



EU COHESION POLICY CONTRIBUTING TO EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH IN EUROPE

*Joint paper from the Directorates-General for Regional & Urban Policy and
Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion*



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1. THE ROLE OF COHESION POLICY IN SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT AND GROWTH

The Union's cohesion policy – funded with EUR 346 billion from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund– represents 35 % of the Union's budget over the budget period 2007-2013.

As part of the essential economic policy package of macro-economic and fiscal stability, structural reforms and growth enhancing measures, EU cohesion policy is perhaps the most visible and largest of the European Union's instruments making a significant contribution to investments in employment and growth in Europe.

The three funds are delivered through programmes managed nationally or regionally with a view to supporting structural change through investments in priorities widely recognised as supporting medium and long term growth:

- Innovation and R&D, particularly in SMEs and including ICT supply and demand measures;
- Other generic business support measures, including access to finance (equity, loans and guarantees);
- Investment in priority infrastructures;
- Investment in human capital development;
- Support labour market reforms and getting people into employment;
- Investment in sustainable development, sustainable energy and resource efficiency;
- Support to inclusive growth – equal opportunities, social inclusion;
- Support to good governance, strengthening institutional capacity.

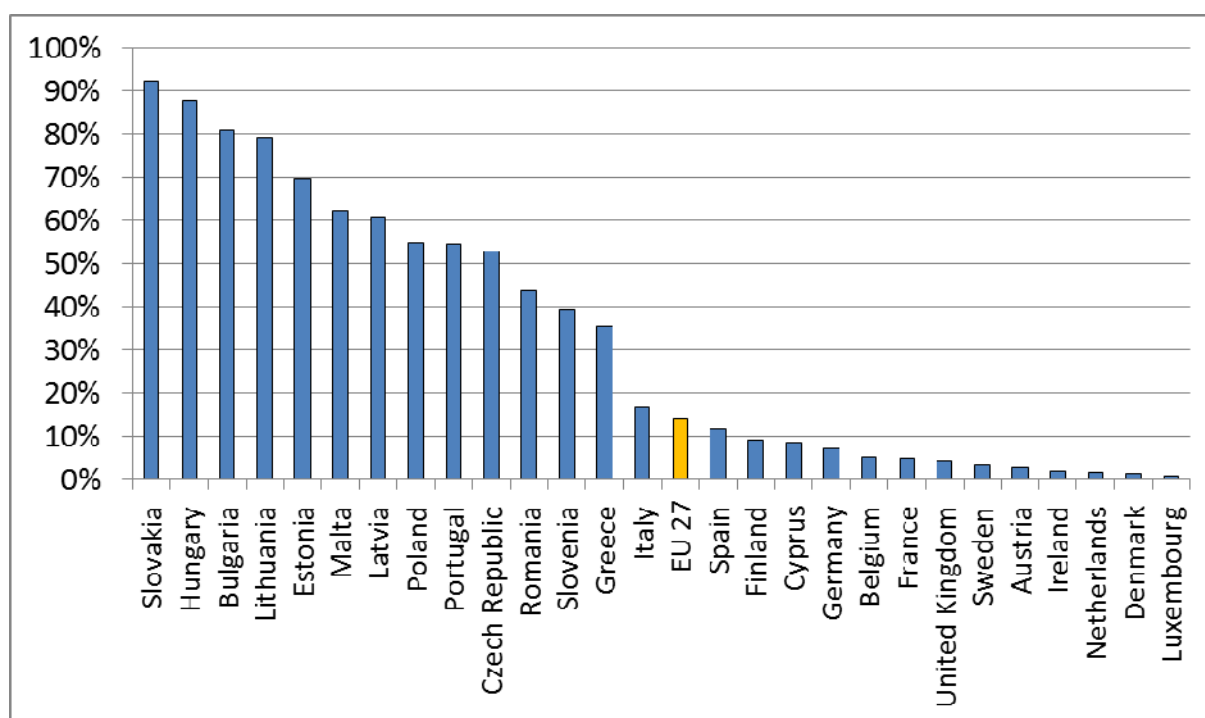
As set out below, the policy in the current programming period is now delivering significant results. This is because of its original focus on the investment in the drivers of sustainable long term growth but also because of the flexibility shown to adapt the programmes by the Member States and the Commission.

