hundred participants: 1%).

**Table 8.3** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8iii

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT									
BE		18.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BG		31.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY									
CZ									
DE		615.3	130.2	21.2%	3,430	4.5%	1,819	6.8%	53.0%
DK		72.3	21.0	29.0%	201	2.5%	11	1.4%	5.5%
EE	*								
ES		544.1	0.0	0.0%	84,527	2.1%	858	26.5%	1.0%
FI			2.2						
FR		533.1	68.9	12.9%	27,592	4.9%	5,746	1.0%	20.8%
GR		141.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR	*								
HU									
IE									
IT		22.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LT									
LU									
LV									
MT									
NL									
PL		572.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		237.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO		334.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI									
SK									
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>3,122.4</b>	<b>222.3</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>115,750</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>8,434</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		1,369.1	2.0	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
More dev		1,054.0	134.8	12.8%	84,264	2.4%	5,066	1.9%	6.0%
Trans		699.3	85.5	12.2%	31,486	3.2%	3,368	29.9%	10.7%

Source: AIR 2015

Despite the higher financial significance of IP8iii in less-developed regions, implementation has been behind the reported levels for transition and more developed regions. Almost no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries in less-developed regions, and no progress whatsoever has been reported towards output indicators with targets. Transition and more developed regions show similar levels of implementation.

#### 8.1.4 IP8iv. Equality between men and women

Investment priority 8iv combines ESF investments that seek to improve 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. These interventions mainly target women, unemployed, enterprises and employees. Eight EU MS (AT, EE, IE, IT, MT, PL, SK and UK) received a recommendation to improve women's participation and prospects on the labour market, of which AT and SK received them in both 2014 and 2015. The most common recommendation focuses on improving childcare facilities and the access to more affordable and available childcare (AT, IE, IT, PL, SK and UK). EE and IE have not used ESF investments for this theme, while other MS with CSR explicitly allocated investments to this priority. Particularly in DE and GR, implementation seems on track, with 32% and 48% of the allocated budget recorded as costs respectively. GR, DE, IT, and ES already report substantial

participation figures, while only in DE were considerable number of individual results recorded. GR is showing particularly significant progress in its implementation and already reaches 33% of its output targets. In PL and IT, substantial investments are foreseen in this thematic field, but these still need to be initiated.

**Table 8.4** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8iv

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve- ment	Individual results	Result target achieve- ment	Individual result / output
AT	* *	59.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BE									
BG									
CY									
CZ		335.0	1.2	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE		283.8	90.1	31.7%	5,915	9.5%	1,684	16.6%	28.5%
DK									
EE	*								
ES		75.0	0.0	0.0%	3,392	3.2%	0	0.2%	0.0%
FI		23.8	2.3	9.5%	162	3.1%	1	0.0%	0.6%
FR									
GR		252.8	120.8	47.8%	37,438	33.3%	5	0.0%	0.0%
HR									
HU		3.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE	*								
IT	*	449.5	5.7	1.3%	4,878	0.9%	58	0.8%	1.2%
LT									
LU									
LV									
MT									
NL									
PL	*	503.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		99.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO									
SE									
SI									
SK	* *	91.8	30.0	32.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK	*	39.9	15.2	38.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>2,218.2</b>	<b>265.3</b>	<b>12.0%</b>	<b>51,785</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1,748</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Region</b>		<b>Allocated budget (x€million)</b>	<b>Amount contracted (x€million)</b>	<b>% all. budget</b>	<b>Individuals reached</b>	<b>Output target achieve- ment</b>	<b>Individual results</b>	<b>Result target achieve- ment</b>	<b>Individual result / output</b>
Less dev.		1,380.5	74.7	5.4%	19,370	0.6%	2	0.0%	0.0%
More dev.		647.0	156.1	24.1%	24,896	4.5%	1,624	2.6%	15.1%
Trans.		190.8	34.5	18.1%	7,519	4.9%	122	5.4%	0.0%

Source: AIR 2015

With 12% of the total budget allocated across the entire EU, 51,785 individuals have been reached, and for 1,748 individuals results have been reported. This low result value probably reflects the fact that GR, IT and ES report participants of ongoing projects, for which results may still need to be achieved. Less developed regions lag behind the other regions in terms of committed budgets and progress towards output targets.

### 8.1.5 IP8v. Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs

IP 8.v includes a wide diversity of actions addressing employers (and managers of enterprises) on the one hand and employees on the other. With regards to the employers, ESF mainly supports actions that facilitate the introduction and management of change in organisations to

prevent or mitigate the consequences of economic restructuring (e.g. guidance and training support, making the diagnosis and developing restructuring / action plans for introducing more innovative, more productive and greener models of labour organisation, including safe and healthy working conditions, managing the changing demographic structure of the company). Seven EU MS (DE, DK, FI, FR, LT, MT and RO) received recommendations to improve the employability of workers. In the case of DE, FR and RO special reference was made to the target groups of older workers or long-term unemployed. FI was advised to improve the employability of workers both in 2014 and 2015. In 2014 CSR were given to DE, FR, LT and RO.

Apart from LT and MT, all MS that received recommendations in this area have allocated specific ESF funding to this priority, and all except RO have reported on the start of the implementation of interventions in this area.

**Table 8.5** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8v

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT		1.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BE		159.9	58.9	36.9%	413	2.6%	2	0.0%	0.5%
BG		62.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY									
CZ		341.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE	*	1,984.9	442.5	22.3%	33,335	9.1%	14,723	19.8%	44.2%
DK	*	72.3	23.2	32.1%	42	7.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
EE									
ES		117.7	0.0	0.0%	35,472	11.9%	0	0.0%	0.0%
FI	**	116.9	26.4	22.6%	2,591	7.6%	24	0.0%	0.9%
FR	*	1,406.4	179.0	12.7%	9,941	2.9%	1,059	19.1%	10.7%
GR		603.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR									
HU		169.4	6.4	3.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE									
IT		574.8	8.9	1.6%	2,654	2.6%	0	19.3%	0.0%
LT	*								
LU									
LV		23.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT	*								
NL									
PL		670.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		1,043.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO	*	174.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI									
SK									
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>7,522.2</b>	<b>745.4</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>84,448</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>15,808</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
<b>Region</b>		<b>Allocated budget (x€million)</b>	<b>Amount contracted (x€million)</b>	<b>% all. budget</b>	<b>Individuals reached</b>	<b>Output target achievement</b>	<b>Individual results</b>	<b>Result target achievement</b>	<b>Individual result / output</b>
Less dev.		2,980.5	41.7	1.4%	388	0.0%	0	3.3%	0.0%
More dev		3,156.8	505.0	16.0%	71,591	6.2%	14,534	10.6%	17.6%
Trans		1,384.8	198.7	14.3%	12,469	3.8%	1,274	9.4%	24.0%

Source: AIR 2015

In ES participants are already reported for interventions in this field, even though no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries yet; 35,472 individuals have already been reached, and progress towards its output targets is at 11,9%. In DE, 33,335 individual participants were recorded, while a considerable number of results are also reported, particularly when compared against the total participants reached (44.2% result against every participant). Less

developed regions lag behind the other regions in terms of committed budgets and progress towards output targets.

#### **8.1.6 IP8vi. Active and healthy ageing**

Investments under IP8vi mainly support the development of tools and instruments for organisations, raising the awareness of healthy ageing and providing incentives for companies to hire older workers. As such, these interventions are directed at relatively similar target groups as those targeted by IP8v, which includes employees, older workers, employees at risk, and enterprises. Indirectly, the investment priority is linked to various country specific recommendations that focus on pension reforms and increasing the retirement age. It can be argued that MS about to initiate pension reforms also need to increase policy attention to measures that promote active and healthy aging. Fourteen EU MS (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, FI, FR, HR, LT, LU, MT, PL, RO and SL) received specific recommendations on changes to the pension systems. For example, AT, BE, BG, CZ, FI, LT, LU and MT are recommended to link the statutory retirement age to life expectancy and restrict access to early retirement. Further it was recommended to adopt a long-term strategy for the pension systems or bringing the pension system into balance (BG, CZ, DE, FR, LU PL, and SL). This includes phasing out early retirement options (BG, CZ, DE, FI and LU). Nine MS (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, FI, HR, LU and SL) were given CSR in 2014 and 2015. In 2014 only FR, LT, MT, and PL received CSR and RO only for 2015.

**Table 8.6** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8vi

MS	CSR	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement
AT	**	47.0	15.5	32.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
BE	**							
BG	**							
CY								
CZ	**							
DE	**							
DK								
EE								
ES								
FI	**		1.2					
FR	*	66.2	0.6	0.9%	4	47.8%	0	0.0%
GR								
HR	**							
HU								
IE								
IT		13.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
LT	*							
LU	**							
LV								
MT	*							
NL		202.0	0.0	0.0%	0	1.9%	0	0.0%
PL	*	393.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
PT								
RO	*							
SE								
SI	**	43.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
SK								
UK								
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>765.6</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement
Less dev.		417.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
More dev		330.0	16.9	5.1%	4	0.3%	0	0.0%
Trans		18.2	0.3	1.6%	0	46.7%	0	0.0%

Source: AIR 2015

Despite the considerable attention to the issue of pension reform in CSR, the table above shows that ESF 2014-2020 pays relatively little attention for interventions in the field of active ageing. While 14 MS received such CSR, only 6 MS allocated budgets to this priority (AT, FR, IT, NL, PL, SI). IT also allocated part of its budget to this priority, without having received a CSR. As such, considerably lower budgets were allocated to this IP than other IPs under TO8. As already reported for various other IP, FI reports amounts contracted by beneficiaries to this priority even though its OP has not allocated budget to it. This will need verification in a future revision of the AIR. Implementation of interventions in this field still needs to start. Only very small amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries, with the exception of AT. Moreover, except for the 4 participants reported in FR, no participants have yet been reached by active ageing interventions.

### 8.1.7 IP8vii. Modernisation of labour market institutions

Under IP 8vii, interventions are grouped that seek to modernise labour market institutions, such as public and private employment services, and improve the matching of labour market needs. Such interventions may consist of actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility schemes and better cooperation between institutions and relevant stakeholders. Eight EU MS (BG, ES, HR, HU, IE, IT, RO and SK) received recommendations to

strengthen labour market policy (LMP) institutions. Most focus on the potential to improve and modernise public employment services by providing quality support services to jobseekers (ES, HR, IE, IT, RO and SK). Another solution suggested is to focus on providing pathways to reach more specific target groups (BG, ES, and HR). Furthermore, it can be noticed that BG, CZ, ES and IE for both years, 2014 and 2015, received CSR in this field. Other countries like HR, HU, RO and SK only did so for 2014.

IE and HU did not allocate budgets for investing in this priority, but all other MS that received a CSR did. In addition, IT allocated a substantial 643 million euro to this priority. These interventions still need to be implemented in many MS, as no amounts are contracted by beneficiaries nor participants are reported in BE, BG, CY, CZ, ES, GR, PL, PT, RO, SK. The only participants and results so far have been reported in FR where 2,318 individuals participants have reached 869 individual short term results. In DK and HR, substantial amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries, but as of yet no equivalent progress in participation has been recorded.