The future programming period of 2014-2020 will strengthen the coherence of investment priorities with the priorities for structural reforms identified in the context of the European Semester and the need to promote growth and jobs to make progress towards the Europe 2020 goals. For 2014-2020 new rules are being agreed with the European Parliament and the Council which will reinforce the future investment programmes' policy focus, results orientation, ex ante conditionalities, thematic concentration, and improve transparency and accountability, strengthen partnership and reduce the administrative burden.

1.1. 2007-2013: Volume of investment as a share of public investment

Cohesion policy is both a concrete expression of solidarity and a major driver of economic recovery and convergence. Together with the co-financing provided by Member States, cohesion policy accounts for a very significant proportion of public investment in Europe - more than half of all public investment in several Member States. At a time of necessary fiscal consolidation, cohesion policy is therefore making a major contribution to Europe's future prosperity and to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objectives.

Graph 1: Cohesion policy and national co-financing as % of total public investment (average 2010-2012)

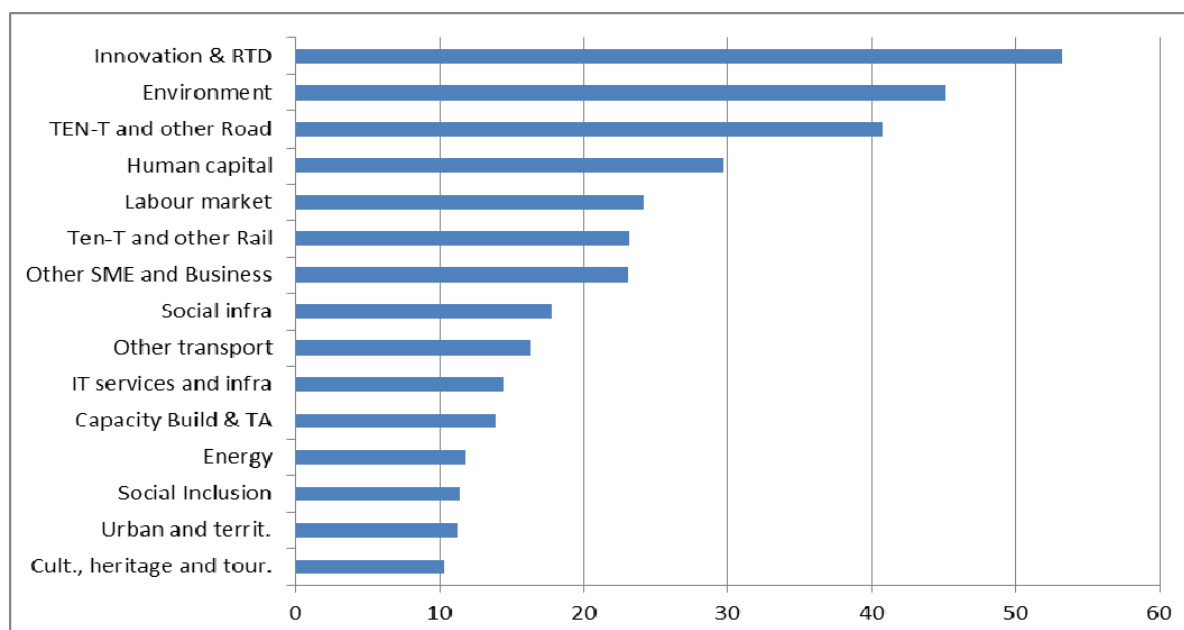


1.2. Thematic focus of planned investments

Cohesion policy seeks to support structural change through a mix of different investments that are adjusted in line with the needs and capacities of the different Member States.

The overview of the volumes investment by major investment fields is presented in Chart 2.

Graph 2: Cohesion policy - planned investment by major investment fields - 2007-2013 (in € billions)



Through investments within and across these investment fields the programmes support two major EU objectives in the current economic environment – employment and human capital (including young people) and SMEs and innovation.

1.2.1. Employment and human capital development

In recent national reports on the roll out of cohesion policy programmes most Member States reported¹ that Structural Funds, in particular the ESF, have been a key tool in preserving employment and containing unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, supporting the modernisation of the education systems and strengthening the labour market through reforms.

It is worth noting that particularly in the context of the sharp deteriorated labour market situation in the EU as a result of the crisis, a number of Member States have relied on ESF support as the key instrument to support active labour market policies (ALMP) in recent years. This is the case particularly for the EU-12 where ALMP budgets are significantly lower, mostly below 0.5% of GDP. In these Member States, and certainly during the crisis, the ESF often constitutes the most important part of ALMP. In almost all EU-12 Member States ESF spending on ALMP exceeds national ALMP funding by 50% or more.

It is reported that 2.4 million people who have participated in ESF supported operations found a job within 6 months of completing the intervention. Overall there were 12.5 million participants in ESF actions in support of their improved access to employment through training or other forms of assistance. This is a significant achievement given the current economic downturn.

In addition to ESF investment in human capital and more effective labour markets, ERDF investments have helped to create sustainable jobs, mainly through support to research,

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/how/policy/doc/strategic_report/2013/swd_strat_report_2013_en.pdf

innovation and SMEs. A total of almost 400,000 new jobs were created until end-2011 arising directly from ERDF supported projects.

ESF interventions have contributed to social inclusion policies in many fields. Many of them have followed a social investment approach, namely by improving the performance of active inclusion strategies and achieving a more efficient and more effective use of social budgets. The range of co-financed activities has covered the whole spectrum of active inclusion, except income support.

Moreover, in these Member States important ESF support was also provided to public administration reform through training of civil servants and introduction of measures for better regulation.

Supporting young people and youth employment

Supporting the potential of young people is addressed under the three main ESF investment pillars of human capital (education, training), labour market and social inclusion (see graph 2 above). In some Member States young people account for 40% or more of all participants. Until end-2011, 15 million participants of all participants in ESF-supported programmes in the area of improving employability, better education and social inclusion were young persons (aged below 25) and the figure increased significantly in 2010 and 2011 in response to the crisis.

In January 2012 the European Council endorsed an initiative for Youth/SME Action Teams in the eight Member States that were worst affected by youth unemployment. As a result of the work of the Action Teams of Commission officials and national representatives, around 1 million young people are likely to benefit from the ESF reallocations for youth employment and training programmes in addition to the on-going actions. ERDF measures under this initiative could support an additional 54,800 SMEs compared to what was originally planned, enabling the environment necessary to integrate young persons in employment. These results demonstrate the ambitious action taken by a number of Member States to respond to high levels of youth unemployment.

With a view to the next programming period 2014-2020, the Commission has submitted proposals for the Youth Employment Initiative which will be an additional financial instrument, fully integrated in to the ESF programming framework, that will aim to provide targeted support to the EU regions worst affected by youth unemployment.

1.2.2. SMEs, business support and innovation for growth

Encompassed within the broad headings in Graph 2, support to innovation and enterprises - and in particularly SMEs – are key investment areas in all Member States supported by the Structural Funds, and notably the ERDF. SME and other enterprises benefit from both direct investments into business and from other contracts and services funded through EU cohesion policy.

Direct support to SMEs

In the current programmes nearly € 70 billion or 20% of the € 346 billion takes the form of direct support to companies through grants, business services, loans, guarantees or equity stakes.