**Table 8.7** Summative factsheet on progress of IP8vii

MS	CSR	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement
AT								
BE		15.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
BG	**	29.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
CY		6.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
CZ	**	209.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
DE								
DK		5.6	2.7	48.4%	0	32.0%	0	24.5%
EE								
ES	**	69.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
FI			6.9					
FR		90.8	7.1	7.8%	2,318	0.5%	869	0.5%
GR		31.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
HR	*	96.3	83.6	86.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
HU	*							
IE	**							
IT		643.3	28.1	4.4%	0	1.2%	0	12.9%
LT								
LU								
LV								
MT								
NL								
PL		46.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
PT		48.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
RO	*	118.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
SE								
SI								
SK	*	41.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
UK								
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>1,452.6</b>	<b>128.4</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>869</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Region</b>		<b>Allocated budget (x€million)</b>	<b>Amount contracted (x€million)</b>	<b>% all. budget</b>	<b>Individuals reached</b>	<b>Output target achievement</b>	<b>Individual results</b>	<b>Result target achievement</b>
Less dev.		1,021.8	97.0	9.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
More dev		379.8	27.6	7.3%	1,572	1.0%	821	11.8%
Trans		50.9	3.8	7.4%	746	2.1%	48	3.7%

Source: AIR 2015

### 8.1.8 Overview T08

The implementation of the interventions under Thematic Objective 8 has started, but to varying extents across MS. Interventions that seek to increase access to the labour market

(IP8i) already reach out to unemployed or inactive individuals. However, interventions in the field of self-employment (IP8iii) and active ageing (IP8vi) have a relatively slow start, judging by the amounts contracted by beneficiaries and the number of participants reached so far.

**Table 8.8** Overview TO8

IP	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
8i	16,114.9	2,111.6	13.1%	604,867	9.2%	100,152	13.4%	17%
8ii (no YEI)	9,071.2	1,163.6	12.8%	130,198	6.3%	38,641	28.4%	30%
8iii	3,122.4	222.3	7.1%	115,750	1.8%	8,434	8.7%	7%
8iv	2,218.2	265.3	12.0%	51,785	3.1%	1,748	1.7%	3%
8v	7,522.2	745.4	9.9%	84,448	3.1%	15,808	7.0%	19%
8vi	765.6	17.2	2.2%	4	2.0%	0	0.0%	0%
8vii	1,452.6	128.4	8.8%	2,318	1.4%	869	6.0%	37%
<b>TO8</b>	<b>40,267.2</b>	<b>4,653.8</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	<b>989,370</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>165,652</b>	<b>12.6%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Source: AIR 2015

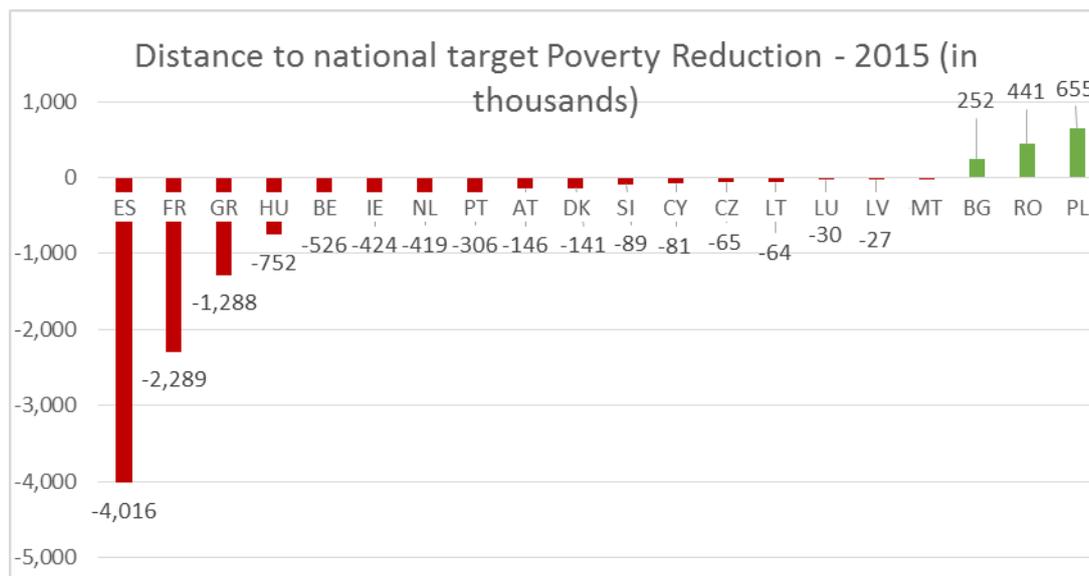
The contribution of ESF to the EU objective to increase the employment rate to 75% is however relatively clear. In 2014 / 2015, slightly under a million individuals have already been reached. Already 165,652 individuals entered employment within the first weeks after the intervention, or at least improved their position on the labour market by gaining a qualification, participating in training or actively engaging in job searching. Over 25% of these 201,009 individual results are achieved by beneficiaries that specifically target youth unemployment.

The overview table shows that implementation of output indicators at EU level has reached, on average, 4.2% of the output targets, and 12.6% of the result targets. The high score for result target achievements in IP8ii is mainly due to the target setting in IT; however, the figure also shows that in IP8ii the highest share of individual results against the number of participants is being achieved.

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

In order to reduce poverty in the EU, the EU 2020 headline target aims to lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty. 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 reach these targets. Progress towards the headline targets has been varied, particularly as the economic and financial crisis posed challenges towards meeting these targets, as shown in figure 8.2 below.

**Figure 8.2** Distance to national poverty reduction target (2015, in thousands)



Source: Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>)

EU MS can be divided into countries that have already reached their national targets (BG, RO, PL), a large group that is relatively close to its targets (BE, IE, NL, PT, AT, DK, SI, CY, C, LT, LU, LV and MT), and countries that are more distant from their targets, with the largest differences reported for ES, FR, GR and HU<sup>56</sup>.

Different EU-level strategic documents emphasize the need for additional efforts to ensure the effectiveness of social protection systems, in order to counter the effect of the economic crisis, promote social inclusion and prevent poverty by activating inclusion strategies (including efficient and adequate income support, measures to tackle poverty, as well as broad access to social services). Currently, EU Member States spend varying shares of GDP on social protection, and also achieve different results in terms of reducing poverty.

ESF 2014-2020 is a crucial EU-level instrument to further complement national efforts towards achieving the Headline target. In order to ensure that a sufficient share of resources is allocated to promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, Article 4(2) of the ESF Regulation requests that at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State shall be allocated to this thematic objective. Although higher social spending is generally associated with stronger poverty reduction, important differences exist, suggesting scope for efficiency gains. On the other hand, the link between social assistance and activation measures should be strengthened, by developing more personalised services and efforts to improve the uptake of measures by vulnerable groups.

ESF supports the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty through the following investment priorities:

- (9i). Active inclusion;
- (9ii). Integration of marginalised communities, such as the Roma;
- (9iii). Combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation;
- (9iv). Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest;
- (9v). Promoting the social economy and social enterprises;
- (9vi). Community-led local development strategies.

<sup>56</sup> For DE, EE, HR, SK, FI, SE, UK no targets have been included in Eurostat concerning this target

### 8.2.1 IP9i. Active inclusion

Most interventions under IP 9i relate to reducing barriers to employment and integration for groups at the margins of the labour market, or those at risk of poverty and social exclusion; these groups are closely related to the IPs falling under TO8. Interventions support pathways to employment, including integrated individualised approaches (combining needs assessments / diagnosis, individual counselling, accreditation of prior learning and working experience, basic education, training, work experience places, job counselling, anti-discrimination measures and information / awareness raising activities, hiring support for companies, job coaching/ support on the work floor).

In 2014 and 2015, a total of twelve EU MS (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DK, FI, FR, HU, LU, NL, SE and SK) received a specific recommendation on the active inclusion of marginalised groups. The definition of marginalised group can differ by country and may include migrants, Roma, rural populations or other vulnerable groups. The focus of this investment priority lies primarily on the inclusion into the labour market, promoting equal opportunities, and active participation.

When assessing the factsheet table below, the largest allocated budgets in real terms are found in MS that did not receive recommendations, such as in DE, ES, IT, PL, PT. These considerable investments are relevant, as in the previous programming period these MS (except DE) invested a lower share of their total ESF budget in active inclusion interventions than the EU average. All MS that received a recommendation have also allocated investments to this priority. In terms of implementation, BE, DE and FR advance well, with considerable amounts already contracted by beneficiaries in combination with a high number of participants and equivalent numbers of individual short-term results. NL has not registered any amounts contracted by beneficiaries, yet it has already reported 138,865 participants. In terms of results, 124,835 individual results have already been achieved, particularly due to the advanced implementation of the priority in BE, DE, and FR. FR proves to be an exceptional case despite its high number of individuals already reached; it progressed on average only towards 4.7% of its output targets. Various indicators that do not measure individuals still show low or zero values.

When looking at the target achievement, BE, NL and GR already score relatively highly in terms of their output targets (58.4%, 50.4% and 39.4% respectively), while most other MS are considerably further from their output targets. In terms of results, HU reports an outlying target achievement, but, despite of this, no participants have been reported nor amounts contracted by beneficiaries; it already registered 6 times the number of registered communities than its target.

**Table 8.9** Summative factsheet on progress of IP9i

MS	CS R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT	**	266.4	28.4	10.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BE	*	662.6	426.7	64.4%	81,541	58.4%	37,079	77.8%	45.5%
BG	**	99.4	8.9	9.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY		8.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ	**	407.0	13.1	3.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE		4,153.4	1,779.3	42.8%	76,269	12.4%	13,783	80.6%	18.1%
DK	*	80.1	4.3	5.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
EE		42.5	42.2	99.3%	402	7.9%	34	0.0%	8.5%
ES		1,997.1	1.3	0.1%	24,923	2.1%	1,044	17.5%	4.2%
FI		199.5	47.7	23.9%	2,863	5.6%	187	0.0%	6.5%
FR	*	3,360.2	88.3	2.6%	241,100	4.7%	69,168	4.9%	28.7%
GR		309.0	77.1	24.9%	25,095	39.4%	2	0.0%	0.0%
HR		136.5	104.1	76.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU	**	379.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	214.3%	
IE		365.9	365.4	99.9%	4,715	4.0%	1,055	5.1%	22.4%
IT		2,742.5	32.9	1.2%	7,594	1.0%	841	15.1%	11.1%
LT		68.1	26.8	39.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU	*	8.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LV		108.3	67.9	62.7%	655	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
MT		35.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL	*	722.1	0.0	0.0%	138,865	50.4%	1,638	0.0%	1.2%
PL		1,574.8	5.3	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		1,071.5	50.5	4.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO									
SE	*	293.1	53.4	18.2%	119	0.5%	4	0.0%	3.4%
SI	*	112.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SK	**	193.2	50.3	26.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK		1,853.2	1,002.9	54.1%	2,715	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>21,249.8</b>	<b>4,276.8</b>	<b>20.1%</b>	<b>606,856</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>124,835</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>20.6%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		5,980.9	560.1	9.4%	12,109	1.6%	34	7.3%	0.3%
More dev		11,269.6	2,802.1	24.9%	460,890	6.5%	81,868	27.8%	17.8%
Trans		3,999.3	914.7	22.9%	133,857	18.7%	42,933	31.8%	32.1%

Source: AIR 2015

The table shows a large discrepancy in the implementation between the different regions. Lesser developed regions are consistently behind in the implementation of investments in this priority, both in committing budgets, and towards reaching output / result targets and individuals. Interventions in more developed and transition regions already progressed better.

### 8.2.2 IP9ii. Integration of marginalised communities

Under the heading of active inclusion, various specific investment priorities have been defined. In addition to active inclusion in IP9i, a second investment priority focuses more broadly on the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities. Interventions in this investment priority address the improvement and accessibility in educational provision (including measures to strengthen methods and teachers on inclusion), as well as improving employment, social and health services, and housing, along with reducing existing segregation practices. In this regard, BG, CZ, HU and SK received the recommendation to focus specifically on Roma by increasing participation in education. For AT, BE, DK, FI, LU and SE, it was recommended that they should take actions to improve the prospects of people with a migrant background, by taking measures to improve vocational training (DK) and increase labour market participation, for example, as well as by reducing financial disincentives to work (BE).

Compared to the investments in active inclusion, MS allocated substantially lower investments to the broader integration of marginalised communities than they did towards more specific labour market inclusion. This is in line with the combined targets on employment and poverty reduction, set out in the Headline target 2020 and therefore not necessarily a reason for concern. Furthermore, the fact that various MS, which received relevant CSR, did not allocate budgets to this specific priority is often explained by the investments made under IP9i.

From all the MS that allocated investments, only in AT meaningful amounts are already contracted by beneficiaries; here it constitutes 32.4% of the allocated budget. However, no participants or results were reported until 2015, which suggests that this investment priority is not yet being implemented.

**Table 8.10** Summative factsheet on progress of IP9ii

MS	CSR	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT	**	8.0	2.6	32.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BE	*	27.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BG	**	168.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY									
CZ	**	236.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE									
DK	*								
EE									
ES		63.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FI			0.5						
FR	*	12.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		92.5	0.6	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR									
HU	**	556.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE									
IT		112.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LT									
LU	*								
LV									
MT									
NL	*								
PL		20.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT									
RO	*	437.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE	*								
SI	*								
SK	**	116.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>1,851.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		1,632.0	0.6	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	
More dev		161.3	3.1	1.9%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	
Trans		58.6	0.0	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	

Source: AIR 2015

### 8.2.3 IP9iii. Combating discrimination

Investment priority 9iii is yet another form in which ESF allows MS to specifically improve the position of vulnerable groups and promote equal opportunities. It addresses actions supporting the promotion of equal opportunities and fighting all types of discrimination by supporting entities in charge, combatting discrimination and developing awareness-raising programmes and training amongst a variety of stakeholders. No specific CSR relate to discrimination as

such; where these are mentioned, these are more specifically in relation to accessing the labour market or accessing education. Therefore, no CSR has been included in the table below. While 11 MS have still included interventions under this priority, the budgets allocated are also the lowest in comparison to the other IP under TO9 (552 million euro). This suggests that MS, as well as the CSR, also seek to generally link discrimination issues to other interventions, such as the labour market or education.

In BE and IE amounts are already contracted by beneficiaries that equal and even surpass the allocated budgets, while beneficiaries in DE also already contracted a majority of its allocated budget. In these MS no or very low individual results are reported. In ES the highest number of individuals is reported, but no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries in this instance. Output and result indicators that do not track individuals but the number of organisations are still relatively low. Most progress has been made in DE, where implementation has reached 10.5% of the output targets, and 5.8% of the result targets.

**Table 8.11** Summative factsheet on progress of IP9iii

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve ment	Individual results	Result target achieve ment	Individual result / output
AT									
BE		7.3	7.3	100.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BG									
CY		16.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ		26.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE		3.0	1.8	60.4%	203	10.5%	55	5.8%	27.1%
DK									
EE									
ES		205.2	0.0	0.0%	3,691	4.5%	625	2.0%	16.9%
FI			1.4						
FR		15.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		126.9	8.7	6.9%	525	3.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
HR									
HU									
IE		21.7	21.7	100%	17	0.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
IT									
LT									
LU									
LV									
MT									
NL									
PL		20.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		62.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO									
SE									
SI									
SK		47.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>552.0</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>7.4%</b>	<b>4,436</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve ment	Individual results	Result target achieve ment	Individual result / output
Less dev.		212.4	3.9	1.8%	380	1.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
More dev		236.3	28.8	12.2%	3,969	4.9%	680	2.2%	17.1%
Trans		103.3	8.3	8.0%	87	1.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%

Source: AIR 2015

#### 8.2.4 IP9iv. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services

Under IP9iv, MS can set up interventions that seek to enhance access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest. These interventions mostly support actions for entities (social service providers in the field of education, employment, healthcare, and others) adjusting their policies, working arrangements, and developing programmes, tools and instruments. In a limited number of cases, actions are supported that are directly related to individuals. CSR to this end have been formulated for AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FI, IE, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT and SK; AT, BE, IE, and FI did not use ESF to address these recommendations. FI is another special case, as it reports contracted amounts by beneficiaries to this investment priority, even though no budget has been allocated.

In various MS, amounts contracted by beneficiaries have been reported (BG, EE, HR, SK), even though the number of participants is still quite low. BG is an exception, and is responsible for most of the individuals reached by interventions in this priority. Projects and entities measured in common output indicators have not yet been reported. Disregarding the 8 individual results achieved in EE, no results were reported for this specific investment priority.

**Table 8.12** Summative factsheet on progress of IP9iv

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT	*								
BE	*								
BG	**	170.9	117.9	69.0%	11,152	22.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
CY									
CZ	**	279.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE	*	10.7	0.8	7.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DK									
EE	**	114.9	72.6	63.2%	233	9.0%	8	3.7%	3.4%
ES	**	113.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FI	**		6.2						
FR		17.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		303.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR		211.8	210.2	99.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU		277.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE	*								
IT		740.4	2.1	0.3%	2,649	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
LT	*	125.8	6.5	5.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU									
LV	**	156.6	25.9	16.6%	545	0.0%	0	4.9%	0.0%
MT	*	5.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL	*	1,139.8	1.4	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT	*	546.6	16.3	3.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO		541.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI		31.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SK	**	175.4	67.7	38.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>4,962.3</b>	<b>527.5</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>14,579</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		3,872.4	510.7	13.2%	11,930	1.3%	8	0.5%	0.1%
More dev		960.4	16.6	1.7%	2,649	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Trans		129.5	0.2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	

Source: AIR 2015

### 8.2.5 IP9v. Promoting the social economy and social enterprises

This investment priority seeks to promote social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social economy. It does so by subsidizing operation costs, micro credits, wage subsidies for employees, developing business plans, mentoring, providing legal and accounting support, and more. Management and supporting staff of social enterprises are also trained to improve their capacity for effective management of social enterprises. This should facilitate access to employment for vulnerable groups. No CSR in 2014 / 2015 have been issued to MS in this priority. A total of 1,75 billion euro has been allocated, with particularly high contributions in ES and PL. At this stage, contracted amounts by beneficiaries have been reported in FI, FR, HR, LT, and PL, among which LT and FI report higher costs than originally allocated. The reported number of individuals or projects measured by common indicators is still relatively low. LT is the only case in which some progress has been achieved towards the output targets set for this investment priority (20.5%).

**Table 8.13** Summative factsheet on progress of IP9v

MS	CSR	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT									
BE		21.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BG		33.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY		6.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ									
DE									
DK									
EE									
ES		473.8	0.0	0.0%	1,000	1.3%	267	0.6%	26.7%
FI		0.4	0.5	123%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FR		39.8	3.8	9.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		136.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR		37.6	7.3	19.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU		32.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE									
IT		118.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LT		48.4	53.0	109.5%	3,379	20.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
LU									
LV									
MT									
NL									
PL		430.7	25.9	6.0%	50	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
PT		182.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO		131.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI		37.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SK									
UK		23.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>1,753.1</b>	<b>90.5</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>4,429</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		1,069.7	86.6	8.1%	3,429	0.7%	0	0.0%	0.0%
More dev		388.0	3.8	1.0%	1,000	0.3%	267	0.2%	26.7%
Trans		295.4	0.1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	

Source: AIR 2015

### 8.2.6 IP9vi. Community-led local development strategies

Finally, active inclusion can be promoted through supporting community-led local development strategies. Actions have been developed to engage local communities with the aim of solving local unemployment, supporting SME and social enterprises, providing education possibilities for the disadvantaged, access to social services, community based social work and more. No specific CSR were issued with this priority in 2014 / 2015 and MS have all allocated relatively limited amounts. Only in LT and SE amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries, but in both MS this is no more than 2% of the allocated budget. No participants were recorded under this investment priority, and progress towards the output targets has only been recorded in DE. No results have been achieved, either for individuals or others.

**Table 8.14** Summative factsheet on progress of IP9vi

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT									
BE									
BG									
CY									
CZ		67.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE		25.0	0.0	0.0%	0	20.0%	0	0.0%	
DK									
EE									
ES		18.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FI									
FR		10.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		45.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR									
HU		48.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE									
IT		24.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LT		16.9	0.2	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU									
LV									
MT									
NL									
PL		73.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		124.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO		212.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE		16.0	0.3	1.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SI									
SK									
UK		107.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>789.9</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		571.6	0.2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
More dev		146.4	0.3	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
Trans		71.9	0.0	0.0%	0	3.1%	0	0.0%	

Source: AIR 2015

### 8.2.7 Overview T09

Under Thematic Objective 9 the implementation efforts by MS seem to be focused primarily around IP9i and IP9iv, while in other (smaller) investment priorities considerably lower amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries thus far. Progress towards implementation targets is generally very low under this thematic objective, not only for individuals as presented in the table, but also for the other indicators, most of which still report implementation values of 0%. The implementation of IP9ii and IP9vi in particular will need considerable attention in the coming years, as these are relatively significant in financial terms. More reassuring is that IP9i - which is much more financially significant than other IP - has already been able to produce observable results against the EU objectives to reduce poverty. At the individual level, IP 9i has already reached 606,856 individuals, among which 135,596 have achieved positive results within weeks after leaving the intervention. As various MS also report ongoing interventions, a monitoring report such as this one is not able to fully capture all possible results. However, by reaching a total of 136,551 individual short-term results under active inclusion, a meaningful contribution to the poverty reduction targets is being made.

**Table 8.15** Overview T09

IP	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
9i	21,249.8	4,276.8	20.1%	606,856	7.2%	124,835	20.4%	21%
9ii	1,851.9	3.7	0.2%	4,436	0.0%	680	0.0%	15%
9iii	552.0	40.9	7.4%	14,579	2.9%	8	1.1%	0%
9iv	4,962.3	527.5	10.6%	4,429	0.9%	267	0.3%	6%
9v	1,753.1	90.5	5.2%	0	0.5%	0	0.1%	
9vi	789.9	0.5	0.1%	0	0.7%	0	0.0%	
<b>T09</b>	<b>31,159.0</b>	<b>4,939.9</b>	<b>15.9%</b>	<b>630,300</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>125,790</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>20%</b>

Source: AIR 2015

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

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

In addition to the EU2020 goals on education (that remain the cornerstone of European strategy in this field), "Education and Training 2020" (ET 2020) provides complementary common strategic objectives for Member States, including a set of principles for achieving these objectives, as well as common working methods with priority areas for each periodic work cycle<sup>57</sup>. This strategy framework consists of European benchmarks in the fields of: participation in early child 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. ESF contributes to these objectives with four dedicated investment priorities.