This € 70 billion involves support across a variety of the themes in Graph 2 above, mainly under the headings “Innovation and R&D”, “ICT service and infrastructure”, “Other SME and business support” and “labour market” as follows:

- **Innovation, RTD and ICT in business:** € 26.3 billion (7.7% of all cohesion policy funding) takes the form of a wide range of mainly ERDF supported innovation and research measures in regional and national programmes that are SMEs dedicated (i.e. technology transfer, eco-innovation, e-commerce). It includes ESF and ERDF support to business start-ups.
- **Other SME and Business support:** A further €30.7 billion of ERDF (8.6% of the total) is predominantly benefitting SMEs but may also benefit large companies. It includes measures approved under regional aids, R&D&I, environment and risk capital guidelines and generic access to finance through financial engineering instruments (loans and guarantees).
- **Labour Market in firms:** The funds support measures targeting work place training, restructuring and innovative work practices with some € 12.7 billion (or 3.7% of the total) mainly from the ESF.

Examples of innovation, SME support and labour market measures are presented in annex.

Indirect benefits to SME

A recent study by the European Parliament looked at the procurement impact of cohesion policy. Cohesion policy supported projects (including major construction works related to infrastructure investment) involving large and small scale public procurement procedures, account for around 46% of the total cohesion policy budget (some €159 bn) across Europe in the period 2007-2013.

Based on Commission findings on general public procurement around one third of all procurement budgets are awarded SMEs (directly or as sub-contractors). If this were replicated under cohesion policy funded public procurements then around €50 billion in works and supplies contracts could be benefiting SMEs.

Access to finance for SMEs

Financial instruments (i.e. loan, guarantee and equity funds) represent a resource-efficient way of deploying cohesion policy resources in pursuit of growth and jobs. Targeting projects with potential economic viability, financial instruments provide support for investments by way of loans, guarantees, equity and other risk-bearing instruments.

Their relative importance has increased during the current programming period 2007-2013 and they now represent around 5% of total ERDF resources – and in particular more than 10% of all ERDF business support.

At the end of 2011 (2012 reporting due by end of June) some **EUR 8.9 billion** of cohesion policy programmes' support had been delivered through financial instruments for enterprises (primarily SMEs) through some 530 funds set-up in nearly all Member States (except Luxembourg and Ireland).

Of this amount some **EUR 3.6 billion** (40%) were effectively paid to enterprises, in the form of investment financing delivered through equity, loans or guarantees and other risk-bearing instruments, the remaining EUR 5.3 billion being readily available in holding funds or specific funds, to invest in enterprises, upon presentation of acceptable investment projects.

The ERDF part of the funding available for investment in enterprises through financial instruments represented some EUR 5.6 billion the remaining being represented by ESF (EUR 200 million) plus national public and private contributions (EUR 3.1 billion).

2. IMPACT OF PLANNED INVESTMENT – 2007-2013

2.1. Expected impacts on GDP

Together with the co-financing provided by Member States, cohesion policy accounts for a very significant proportion of growth-friendly public expenditure in Europe. It is therefore making a major contribution to create growth enhancing conditions in the Union by improving the structure of the EU economy.

The impact of cohesion policy is twofold. It has a short term impact reflecting the implementation of programmes and a long term impact by improving the structure of the economy. This implies that an important part of its impact only materialises in the long run, i.e. after the programmes are completed and the investment bring returns.

The impact of cohesion policy is particularly strong in the Member States and regions which are deemed “convergence” beneficiaries of cohesion policy, but it can also be significant in Member States which are net contributors to the Community budget. This is particularly true for net contributor countries that have strong trade links with the net recipient countries and which indirectly benefit from the increase in trade triggered by the economic stimulus related to cohesion policy investments in the main beneficiaries.

The table below summarises the impact of the 2007-2013 programmes on the EU GDP as simulated by the HERMIN model. According to these estimates, the cohesion policy programmes are expected to increase the level of GDP of the main beneficiaries by 1.2% per annum between 2007 and 2016 (which corresponds to the implementation period). In the EU-12, cohesion policy programmes are expected to increase GDP by 2.4% per annum over the same period. However, the programmes will continue to have a positive influence on GDP years after they have stopped. In 2020, they are still expected to increase GDP by 0.8% in the main beneficiaries and by 2.1% in the EU-12.