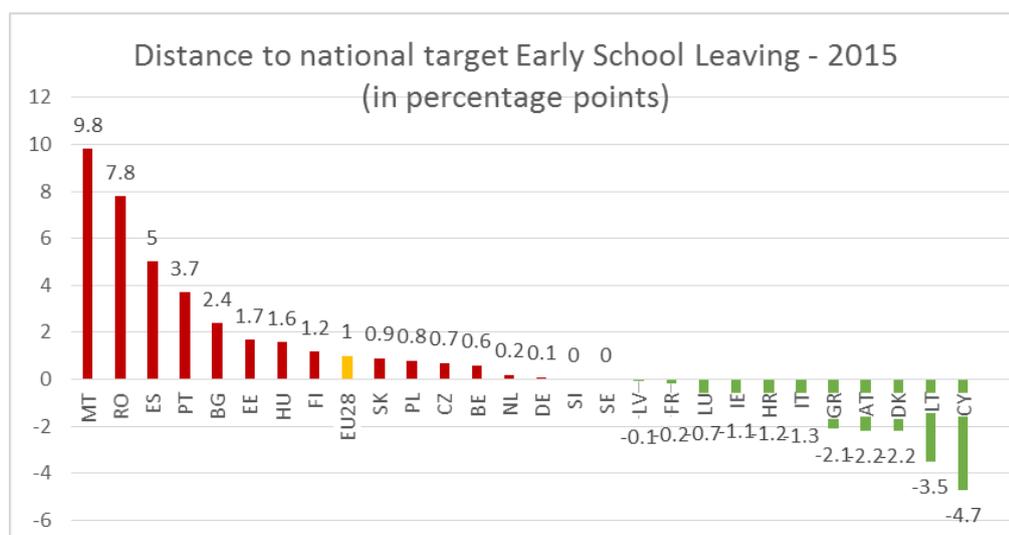
When assessing the performance of MS in relation to early school leaving<sup>58</sup> in the field of education, one sees that a number of countries already reached their targets, such as LV, FR, LU, IE, HR, IT, GR, DK, AT, LT, CY and the UK (see figure below). Another group of MS is made up of countries that are close to reaching their targets, such as SE, SI, DE, NL, BE, CZ, PL, SK, FI, HU and EE. A third of countries are still far from reaching their national targets, including MT, RO, ES, PT and BG, which are all more than 2 percentage points away from their national target<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>57</sup> It should be mentioned however that the CPR is not directly linked to the ET2020 strategy

<sup>58</sup> Early School Leaving is defined by the percentage of the population aged 18-24 with, at most, lower secondary education and who are not in further education or training;

<sup>59</sup> For the UK no target has been included in Eurostat concerning this target

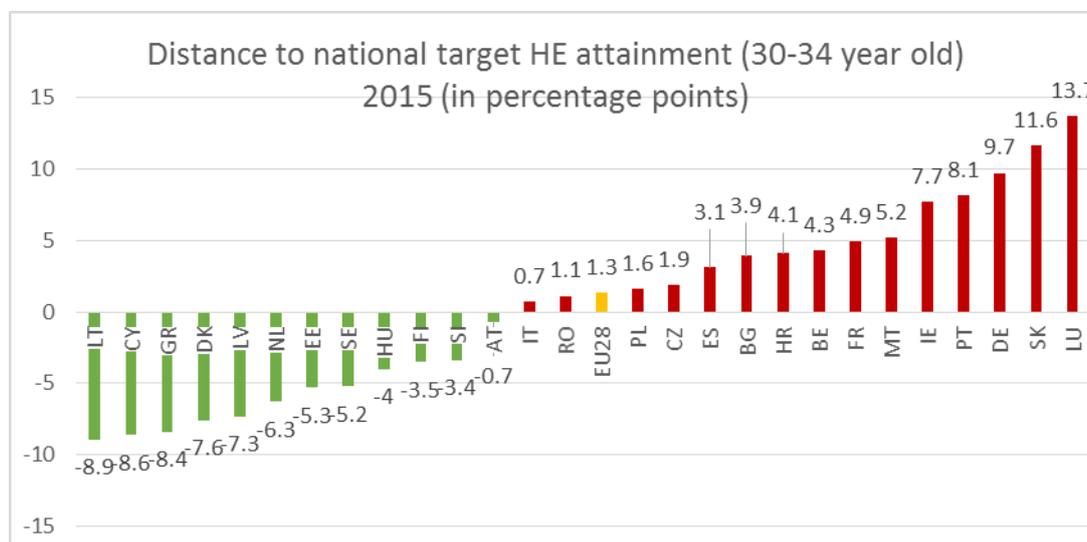
**Figure 8.3** Headline target Early School Leaving – distance from national target (in percentage points)



Source: Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>)

Likewise, by taking a closer look at countries' performance and national targets on tertiary educational attainment for the 30-34 age group, one sees a group of countries that have already reached their national targets (LT, CY, GR, DK, LV, NL, EE, SE, HU, FI, SI and AT); a second, larger group is close to reaching their national target. Only SK and LU still need to considerably increase educational attainment, as they are more than 10 percentage points from their national target<sup>60</sup>.

**Figure 8.4** Headline target HE attainment (30-34 year old) 2015 – distance from national target (in percentage points)



Source: Eurostat (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>)

National efforts to reach these targets are substantially complemented by funding available in the ESF, which is recognised as one of the crucial implementation mechanisms for the EU2020 objectives. ESF 2014-2020 concentrates investments in education into the following four investment priorities:

- (10i). Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal,

<sup>60</sup> For the UK no target has been included in Eurostat concerning this target

non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training

- (10ii). 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). 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). 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

### **8.3.1 IP10i. Reducing and preventing early school-leaving**

Investment priority 10i combines various types of actions and interventions under one priority. It focuses on the reduction and prevention of early school-leaving, and also includes the promotion of 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. The overwhelming majority of targets consists of young people in education. Other frequently targeted groups are schools, low skilled individuals and school personnel.

CSR were issued towards the headline target on early school leaving among nine MS (AT, BE, ES, FR, HU, IT, MT, PT and RO). More specifically for ES, it was recommended to enhance guidance and support for groups at risk of early school leaving, while for HU it was recommended to implement a national strategy on early school leaving prevention with a focus on drop-outs from vocational education and training. Only RO received recommendations in relation to early school leaving for both years. This attention on early school leaving is fully reflected in the allocated budgets. All MS that received CSR have a considerable budget allocated to this priority. Due to the importance of the headline target, various other MS have also allocated considerable budgets to this priority, which totals 11.37 billion euros.

**Table 8.16** Summative factsheet on progress of IP10i

MS	CSR	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT	*	284.7	0.6	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BE	*	60.4	0.0	0.0%	1,686	31.8%	231	0.0%	13.7%
BG		143.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY									
CZ		877.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE		1,032.1	177.2	17.2%	46,855	9.6%	15,770	160.4%	33.7%
DK									
EE		120.3	71.0	59.0%	129	6.8%	6	250.3%	4.7%
ES	*	1,351.1	0.0	0.0%	3,409	9.0%	1,600	1072%	46.9%
FI			3.8						
FR	*	226.6	27.1	11.9%	4,823	0.8%	3,377	2.1%	70.0%
GR		489.4	27.0	5.5%	0	40.3%	0	0.0%	
HR									
HU	*	417.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE									
IT	*	2,886.2	24.4	0.8%	7,592	2.7%	2	2.2%	0.0%
LT		91.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU									
LV		138.8	9.0	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT	*	15.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL		1,219.0	1.9	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT	*	911.8	53.0	5.8%	19,514	2.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
RO	**	660.5	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI									
SK		263.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK		178.1	2.9	1.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>11,367.1</b>	<b>397.9</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>84,008</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>20,986</b>	<b>53.1%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		6,525.2	162.4	2.5%	19,717	0.7%	6	16.5%	0.0%
More dev		3,402.8	142.9	4.2%	49,189	8.9%	15,375	140.8%	31.3%
Trans		1,439.1	92.6	6.4%	15,102	8.5%	5,605	308.6%	37.1%

Source: AIR 2015

Despite the importance of IP 10i, implementation of operations still needs to take off. Only in EE a high share of the allocated budget has been contracted by beneficiaries (59%), but for other MS this is generally well below 10% of the allocated budgets. As in other investment priorities, some amounts contracted by beneficiaries submitted by FI seem wrongly recorded, as no funding seems to have been allocated.

In total, 84,008 individuals have already been reached across the EU, half of which are in DE. This seems well balanced, as DE also reports around half of the amounts contracted by beneficiaries across the EU at this stage of implementation. Subsequently, 20,986 individual results have been reached, most of which are again in DE. A number of MS have not yet reported amounts contracted by beneficiaries nor participants, which should receive additional attention in MS that received CSR on this issue (HU, AT, MT and RO).

The table demonstrates the need for additional implementation efforts in less developed regions; implementation in terms of committed budgets, or progress towards targets, is considerably behind other regions. In terms of result targets, unreasonably high target achievements have been reported, mostly due to target setting in percentages; the results

that are easiest to obtain in this area are also mostly achieved in the beginning of the programming period, and are likely to normalise in the coming years.

### **8.3.2 IP10ii. Improving the quality and efficiency of tertiary education**

A second crucial headline target of Europe 2020 extends to the share of population that is enrolled in tertiary education. Investments towards this target can be found under IP10ii. The objective of this priority is to improve 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. As such, it brings together various aspects that may be mentioned in the CSR, such as quality and access to HE, but also elements that may be targeted under thematic objective 9, under fighting discrimination and equal opportunities. Here, the analysis is focused on AT, CZ, HU and LV, which received explicit CSR to implement reforms for higher education. In addition, IT and LV also received the recommendation to improve the quality of higher education.

The table clearly shows the importance that most MS award to this priority, with over 6.6 billion euros allocated for 2014-2020. AT did not use ESF investments to respond to a recommendation to improve strategic planning in higher education. In terms of implementation, HR and IE have almost all of their budgets already contracted by beneficiaries, while in HR no participants have yet been recorded. In PT, a substantial number of participants have already been reached, while it reports 16.8% of its budgets as allocated costs. The achievement towards its output indicators suggests that interventions targeting individuals have possibly been frontloaded, while interventions targeting entities and project are progressing a bit more slowly. The opposite is found in ES, where a limited number of individuals have been reached, while it already progressed towards 58.0% of its output targets. Finally, no sign of implementation can be found in BG, CZ, GR, HU, LV, MT, PL, RO and SK. Possibly the fact that interventions in these MS focus more on structural support, such as infrastructure or education systems may explain a slow start.

**Table 8.17** Summative factsheet on progress of IP10ii

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT	*								
BE									
BG		70.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY									
CZ	*	444.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE		200.3	39.7	19.8%	331	3.4%	0	5.8%	0.0%
DK									
EE									
ES		243.9	0.0	0.0%	2,398	58.0%	10	0.7%	0.4%
FI			3.5						
FR		401.7	5.3	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		174.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR		241.2	231.2	95.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU	*	395.2	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE		22.4	22.4	100.0%	25,107	6.8%	0	0.0%	0.0%
IT	*	911.8	29.7	3.3%	2,914	7.8%	314	0.0%	10.8%
LT		219.1	7.8	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU									
LV	*	66.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT		9.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL		1,443.2	2.0	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		1,354.8	227.7	16.8%	58,201	7.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
RO		307.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI									
SK		103.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>6,611.6</b>	<b>569.2</b>	<b>8.6%</b>	<b>88,951</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		4,978.9	468.4	9.4%	58,213	1.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
More dev		1,223.4	64.9	5.3%	30,261	11.4%	314	0.0%	1.0%
Trans		409.2	36.0	8.8%	477	3.3%	10	3.9%	2.1%

Source: AIR 2015

### 8.3.3 IP10iii. Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning

Where IP 10i focuses on general education, and IP10ii on higher education, IP10iii includes interventions that seek to improve quality and access to lifelong learning, including for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings. It should contribute to upgrade the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways, including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences.

Seven EU MS (BG, EE, IE, LT, LU, PL and RO) received a recommendation related to lifelong learning in 2014, while in 2015 no specific recommendations were made in relation to LLL. It is one of the key investment priorities of ESF programming, and brings together an allocated budget of 11.49 billion euros; only in CZ and NL are no interventions funded under this theme. However, it is very well possible that lifelong learning interventions feature in other investment priorities, such as in active inclusion or labour market related interventions.

In AT, BE, EE, HR, IE, and the UK, amounts have already been contracted by beneficiaries. In BE and IE, a high number of participants and results have been reached (86,514 and 98,517 participants against 65,289 and 66,329 individual results respectively), which also accounts for a healthy progression towards the output and result targets (30.6% and 16.9% and 16.7%

and 11.1% respectively). This shows that this investment priority has been high on the implementation agenda in these two MS. Overall, implementation for this investment priority seems to be the most on track in comparison to other IP, with the highest share of allocated budget already contracted by beneficiaries, the second highest number of individuals reached, and the highest number of results. Still, in AT, HR and the UK, hardly any participants or progress towards targets were recorded, despite the amounts contracted by beneficiaries. In EE a low number of individuals have been recorded, but its progress towards the output target is already at 21%. BG, LT, LU and RO all received CSR in this area, but reported neither amounts contracted by beneficiaries nor participations, and thus need to make considerable steps towards their objectives.

**Table 8.18** Summative factsheet on progress of IP10iii

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
AT		136.1	64.9	47.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BE		524.6	354.0	67.5%	86,514	30.6%	41,989	16.7%	48.5%
BG	*	116.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY		10.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ									
DE	*	1,002.8	169.3	16.9%	29,274	6.6%	5,174	15.1%	17.7%
DK		75.1	4.4	5.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
EE	*	108.9	51.1	46.9%	106	21.0%	0	0.5%	0.0%
ES		296.5	0.0	0.0%	389	6.6%	389	853.1%	100.0%
FI		329.4	29.9	9.1%	7,113	1.5%	574	0.0%	8.1%
FR		2,390.4	600.2	25.1%	24,845	13.2%	12,453	130.0%	50.1%
GR		71.1	3.6	5.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HR		188.2	194.5	103.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU		590.0	28.7	4.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE	*	193.0	192.5	99.7%	98,517	16.9%	66,329	11.1%	67.3%
IT		449.1	13.0	2.9%	1,501	1.1%	191	0.1%	12.7%
LT	*	158.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU	*	8.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LV		27.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT		15.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL	*	519.1	21.2	4.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
PT		668.1	111.9	16.7%	0	2.6%	0	0.0%	
RO	*	282.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE		372.3	60.6	16.3%	237	0.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
SI		223.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SK		64.8	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK		2,673.4	1,467.6	54.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>11,493.3</b>	<b>3,367.3</b>	<b>29.3%</b>	<b>248,496</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>127,099</b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>51.1%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
Less dev.		3,954.7	670.0	16.9%	106	0.9%	0	0.0%	0.0%
More dev.		5,711.4	1,926.7	33.7%	173,209	8.7%	84,743	113.1%	48.9%
Trans		1,827.2	770.6	42.2%	75,181	8.1%	42,356	189.4%	56.3%

Source: AIR 2015

Less developed regions are slightly behind in their implementation of interventions in this area, both in terms of committed budgets and particularly in terms of achieved output targets. While the result targets in transition and more developed regions are a bit distorted by outliers, no results have been achieved in lesser developed regions. This means that these activities have hardly started in these regions in the first two years of implementation. This is problematic, as a total budget of almost 4 billion euros has been allocated to lesser developed regions. As such LLL projects will need to be started up urgently in order to reach the targets set by MS with

lesser developed regions in the Performance Framework. In more developed and transition regions, a considerably higher ratio of results against participants (around 50%) has been achieved than in other investment priorities. This is in line with higher ratios for these type of investments in the 2007-2013 programming period.

#### **8.3.4 IP10iv. Improving the labour market relevance of education**

Under this heading, MS can undertake interventions that improve the overall education and training systems, improve the transition from education to work, and strengthen vocational education and training systems and their quality. This can be carried out 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. Target groups range from schools, low skilled individuals and school personnel and also include enterprises (employers, companies, and organisations).

No less than twenty-two EU MS (BE, BG, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, SL and UK) received a specific recommendation to improve the labour market relevance of education. For BE, LT, LU, PT, SL and UK, it was recommended to improve professional mobility by improving the labour market relevance of education to address skills shortages and skill mismatches. For DK, EE, FI, FR, IE, LV, RO and UK, it was recommended to facilitate the transition from education to the labour market by offering work-based training or apprenticeships. BE, EE, HU, LT and LV received recommendations for 2014 and 2015, other countries only for 2014. No specific ESF investments were made by CZ, EE and IE in response to this recommendation.

For FI, the amounts contracted by beneficiaries under this priority seem incorrect (as shown across practically all IPs), and HR, which reports a considerably higher amount than allocated in its OP. Also curious is that in ES 27,926 individuals have already been reached, while no amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries at this stage. In DE, implementation of interventions under this priority seems well underway, with 39.6% of the allocated budget already contracted by beneficiaries, and a total of 64,569 individuals already reached. Its progress towards output targets is currently at 6.1%, which shows that currently the number of indicators that do not measure individuals is still relatively low. Even though it is relatively early in the implementation stage of interventions in this priority, the number of individual results is remarkably lower than for other IP under TO10.

**Table 8.19** Summative factsheet on progress of IP10iv

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve ment	Individual results	Result target achieve ment	Individual result / output
AT									
BE	**	56.5	26.2	46.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
BG	*	15.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY		20.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ	*								
DE		1,850.8	733.3	39.6%	64,569	6.1%	2,845	0.8%	4.4%
DK	*	75.1	6.1	8.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
EE	**								
ES	*	971.5	0.0	0.0%	27,926	3.9%	0	0.0%	0.0%
FI		0.9	44.2	5107%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
FR	*	66.8	1.7	2.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		492.1	9.9	2.0%	3,302	0.0%	1,917	0.0%	58.1%
HR	*	100.0	144.7	144.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU	**	70.5	13.5	19.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE	*								
IT	*	1,341.9	113.7	8.5%	10,958	6.0%	894	1.8%	8.2%
LT	**	66.7	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU	*								
LV	**	41.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT	*	8.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL	*	1,581.4	83.3	5.3%	8,298	0.2%	809	0.2%	9.7%
PT	*	1,644.6	477.0	29.0%	164	3.6%	0	0.0%	0.0%
RO	*	233.4	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE	*	41.4	5.3	12.9%	0	26.0%	0	0.0%	
SI	*	38.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SK	*	117.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK	*	901.5	76.4	8.5%	85	0.3%	67	2.4%	78.8%
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>9,735.5</b>	<b>1,735.2</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>115,302</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>6,532</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve ment	Individual results	Result target achieve ment	Individual result / output
Less dev.		4,631.2	762.7	16.5%	9,901	1.5%	1,211	0.1%	12.2%
More dev.		3,492.7	714.3	20.5%	82,560	3.9%	2,089	1.2%	2.5%
Trans		1,611.6	258.1	16.0%	22,841	2.1%	3,232	0.1%	14.1%

Source: AIR 2015

Implementation of interventions in this investment priority progresses relatively evenly across regions. The share of committed budgets and output targets achieved are relatively similar across all regions. In that light, it is remarkable that the share between individuals and results is considerably lower in more developed regions (2.5%) than in transition (14.1%) and lesser developed regions (12.2%). However, the table shows that this is not due to the lack of results, but rather to the considerably higher number of individuals reached in more developed regions.

### 8.3.5 Overview TO10

Interventions under Thematic Objective 10 have a clear bearing on the two Headline targets set for education. Below, the progress of the four investment priorities under TO10 is reported in terms of amounts contracted by beneficiaries, individuals and short-term individual results achieved and progress towards targets set for output and result indicators.

**Table 8.20 Overview TO10**

IP	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achievement	Individual results	Result target achievement	Individual result / output
10i	11,367.1	397.9	3.5%	84,008	4.3%	20,986	102.7%	25%
10ii	6,611.6	569.2	8.6%	88,951	5.2%	324	0.5%	0%
10iii	11,493.3	3,367.3	29.3%	248,496	5.6%	127,099	88.0%	51%
10iv	9,735.5	1,735.2	17.8%	115,302	2.6%	6,532	0.6%	6%
<b>TO10</b>	<b>39,207.5</b>	<b>6,069.6</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>536,757</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>154,941</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>29%</b>

Source: AIR 2015

IP 10i specifically supports interventions seeking to reduce early school leaving, although budgets committed to this priority are lagging behind. Thus far, only 3.5% of the total budget has been contracted by beneficiaries, against an overall average under TO10 of 15.5%. However, in terms of progress towards its output targets set, it scores relatively similar as the other IP. Given the budgetary space still available to this policy priority, there is considerable potential for interventions in this field to contribute substantially to the EU policy target in reducing early school leaving.

The second headline targets aim to increase the attainment levels for tertiary education. For this headline target, interventions under IP10ii are particularly relevant, as this IP is dedicated to increasing access to higher education. As for early school leaving, amounts contracted by beneficiaries are slightly below the average, but overall progress towards output targets has been on par with the other investment priorities under TO10. The low number of individual short-term results is a reflection of the more structural nature of interventions and is therefore not necessarily reason for concern. Interventions under this investment priority may not directly succeed in directing individuals into higher education, but rather contribute to a favourable environment, in which higher attainment level of tertiary education is made possible.

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

Good public administration significantly impacts upon the economic environment. Therefore, reform of public administrations was listed as a key priority for the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy towards smart and sustainable growth. The Annual Growth Survey 2013, the Economic Adjustment Programmes and other frameworks of Financial Assistance in EU Member States highlighted the need for Member States to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, as well as the transparency and quality of public administration 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. ERDF has a relatively narrow scope on infrastructure, while ESF focuses more on the (staff of the) institutions and procedures.

To contribute to these objectives, two specific investment priorities have been defined within the ESF:

- (11i). 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). 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.

While these investment priorities are distinct, they are presented together in this section. Particularly investment priority 11ii has been allocated a relatively small budget and by a limited number of MS. Moreover, the difference between the beneficiaries in the interventions between the two investment priorities are also not always clear, which is a more compelling reason to discuss the implementation of the IP together.

The main recommendations in the field of institutional capacity are related to the field of civil justice, for which BG, CY, CZ, HR, IT and SK have received CSR. As the table below shows, the MS that received CSR all allocated budgets to interventions in this priority. However, the investment priority is considerably broader than just the recommendation on improving the justice sector (it also specifically covers public administration, social service delivery and civil society stakeholders). Other sectors (such as PES, actors in education, healthcare, ministries, local governments) feature less prominently in the CSR.

Amounts have been contracted by beneficiaries in EE, GR, HR, IT and PL. Unlike other ESF priorities, assessing implementation progress of interventions in the area of institutional capacity, the number of individuals reached is not the most insightful, as these are not the main units targeted by these interventions. However, as other common indicators do not yet show any progress in any MS, these are still included in the table below. Most individual participants have so far been reached most by interventions in GR; in other MS almost no participants are found. To get a better sense of implementation, progress can also be assessed by looking at progress towards output targets; particularly in EE implementation seems well underway. Despite the amounts already contracted by beneficiaries in BG, HR, and PL almost no progress towards the output indicators with a target was reported.