Table 1: Impact of 2007-2013 cohesion policy programmes on GDP (as % of baseline):

	Average 2007- 2016	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Main beneficiaries*	1.2	0.2	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.6	2.0	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8
EU-12	2.4	0.5	0.9	1.7	2.1	2.7	3.2	3.7	3.8	3.7	4.4	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.1

* Main beneficiaries correspond to the so-called cohesion countries: EU-12 + Greece, Portugal, Spain + Mezzogiorno, East German Länders.

2.2. Evidence from monitoring of national and regional programme

In the annual programme reports and their recent National Strategic reports² the Member States are providing information on the direct outputs and the result of the programmes to date. These data show that cohesion policy has delivered tangible results on the ground and that there is a considerable acceleration in outputs and results reported in 2011 compared to 2010.

The following concrete achievements reported by the programmes can be aggregated to European level in relation to the ERDF and Cohesion fund programmes:

- 400,000 jobs have been created to end -2011, of which 190 000 since 2010. This include :
 - more than 15 600 research jobs (9 500 since 2010)
 - more than 167 000 jobs in SMEs (69 100 since 2010)

The largest number of reported new jobs were in the UK, IT, DE, ES, PL and HU. This demonstrates that cohesion policy support has a positive and in some cases significant counter-cyclical direct job-creation effect.

- Support has been given to 53 240 RTD projects and 16 000 co-operation projects between enterprises and research institutions.
- 53 160 start-ups have been supported (28 000 since 2010) mostly in the EU15 but with significant numbers also in HU and PL.
- Nearly 1.9 million more people now have broadband access (concentrated in ES, FR, IE, IT).
- 1 222 megawatts of additional electricity generation capacity has been created from renewables since 2007 mostly in the EU15.
- 2.6 million more people are now served by water supply projects and 5.7 million more people by waste water projects.
- Over 5 000 transport projects have been launched and outputs are becoming visible on the ground: 460 km of TEN-T roads and 334 km of TEN-T rail apart from other road and rail projects completed.
- Nearly 3.4 million people have access to improved urban transport.
- Over 19 000 educational infrastructure projects have received support, benefiting 3.4 million students, mostly in IT, but with significant achievements also in BG, ES, GR.

For the ESF, a significant acceleration in the number of participants took place between 2009 and 2010 (from 10 to over 15 million participants annually) and this high level was maintained in 2011. The profile of participants is very diverse reflecting different national

²

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/how/policy/strategic_report_en.cfm

conditions and the priorities for ESF support. From 2007 to the end of 2011, Member States reported the following results:

- 2.4 million participants found a job within 6 months of completing the intervention. Altogether, there were 12.5 million participants in ESF actions to support access to employment through training or other forms of assistance. Two thirds of all participants were inactive or unemployed. .
- 15 million participants in all ESF related operations were young (under 25 years) and the figure increased significantly in 2010 and 2011 in response to the crisis. In DE, FR and HU young people account for 40% or more of all participants.
- Nearly half (46%) of participants have lower secondary education at most. In DE, GR and MT they account for over 60% of all participants but less than 20% in FI, SE, SI and CY. In CY, EE, LT and SI, 40% or more have tertiary education.
- In the area of lifelong learning (LLL), the ESF supported around 5 million young people. Regarding the education profile, 5.5 million participants had low skills .
- In the area of social inclusion, , over 14.5 million final recipients were covered and a broad range of target groups reached.. 18% of the participants were from groups which are particularly vulnerable on the labour market. Though the situation varies, UK and AT seem to be particularly successful in reaching out to people with some form of disability. Others, notably AT, CY, NL and LV are successful in using the ESF to support people from a minority or with migrant background.
- About 700,000 participants, notably civil servants, have upgraded their skills with ESF support. Four Member States (BG, GR, HU, and RO) implement a programme explicitly dedicated to institutional capacity building.
- Over half of ESF participants (52%) are women, which is in line with the overall ESF goal to promote equal opportunities and raise the average level of women's participation in the workforce. In CY, EE, LT, LV they amount to more than 60%.