**Table 8.21** Summative factsheet on progress of TO11

MS	C S R	Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve- ment	Individual results	Result target achieve- ment	Individual result / output
AT									
BE									
BG	*	295.8	9.2	3.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CY	*	5.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
CZ	*	163.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
DE									
DK									
EE		35.5	17.3	48.6%	123	22.3%	14	41.4%	11%
ES									
FI			3.6						
FR		24.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
GR		366.3	56.5	15.4%	45,057	5.2%	98	6.0%	0%
HR	*	225.0	286.1	127.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
HU		874.6	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
IE									
IT	*	966.2	83.2	8.6%	573	1.7%	2	25.9%	0%
LT		176.9	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
LU									
LV		21.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
MT		11.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
NL									
PL		202.0	3.0	1.5%	0	0.5%	0	0.0%	
PT		294.3	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
RO		612.1	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
SE									
SI		77.6	0.0	0.0%	0	10.0%	0	0.0%	
SK	*	322.0	0.0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	
UK									
<b>Total EU</b>		<b>4,674.7</b>	<b>458.8</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>45,753</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>0%</b>
Region		Allocated budget (x€million)	Amount contracted (x€million)	% all. budget	Individuals reached	Output target achieve- ment	Individual results	Result target achieve- ment	Individual result / output
Less dev.		3,836.5	373.6	9.7%	15,278	1.5%	14	6.9%	0%
More dev		680.4	71.8	10.6%	22,977	2.6%	100	7.8%	0%
Trans		157.8	13.4	8.5%	7,498	2.0%	0	17.1%	0%

Source: AIR 2015

Investments Thematic Objective 11 in more developed and transition regions are an exception to the ESF Regulation; less-developed regions have allocated much more ESF investments to this priority than transition or more developed regions. However, in terms of implementation, there are no substantial differences; the amounts contracted by beneficiaries and output targets achieved thus far are relatively similar.

## 9 Conclusions

This report has shown that by the end of 2015, the implementation of ESF 2014-2020 has started in almost all MS, though at a considerably slower pace than the previous programming period (2007-2013). In the previous sections, more specific progress in terms of inputs (financial data), outputs, and results has been across MS and types of regions, both for ESF and for YEI investments. This chapter revisits the main explanations and conclusions behind these findings and finally suggests a number of recommendations for improvements, in order to raise the quality of reporting in the coming years.

### 9.1 Progress in implementation

Almost all programmes have started, but implementation does not meet the original planning for almost half of the programmes, regardless of the type of region across the EU. The delays are related to challenges in programming requirements / features leading to some delays in starting the programme, the national context, programme management, and issues related to IT systems. Such delays in implementation can be assessed and better understood by analysing progress of inputs, outputs and results separately, and should take types of regions, types of objectives and different types of investments priorities into account.

#### **Inputs (Financial progress)**

First of all, the financial progress as measured by eligible expenditure declared to the EC has been limited. Less than half of the MS declared expenditures after the first two years of implementation, mainly due to ongoing administrative procedures to designate the relevant authorities for auditing and certifying the declared expenses. Where they do, the expenditures declared to the EC are very low, and barely reach 1% of the allocated budget at EU level. This is comparatively low, also when compared against financial implementation in 2007-2013. In view of this, and the similarly low number of participants reached in 2014-2015 compared to 2007-2008, considerable action will be needed to catch up on the implementation targets set for 2018 and 2023.

This report also compares amounts contracted by beneficiaries reported by MS. These are insightful, as these are reported at an earlier stage of implementation (sometimes before MS report on participants). When comparing the amounts contracted by beneficiaries by Thematic Objective, those reported for TO 9 and TO 10 are the highest (around 15% of the total budgets allocated to the 2014-2020 period). The amounts contracted by beneficiaries under Thematic Objectives 8 and 11 are slightly lower, and reached 11.6% and 9.8% of the total allocated budgets respectively. Investment priorities of smaller budgetary significance also show lower implementation rates. Considerable differences exist between the different types of regions; while less developed and transition regions are still more than 50% away from the 2018 milestone target (39% and 29% respectively) as measured by costs of selected operations, more developed regions reported 92% of the 2018 milestone values.

#### **Outputs (Progress in participants / projects)**

In total, 2.7 million participants are reported for in ESF/YEI interventions. For ESF, the highest number of participants are recorded in the more developed regions (1.4 million), followed by transition regions (0.55 million), and less developed regions (0.24 million). YEI has reached another 0.5 million participants. These participants have various backgrounds, but the majority of participants (58%) were unemployed. In terms of age, 39% of all participants were below 25 years old (39%). Finally, with regard to education

level, a considerable level of participants had qualifications at ISCED 1/2 level (36%)<sup>61</sup>. The participation of (wo)men is balanced at EU level (50%-50%). Generally, AIR do not clearly indicate whether indicator values are based on “fully” versus “partially” implemented operations (see Article 5(3) of ESF Regulation). Especially ES, FR, IT, DE, BE, PT, IE, EL, PT, NL report a larger number of participants than average. For AT, CY, HR, HU, MT, RO no outputs are reported. The AIR in these countries refer to delays due to a lengthy designation procedure of the MA and the certifying body, problems with establishing the IT system, and subsequent late start-up of calls for proposals.

The common output indicators that measure the number of projects and entities report a total of 2,828 projects that were supported by social partners or non-governmental organisations, while 1,160 projects were supported that are dedicated to the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment. Another 930 projects were targeting public administration / public services at national, regional or local level. ESF supported a total of 87,091 SMEs in 2014 and 2015. The number of projects shows a steep increase after 2014.

### **Results (Progress achieved towards the objectives)**

In terms of results achieved by ESF, 164,000 participants are in employment, 160,000 participants gained a qualification, 30,000 participants are engaged in job searching, and 96,000 in education / training. In total 226,000 disadvantaged participants achieved a positive result in terms of employment, gaining a qualification and more. Immediate results were only reported for 16 MS; in other MS no results have been measured yet.

YEI supported 165,665 unemployed persons that completed the intervention (with an average target achievement across MS of 3%), while around 71,469 unemployed received an offer after completing the intervention (with a target achievement of 9%), and another 82,900 unemployed ended up in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving (11% target achievement). A total of 80,249 long term unemployed completed the YEI intervention (17% target achievement), while 24,575 received an offer (target achievement of 10%), and 29,917 persons were activated (13% target achievement). A total of 36,858 inactive persons completed YEI interventions (6% target achievement), while 10,336 received an offer (target achievement of 11%), and 25,834 are in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment (16% of target achievement). Overall, 51% of participants (including the unemployed, long term unemployed, and inactive) are female, showing a good gender balance. Four AIR identify the implementation of YEI as completely in line with original planning; 20 AIR report that the implementation is mostly in line with planning (only addressing a few minor issues). In total, only 3 AIR report a slower take up rather than anticipated. For 6 AIR, no information could be deduced on YEI implementation from the text in the AIR.

The analysis of programme specific indicators shows that only a small share of programme specific indicators report an achievements over 2014-2015. Out of the 6,043 programme specific output indicators, only 892 indicators (15%) report an achievement value over above zero (while the majority of indicators report no achievement so far). Out of the 3,843 programme specific result indicators, only 189 indicators (5%) report a value above zero, while 2,732 indicators report an achievement of zero, and 922 indicators do not have an achievement value. This points to limited evidence of progress made for all programmes.

Based on the AIR 2015 it is difficult to assess implementation based on evaluations conducted by MS. Only 3 MS report on evaluations that are not related to the mandatory reporting on YEI evaluations. Instead MS mainly report on their evaluation plans, or on the findings of ex ante evaluation that confirm that the objectives, programming, and output / result measurement are accurate and coherent.

---

<sup>61</sup> Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive.

## 9.2 Overview and assessment of the performance as shown by cumulated achievements

For common output indicators with a target value (and that therefore had been selected in the relevant OPs as indicators for measuring progress towards targets), an average target achievement of 5% is reported. This achievement goes up to 17% for programme specific output indicators. For all common *results* indicators with a target value, an average target achievement of 9% is reported. For programme specific indicators this number is somewhat lower, i.e. 7%. This is lower than would be the case if these were to be delivered evenly across the seven-year period. After two years 29% of the programming period has elapsed, whereas only 17% and 7% of the expected outputs and results (as measured by common indicators) has been delivered. However, programmes need time to get organised and started so it is likely that lower achievements during the first years will be compensated for in subsequent years.

Only for 151 specific result indicators could a success rate be calculated by linking achievement values of common result indicators with the value of the reference output indicators (this could only be done for DE, ES, IT, LT, PL, SE). The average success rate is 21%. At EU level 1% of the total EU target has been achieved, which is relatively low. The average success rate of programme specific result indicators by linking result achievement over 2014-2015 to the reference output values, is 57%. While the success rates may seem low at this stage, it should be taken into consideration that only a limited number of indicators in a limited number of MS is included. More reliable findings can only be presented when implementation has progressed further.

When assessing the performance as shown by cumulative achievements in relation to the financial allocations, the development in unit costs also proves insightful. The total cost per participant, across themes and MS is EUR 1,563, which is roughly in line with the figures reported for the ex post evaluations of ESF 2007-2013. Overall, unit costs for interventions under TO8 are considerably lower than for TO9 and TO10. Overall costs per short term result for the MS in the analysis amount to EUR 3,862. Behind this value are substantially larger variations between MS and between Thematic Objectives than found in the analysis of unit costs for participants. Most of such variation can be explained by the low number of IP that already report both declared eligible expenditures and participants.

## 9.3 Progress towards milestones and targets

This report maps progress towards the milestone targets of the performance framework to be achieved by 2018. The slow progress of declaring eligible expenditures to the EC makes a comparison of declared expenditures against milestones impractical: only PT and GR have been able to progress substantially. Therefore, this report also included an assessment of the amounts contracted by beneficiaries in relation to the financial milestone target, to have a better understanding of ongoing (and not necessarily completed) operations.

At the EU level, amounts contracted by beneficiaries as a share of the milestones show that programmes have started implementation. Slightly over half of the financial 2018 milestone value for ESF has already been reported as costs for ongoing operations (51%, amounting to 15.38 billion euros). Again it is underlined, that this does not equal declared expenditures, and it should be taken into consideration that much of the 51% of the milestone value may still need to be spent. There are considerable differences between regions. While 92% of the financial milestone value have already been contracted by beneficiaries in the more developed regions, this is 29% in transition regions. Less developed regions performed better than transition regions, where 39% of the milestone has been contracted by beneficiaries. Based on this, particular attention needs to be paid at the share of amounts contracted by beneficiaries in transition

regions. Behind these aggregate values, there are significant differences among MS, from 0% (CY, RO, ES), to amounts contracted that are well over 100% of the milestones (DE, EE, BE, UK, HR, IE).

ESF interventions report higher shares of the 2018 milestone values contracted by beneficiaries than YEI interventions. For YEI, currently only 36% of milestone value has been contracted by beneficiaries (against 51% of ESF interventions). This is a cause for concern, as all budgets need to be spent for YEI by 2018. It is therefore concluded that a considerable additional effort will be necessary to meet the financial targets set for YEI.

Of all 1,231 performance framework indicators, 980 do not report an achievement (79.6%). On average 14% of milestone targets for 2018 are achieved at EU level.

The more developed regions report the largest progress towards milestone achievement, followed by the transition regions, and the less developed regions. When taking a closer look at the individual performances of MS, one sees that BE, ES, DK, EE, and GR show the largest progress, while no achievements are reported for BG, LU, RO, NL, MT, CY, HR, AT, HU (all 0%).

## **9.4 Contribution to the main EU policy objectives**

This report analysed the objectives established in the Operational Programmes and types of interventions funded together, from the perspective of the national situation and strategies (as formulated in the Country Specific Recommendations) and EU level strategies and headline targets. Despite the early stage of implementation of ESF programming, most MS already show relevant results. Almost a million individuals have been reached by interventions that focus on employment in 2014 and 2015, and another 501,419 young persons participated in YEI related interventions. These are already significant numbers, particularly in view of the total of 21 million unemployed persons in the EU workforce<sup>62</sup>, even more so considering that almost no eligible expenditure was declared at this stage (less than 1%), and only 11% of the total budget has been contracted by beneficiaries. With additional spending, combined ESF / YEI investment have the potential to reach out to a substantial population in order to make an observable contribution to the EU Headline target to increase the employment rate to 75% of the workforce.

Interventions in the field of active inclusion have the potential to contribute to the headline target of reducing poverty in the EU. Various interventions in investment priorities still need to be started up, but the general social inclusion interventions report the highest amounts contracted by beneficiaries as shares of the allocated budgets. Over 600,000 participants have already been reported, with over 135,000 short term results. Given their scope, these interventions have the potential to contribute to social and economic cohesion in the EU.

In the field of education, the implementation of the key investment priorities that are directly linked to EU2020 headline targets is slower than priorities in other Thematic Objectives. In general, these interventions are more structural and long-term, and do not always target individual participants. Therefore, these are relatively difficult to report on in the first few years. A similar issue affects the implementation of interventions that seek to enhance institutional capacities. A relatively low share of amounts has been contracted by beneficiaries, and participants and individual short term results are also relatively low.

Across the four main thematic objectives, ESF 2014-2020 is still in an early stage of implementation, due to the various delays in implementation reported elsewhere in this report. Only 10-15% of the total budgets have been contracted by beneficiaries, while ESF investments already reached around 2.2 million individuals. In addition, YEI investments have reached an additional half a million participants, summing up to a total 2.7 million individuals reached with ESF / YEI combined. These are already significant

---

<sup>62</sup> Eurostat 2016

numbers, particularly in comparison to the total number of unemployed or disadvantaged people in the EU. With the remaining budgets still available for implementation, ESF should be able to reach a substantially larger target population, thus further contributing to economic and social cohesion in the EU.

Despite this positive contribution to social and economic cohesion, this report also points to a substantial risk. The implementation figures already suggest that implementation in more developed regions is progressing faster than in transition and lesser developed regions. This could be interpreted as an early warning signal for possibly lower absorption capacity in more disadvantaged regions, which also troubled ESF in 2007-2013. Such lower absorption of ESF investments, particularly in lesser developed regions holds a risk for social and economic cohesion across the EU, and therefore warrants close monitoring on implementation in the coming years.

## **9.5 Consistency of reporting and reporting on ex ante conditionality 7**

As reporting on progress for general ex ante conditionality 7 was optional for AIR2015, this report could only analyse what has been reported by those MS that chose to provide this information. Based on these 17 countries it can be observed that progress so far has been greatest in the areas of the criteria publishing data (7.2), selection of result indicators (7.3) and consistency of indicators (7.5). While the number of actions still to be carried out under these criteria is low for all three criteria, for criterion 7.5 they still concern a substantial number of MS. This implies that it can be expected that the public availability of aggregated data and the selection of results indicators are being implemented, while the actions still to be conducted on the development and verification of these indicators requires continuous efforts in 2016. Most of these MS will still be undertaking actions in 2016 to meet the ex ante conditionality 7 criteria. Only two of the 17 MS do not foresee further actions anymore (ES, SE) and another three only for one criterion.

From the available information it would seem that the criterion that needs most attention is 7.4, which deals with target setting for result indicators. Not only do ten MS (out of the 17 that reported on ex ante conditionalities) still foresee actions for 2016 under this heading, quite a few MS also foresee a relatively large number of actions. Moreover, a closer look at the programme-specific indicators shows that there are also a number of MS that have not defined targets for all specific indicators, while these have defined actions to resolve this. Many of the activities planned for 2016 seek to resolve the ex ante conditionality that requires to collect data to underpin the target values empirically. Also, MS tend to identify a different action for different indicators resulting in relatively high values. Overall, the workload for this action seems manageable and completion in 2016 in principle feasible.

The situation may be more worrisome for the some of the actions under 7.1. These include relatively large operations such as the establishment of entire statistical monitoring systems in GR and SI. Also training staff in statistics (GR, FR, DE) and scheduling surveys (HU, GR) require a longer duration and will only be completed in 2016 if started in time. Countries that stand out as facing a relatively large workload are GR, HU, CZ and to a lesser extent IT. Here again it is important to note that for eleven countries the progress is unknown.

Most of these actions that still await completion in 2016 have already passed the deadline that was initially set for completing the actions. Across all MS deadlines set for implementation have been disrespected: a total of 353 out of 397 actions with deadlines before 2016 have not been completed on time.

Progress towards the requirements of ex ante conditionality 7 goes hand in hand with more consistent reporting by MS in the AIR. Some issues reported by this report may not have been flagged by MS already, and form part of the work to be done before fulfilling the requirements of ex ante conditionality 7.

## 9.6 Suggestions for improvement of AIR reporting

A number of inconsistencies in the reporting to SFC have been detected. Such inconsistencies have been made explicit throughout the report, and may be returned to the relevant authorities for verification. They range from basic data entry issues such as the use of punctuation for decimals, to more fundamental issues such as whether to use EU amounts or EU + national amounts in target setting. By pointing out such inconsistencies, this report seeks to enhance the quality of monitoring data reported to the EC, and improve the potential of the data to be used for the purposes of evaluation. While working with the AIR, a number of issues emerged. Based on these the following suggestions are made for improving the quality of reporting of AIR.

First of all, the quality checks of financial data and common and programme specific indicators revealed a number of data issues and inconsistencies that need to be further checked. These are reported throughout the report and consist for instance of;

- Decimals and measurement units of targets and milestones (e.g. IT: 100)
- Missing financial milestones and targets (e.g. FR);
- Higher than allocation targets;
- Targets matching the EU allocation only;
- Reporting to an intervention field that was not included in the OP;
- Reporting financial amounts not connected to any intervention field.

Such elements could be filtered and blocked by the SFC data entry system, to prevent such data errors in future implementation reports.

Secondly, a well-structured guidance, going beyond what is already offered by the Model for the annual and final implementation reports for the Investment for growth and jobs goal, specifying and explaining standard contents, and also what is expected in terms of qualitative inputs would be of major help. Annual reporting would also benefit from additional guidance in the area of reporting on common indicators. Some instances were reported where MS have counted participants in the 'general' count of participants, if these could not be allocated to one of the three main categories (employed, unemployed or inactive). The EC should act early in the implementation to prevent widely diverging practices of counting participants. While most AIR count participants based on common output indicators, it seems that it is not always clear that participants can be counted by several of the common indicators defined.

Thirdly, several steps in the implementation of OP are the same across OPs (such as the setting up the Monitoring Committee or approval of the Evaluation Plan). To inform on progress towards such common steps, it is recommended that boxes could be ticked in SFC, rather than asking MA to include such progress in the qualitative inputs. Possible categories on the status of implementation could for instance be; e.g.: not started; in progress; elaborated to be approved; approved.

Fourthly, another point that could help focus on essential issues is to enable MA to self-assess the importance of issues / obstacles encountered. It is often the case that there are several obstacles described to explain a delay in OP implementation, but obviously some are more relevant than others. The amount of space dedicated to an issue is determined by its complexity and does not necessarily reflect its relevance or importance. This is also why a quantification of the relevance of obstacles identified on a 0-10 scale could help focus on the main points. The narrative part sometimes can contain information which requires extensive knowledge on the local state environment in order to be understood. Efforts to make these documents more self-explanatory should be encouraged and possibly called for. It is recommended to invite MS to add conclusive sentences in the end of the sections, to wrap up e.g. "the report was approved on....", "... contracts were signed", etc.

Finally, the information collected in section 4 should give a more central role to the evaluation plan and the evaluations carried out within the evaluation plan. What would be helpful here is if it were made compulsory to include an explicit judgement on whether the implementation of the Programme is considered behind/ahead of schedule, rather than only focusing on short-term results.

## Annex 1 ID categories programme specific output and result indicators

### Categorisation of programme specific Output indicators

#### ID Categories for categorization of programme specific output indicators - Individuals

ID	Category
1	Above 54 years of age
2	Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, including long- term unemployed, or inactive not in education or training
3	Below 25 years of age (young people)
4	Children
5	Employed, including self-employed
6	From rural areas
7	Homeless or affected by housing exclusion
8	Inactive
9	Inactive, not in education or training
10	Long-term unemployed
11	Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma)
12	Number of participants in general
13	Other disadvantaged / vulnerable groups
14	Parents
15	Participants threatened by poverty and social inclusion
16	Participants threatened losing their job
17	participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children
18	participants who live in jobless households
19	participants who live in jobless households with dependent children
20	participants with disabilities
21	Professionals (healthcare and other)
22	Public administration staff
23	Staff from labour market institutions
24	Staff in education and training (teachers / managers)
25	Student Higher education
26	Students basic education (primary / secondary)
27	Students VET
28	Unemployed, including long-term unemployed
29	Volunteers
30	With primary (ISCED 1) or lower secondary education (ISCED 2)
31	With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)
32	With upper secondary (ISCED 3) or post-secondary education (ISCED 4)
33	Women
34	Other individuals
35	To be checked

#### ID Categories for categorization of programme specific output indicators - products or projects supported

ID	Category
1	Number of instruments / tools developed
2	Number of (good) practices exchanged
3	Number of awareness / communication campaigns
4	Number of contracts

5	Number of curricula / education programmes / qualifications / educational methods, tools, material developed
6	number of health programme supported
7	Number of innovative products / tools supported
8	Number of jobs supported
9	Number of local development strategies
10	Number of projects dedicated at sustainable participation and progress of women in employment
11	Number of projects fully or partially implemented by social partners or non-governmental organisations
12	Number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level
13	Number of registers / databases developed
14	Number of scholarships
15	Number of standards / guidelines developed
16	Number of studies / evaluation supported
17	Other products
18	To be checked

#### **ID Categories for categorization of programme specific output indicators - entities supported**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Number of childcare facilities
2	Number of community centres
3	Number of HE schools
4	Number of healthcare centres
5	Number of involved Civil Society Organisations
6	Number of involved Enterprises/Economic operators
7	Number of involved Institutions/Organisations
8	Number of local / regional government
9	Number of national governments
10	Number of networks / partnerships
11	Number of primary / secondary schools
12	Number of SMEs
13	Number of social enterprises
14	Number of start-ups
15	Number of supported micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (including cooperative enterprises, enterprises of the social economy)
16	Number of VET schools / providers
17	Other entities
18	To be checked

#### **ID Categories to be used for categorization of programme specific output indicators - interventions**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Category</b>
1	Apprenticeship / traineeships / internships / work experience
2	Basic skills education and training (including second chance education)
3	Communication and awareness raising programmes
4	Early childhood education
5	Education and training (HE)
6	Entrepreneurship training
7	Exchanging good practices
8	Financial support
9	Guidance and counselling
10	Health programmes / services

11	Improving ICT capacity
12	Improving administrative performance
13	Improving public procurement
14	Integrated intervention for local development and employment
15	Participating in networks / partnerships
16	Pathways to employment
17	Professional education and training (VET)
18	Programmes promoting gender equality
19	programmes reducing discrimination
20	Receiving consultancy services
21	Receiving childcare support
22	Volunteer programmes
23	Other
24	To be checked