This information provides important insights on implementation that we did not have during previous programme. However, these indicators mainly cover activity reported by the Member States in 2007-2011 and do not cover the full effects of the policy as many other indicators cannot be aggregated.

The Commission Strategic report adopted on 18 April 2013 and the supporting thematic factsheets provide more information on the financial investments and the outputs and results reported by the Member States.

3. ADJUSTING INVESTMENT PLANS TO TACKLE THE CRISIS

The way the EU cohesion policy budget is used **to support growth-enhancing measures** was originally decided in 2007-2008 in partnership with the Member States and regions. Most of the investments are in priority areas where Europe and its regions need to make investments for the medium and long term in order to reinforce the drivers of growth. Indeed the crisis has highlighted pre-existing weaknesses in such fields and in many cases increased the need for investment in order to re-launch growth.

Two important types of modifications have been made to those original plans in recent years that demonstrate the flexibility of Cohesion policy – **thematic reprogramming and targeted reductions in the national co-financing** requirements. The use of these flexibility measures has been heavily driven by the impact of the financial and economic crisis on different Member States. For instance, in the case of reprogramming 90% of the financial transfers to date have taken place since early 2011.

Those Member States that have been most affected by the crisis (see below) have benefitted most from thematic reprogramming and the reduced national co-financing.

The sums involved in such reprogramming provide separate measures of flexibility and should not be added together. Thematic reprogramming involves reducing investment in one theme to increase it in another; reducing national co-financing recognises that there are national public finance restrictions and seeks to secure the investment of the EU funds available by requiring less matching finance.

3.1. Thematic reprogramming

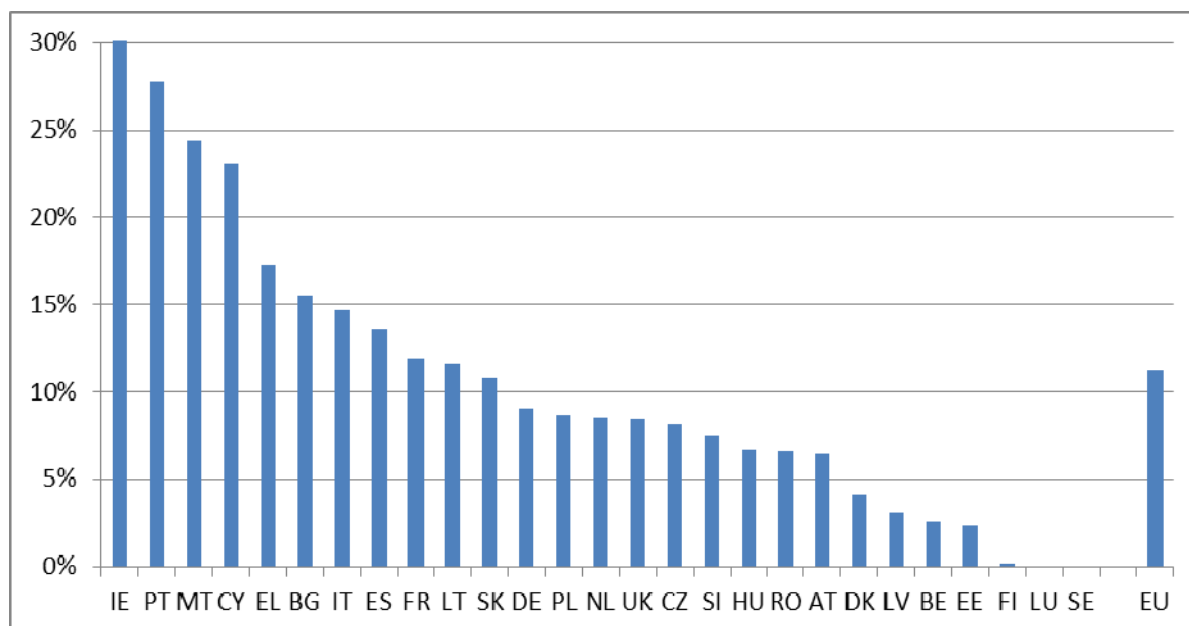
More than € 39.2 billion – or 11% of the total funds – was reprogrammed from one thematic area to another by the end of May 2013 to support the most pressing needs and strengthen certain interventions. Of that, more than €32.7 billion concerned the ERDF and Cohesion Fund and nearly €6.5 billion the ESF. The formal decisions that led to more than 90% of this thematic reprogramming were taken since early 2011.

In terms of the investment themes, the changes have brought about increases for **innovation and R&D, generic business support, sustainable energy, cultural and social infrastructure, roads and the labour market**, including youth employment. Reductions in some Member States have affected ICT services, environment measures, rail, other transport, training and education and capacity building measures – all areas with reduced demand because of the crisis or where initially programmed resources proved over-ambitious.

Graph 3 shows the Member States where thematic reprogramming was more significant as a share of total EU resources available. The average rate of reprogramming was 11%; in IE it reached 44% and well above 15% in PT, MT, CY and EL.

The Commission recommends that any further re-programming should be clearly oriented toward investments which maximise the impact on growth and jobs and be carefully assessed to maximise the possibility for effective implementation at this late stage in the programming period.

Graph 3: Thematic reprogramming within existing 2007-13 allocations by Member State until May 2013



A good examples of reprogramming – the 2012 Youth /SME Action Teams

In January 2012 the European Council endorsed an initiative for Youth/SME Action Teams in the eight Member States that were worst affected by youth unemployment.³

As a result of the work of the action teams of Commission officials and national representatives, an estimated additional 780,000 young people are likely to benefit from ESF reallocations for youth employment and training programmes. ERDF measures under this initiative could support an additional 54,800 SMEs compared to what was originally planned.

The changes decided in the Action Teams by end 2012 - in terms of thematic reprogramming and reducing co-financing for some MS - are included in the figures behind Graph 3 and under section 3.2.

3.2. Reduced national co-financing

The Commission approved reductions in national co-financing requirements for some Member States (ES, GR, IE, IT, LT, and PT and to a lesser extent BE, FR and UK) in 2011-2012. This was done in recognition that national budgets were under stress and that by alleviating the burden on national finance the EU investments could be secured. Due to lower national public co-financing, the total programme investment volume has been reduced by around **EUR 19 billion** – some 3.7% of the total planned investment, reducing by 13% **national public co-financing**.

³

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/archives/2013/03/pdf/youth_en.pdf

The largest relative reductions in public co-financing occurred in IE, PT, LV, GR, and ES and ranged from 26% (ES) to 47% (IE). The objective has been to take pressure away from national budgets at time of crisis while at the same time ensuring continued investment in projects with growth and job creation potential.

The Commission is willing to consider further reductions in national co-financing. Any such reductions should, however, be conditional on (a) ensuring that they help to deliver in the high priority areas for the policy, such as innovation in SMEs, energy efficiency and renewables, rail, employment, education, social inclusion, and capacity building, and (b) earmarking the national resources thus released for supporting national growth-enhancing investment, particularly investment with a short-term and anti-cyclical effect or whose implementation goes beyond the end of the current programming period.

Separately the EU institutions approved further reductions in national co-financing (**the top-up facility**) by temporarily increasing co-financing rates up to 95% for Member States with the greatest budgetary difficulties (GR, HU, IE, LV, PT and RO). By end April 2013, € 1.7 billion had been paid under this measure. In May 2013 the Commission adopted a proposal that would extend this facility, due to expire at end 2013, until the end of the period for countries still under a programme adjustment procedure. The European Parliament and the Council will now consider the proposal.