### **Categorisation of programme specific Result indicators**

#### **ID Categories to be used for categorization of programme specific result indicators**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
1	ST_education	21	RI_enterprises
2	ST_employment	22	RI_equal
3	ST_improved	23	RI_expenditure
4	ST_IND_other	24	RI_flex
5	ST_job_searching	25	RI_grade
6	ST_pos_various	26	RI_institutions
7	ST_qualification	27	ri_jobs
8	ST_skills	28	RI_new_ED
9	ST_trainee	29	RI_other
10	LT_education	30	RI_project
11	LT_employment	31	RI_retain
12	LT_improved	32	ri_satisfaction
13	LT_IND_other	33	RI_NEG_ADMIN
14	LT_pos_various	34	RI_NEG_ESL
15	LT_qualification	35	RI_NEG_grade
16	LT_skills	36	RI_NEG_LT_POV
17	LT_trainee	37	RI_NEG_LT_UNEMPL
18	RI_access	38	RI_NEG_other
19	RI_awareness	39	RI_NEG_ST_NEET
20	RI_childcare	40	RI_NEG_ST_POV
21	RI_CSO		

## Annex 2 Categorisation of qualitative information (section 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of AIR)

### Categorisation of for reasons for the MA not having been designated yet

Category
National contextual factors (political, economic, legal etc.)
Reorganisation at an administrative/governance level
Audit for control systems (Programme database) still ongoing
Ongoing discussions with EC
Other (text)

### Categorisation for administrative and preparatory actions that have been undertaken by the MA to support the implementation of the programme

Category
Setting of monitoring and control platforms/bodies, e.g. monitoring committees; periodical/ad-hoc round tables
Involvement of additional bodies/administrations
Definition of project management tools (monitoring and control procedures, standard costs, evaluation strategy, communication plan etc.) and other documents at a governance level
Establishment of IT systems
Setting of criteria for the identification of beneficiaries
Other (text)

### Categorisation of reasons and challenges are reported for delays in implementation?

Category
National contextual factors (political, economic, legal etc.)
ESF2007-2013 still active
Late approval of OP
Complications related to programming requirements/features (e.g. obligations of procedural nature/characteristics of the programme itself, i.e. timing/others)
Complications related to IT systems
Limited interest/awareness/command of EU funds among actors/operators involved in the implementation
Limited interest/awareness among beneficiaries
Limits in addressing hard to reach individuals
Delays at a governance level due to a focus on preparation / setting up organization / programme management, not yet on attracting proposals
Priority given to YEI initiatives
Priority given to implementation of activities of other funds (relevant for multi-fund OPs)
Incorrect target setting
Not sufficient availability of matching funds
Other (text)

### Categorisation of steps taken to counter under performance\*

Category
No measures taken so far
Organizational measures taken (at MA / IB)
Improved engagement of stakeholders at a design/strategical level
Strengthening/fine-tuning of structures, procedures, tools and competences (e.g. trainings, it tools enhancement, adjustment of requirements)
Promotional measures taken (encourage projects, improve information provision,

additional stakeholder involvement)
Targets adjusted
Target groups adjusted
Budget adjusted
Other (text)

*\* if possible the information is differentiated by level of disaggregation (OP, PA, IP)*

## Annex 3 Data checks

In order to check data validity and to provide inspiration for improvement of AIR reporting data has been checked by a number of queries. In accordance with the list in the inception report, 22 different queries were calculated in order to identify possible issues with the data. This includes zero values, missing data, unbalance between result and output indicator, etc. A more detailed account has been delivered separately in the methodological note. The following list contains a description of the queries on quality checks that are currently in the database. The detailed result can be accessed through the database, or can be found in a separate Excel file:

- Imbalance in value Common Output and Common Result indicator. The important field here is 'Ratio'. It shows all target values where the Output indicator (TO) is 3 times larger or smaller compared to the target value of the result indicator (TR). Not necessarily wrong, but these are worthwhile to check. Differences might be caused by wrong values, lagging behind, or by a difference in measurement unit.
- Imbalance in value Specific Output and Specific Result indicators. The important field here is 'Ratio'. It shows all target values where the Output indicator (TO) is 3 times larger or smaller compared to the target value of the result indicator (TR). Not necessarily wrong, but these are worthwhile to check. Differences might be caused by wrong values, lagging behind, or by a difference in measurement unit.
- Shows all financial values with a value of '0' from the AIR data at Intervention Field level.
- Shows all financial values with a value of '0' from the AIR data at Priority Axis level.
- Shows all financial values with a value of '0' from the OP data at Intervention Field level.
- Shows all financial values with a value of '0' from the OP data at Intervention Field level.
- This check shows, which Intervention Fields (IF) are related to which Investment Priority (IP). There should ideally be a 1-1 relation between an IF and an IP, but this is not always the case in practice.
- This check gives an overview of all Intervention Fields (IF) that are linked to the 'wrong' Investment Priority (IP), and how much funding there is involved.
- This check shows all common result indicators where the target value is lower than the baseline value. This might be OK, but it should be checked if this is correct. The last two columns show recalculated value for the baseline and target in case the original values are a ratio.
- This check shows all programmes (at PA level) where there no eligible expenditure has been declared, but there are already reported results. The last column adds all the values of reported results in 2014 and 2015 (SumofResults)
- This check lists all common output indicators where there are no targets set (value of '0')
- This shows all programmes (at IP level) where there is no target reported for the common output indicator, but there are already reported results.
- This shows all programmes (at IP level) where there is no target reported for the specific output indicator, but there are already reported results.
- Overview of all programmes where a description of the key information is missing in section 2.
- Overview of all programmes where an English translation of the Priority Axis is missing in section 3.1.
- Overview of all programmes where a description of the synthesis of the evaluation is missing in section 4.
- Overview of all programmes where a description of the implementation of the YEI is missing in section 5.

- Overview of all programmes where either a description of the issues that affect the performance of the programme, or an assessment of whether progress is sufficient, is missing in section 6.
- In case a common result indicator target (TR) is a ratio, this check recalculates the absolute value based on the target value of the output indicator (TO). The last two columns show the recalculated values for the target and baseline.
- Missing data on Intervention Field (IF) in the AIR data
- Missing data on Intervention Field (IF) in the OP data (Missing IP data is shown)

## Annex 4 Status Evaluation plan

Yes, evaluation plan approved (86 / 47%)	Evaluation plan not approved, but submitted (36 / 19%)	Nothing mentioned (65 / 35%)
2014BG05M2OP001	2014BE05M9OP001	2014AT05SFOP001
2014CY05M9OP001	2014BG05M9OP001	2014BG05SFOP001
2014CZ05M2OP001	2014ES05SFOP001	2014DE05SFOP001
2014DE05SFOP002	2014ES05SFOP004	2014DE05SFOP013
2014DE05SFOP003	2014ES05SFOP005	2014DE05SFOP015
2014DE05SFOP004	2014ES05SFOP006	2014DE16M2OP001
2014DE05SFOP005	2014ES05SFOP010	2014DK05SFOP001
2014DE05SFOP006	2014ES05SFOP010	2014ES05SFOP002
2014DE05SFOP007	2014ES05SFOP017	2014ES05SFOP003
2014DE05SFOP008	2014ES05SFOP019	2014ES05SFOP007
2014DE05SFOP009	2014ES05SFOP020	2014ES05SFOP009
2014DE05SFOP010	2014ES05SFOP021	2014ES05SFOP011
2014DE05SFOP011	2014ES05SFOP022	2014ES05SFOP012
2014DE05SFOP012	2014ES05SFTA001	2014ES05SFOP014
2014DE05SFOP014	2014FR05SFOP002	2014ES05SFOP015
2014DE05SFOP016	2014FR16M0OP002	2014ES05SFOP018
2014EE16M3OP001	2014FR16M0OP012	2014FR05M9OP001
2014ES05SFOP008	2014GR05M2OP001	2014FR05SFOP005
2014ES05SFOP016	2014GR05M9OP001	2014FR16M0OP001
2014FR05SFOP001	2014GR16M2OP001	2014FR16M0OP004
2014FR16M0OP003	2014GR16M2OP004	2014FR16M0OP005
2014FR16M0OP007	2014GR16M2OP005	2014FR16M0OP006
2014FR16M2OP001	2014GR16M2OP006	2014FR16M0OP008
2014FR16M2OP008	2014GR16M2OP010	2014FR16M0OP011
2014FR16M2OP011	2014GR16M2OP011	2014FR16M2OP002
2014IT05M2OP001	2014GR16M2OP014	2014FR16M2OP004
2014IT05M9OP001	2014IT05M2OP002	2014FR16M2OP006
2014IT05SFOP004	2014IT05SFOP001	2014FR16M2OP007
2014IT05SFOP006	2014IT05SFOP002	2014FR16M2TA001
2014IT05SFOP007	2014IT05SFOP013	2014GR16M2OP002
2014IT05SFOP008	2014IT16M2OP001	2014GR16M2OP003
2014IT05SFOP012	2014IT16M2OP002	2014GR16M2OP004
2014IT05SFOP014	2014MT05SFOP001	2014GR16M2OP006
2014IT05SFOP015	2014PT16M2OP001	2014GR16M2OP007
2014IT05SFOP018	2014PT16M2OP004	2014GR16M2OP008
2014IT05SFOP021	2014RO05M9OP001	2014GR16M2OP009
2014PL05M9OP001		2014GR16M2OP010
2014PL16M2OP001		2014GR16M2OP011
2014PL16M2OP002		2014GR16M2OP012
2014PL16M2OP004		2014GR16M2OP013
2014PL16M2OP005		2014GR16M2OP014
2014PL16M2OP008		2014GR16M3TA001
2014PL16M2OP009		2014HU05M2OP001
2014PL16M2OP010		2014HU05M3OP001
2014PL16M2OP011		2014HU16M0OP001
2014PL16M2OP012		2014HU16M2OP001
2014PL16M2OP014		2014HU16M2OP002
2014PL16M2OP016		2014IT05SFOP017
2014FR05M2OP001		2014IT05SFOP020
2014FR16M0OP013		2014IT16M2OP004
2014FR16M2OP009		2014IT16M2OP005
2014FR16M2OP010		2014IT16M2OP006
2014FR16M2OP005		2014PL16M2OP003
2014FR16M0OP009		2014PL16M2OP006
2014ES05M9OP001		2014PL16M2OP007
2014IT05SFOP010		2014PL16M2OP013
2014IT05SFOP009		2014PL16M2OP015
2014IT05SFOP016		2014PT16M2OP005
2014IT05SFOP003		2014PT16M2OP006
2014IT05SFOP005		2014PT16M2OP007
2014IT05SFOP011		2014UK05M9OP001
2014FR16M2OP003		2014UK05SFOP001
2014CZ05M9OP001		2014UK05SFOP004
2014CZ16M2OP001		2014UK05SFOP005
2014HR05M9OP001		

2014IE05M9OP001		
2014LT16MAOP001		
2014SE05M9OP001		
2014SE16M2OP001		
2014UK05SFOP002		
2014SK05SFOP001		
2014SK05M0OP001		
2014FI16M2OP001		
2014RO05SFOP001		
2014NL05SFOP001		
2014FI05M2OP001		
2014SI16MAOP001		
2014PT05M9OP001		
2014LV16MAOP001		
2014PT05SFOP001		
2014PT16M3OP001		
2014PT16M2OP003		
2014PT16M2OP002		
2014BE05M9OP002		
2014UK05M9OP002		
2014BE05SFOP002		

## HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

### Free publications:

- one copy:  
via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:  
from the European Union's representations ([http://ec.europa.eu/represent\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm));  
from the delegations in non-EU countries  
([http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm));  
by contacting the Europe Direct service ([http://europa.eu/europedirect/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm))  
or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (\*).

(\*). The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

### Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>).

### Priced subscriptions:

- via one of the sales agents of the Publications Office of the European Union  
([http://publications.europa.eu/others/agents/index\\_en.htm](http://publications.europa.eu/others/agents/index_en.htm)).