4. REINFORCING THE CONTRIBUTION OF EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL INVESTMENT FUNDS FOR 2014-2020

The legislative proposals being finalised for the 2014 – 2020 programming period covering the European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF) will strengthen the future programmes' focus on the Europe 2020 goals and put in place a stronger results and performance orientation for the programmes leading to a reinforcement of the quality of investment. This includes an obligation for Member States to fulfil ex ante conditions to contribute to investment quality and ensure prompt implementation in the Member States and regions.

The thematic and financial concentration on Europe 2020 priorities, such as Innovation, SMEs, labour market, human capital, social inclusion, public administration reform and institutional capacity building, sustainable energy and the digital economy, will ensure that the programmes contribute more clearly to the factors that can reduce economic, social and territorial disparities while at the same time making clearer contributions to strategic European objectives.

Strengthened provisions on partnership and the reduction of administrative burden will help to render the future programmes more effective. Social partners and civil society will be provided with the necessary means to take part in the programming, implementation and monitoring of interventions. And beneficiaries will have easier access to funds thanks to, for instance, to the use of simplified cost options.

To encourage and increase the use of financial instruments in Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, the future regulatory framework will offer greater flexibility on the target sectors, provide a stable implementation framework founded on a clear and more detailed set of rules, capture synergies between financial instruments and other forms of support and ensure compatibility

with financial instruments set-up and implemented at EU level under direct management rules. The role and leverage of financial instruments in delivering cohesion policy support to growth and jobs could be significantly greater in the 2014-2020 programming period. This will depend on the Member States and regions taking full advantage of the incentives and new flexibility offered by the future rules on the role of financial instruments.

Good progress is being made in agreeing this fundamental shift with Member States and the European Parliament. The Commission believes that, in partnership with the Member States, these changes will deliver significant results and more accountability in the future for those results as well as for the resources spent.

5. CONCLUSION

In relation to investments in the 2007-2013 programmes significant results are still expected until end 2015 to deliver job creation and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Member States and regions must redouble their efforts and implement the selected projects by the end of 2015. Such an effort would also make an important contribution to the objectives of the Compact for Growth and Jobs launched by the European Council in June 2012.

The Commission urges the Member States to maximise the benefits from the investments underway. In some Member States there are important delays in the areas of innovation and R&D, rail, IT services and broadband, energy and capacity building. Some Member States may seek to further reprogramming in 2014-15 towards areas where it is easier to spend. Any further re-programming should be clearly oriented toward investments which maximise the impact on growth and jobs and be carefully assessed to maximise the possibility for effective implementation at this late stage in the programming period.

This will be challenging as the policy discussion is turning increasingly to future programmes and there is a risk that attention may switch exclusively to the new programming period. Member States must keep a clear focus on delivery and managing the overlap with programme periods in order to maximise impact of the 2007-2013 programmes.

In relation to the 2014-2020 period the Commission has urged all MS to start preparing for the use of European Structural and Investment Funds early. The Commission has encouraged and shown readiness to engage in informal preparatory dialogue even as the regulations and the MFF are not yet finalised.

The Commission's goal, subject to final adoption of the legislative acts, is to finalise negotiations on all Partnership Agreements by the end of this year and on all programmes by the European elections in 2014 so that no time is lost in directing these funds into investment on the ground.

Most Member States are taking up this opportunity and are actively engaged in informal dialogue with the Commission, which in many cases has already reached discussions on draft Partnership Agreements and programmes.

Nevertheless, some Member States (AT, BG, HR, CY, DE, FR, ES, IE, IT, NL, PT and UK) need to make additional efforts to enhance preparations of the future programmes.

All Member States need to consider the significance of the ESIF funding opportunities for overcoming the crisis, and creating jobs and enhance growth. The preparation of the next generation of programmes is a golden opportunity to put the EU structural funds to work both to boost growth and jobs in the immediate term and to galvanise the national reform process.

Annex – Examples of employment and growth measures

AT	Stärkung der regionalen Wettbewerbsfähigkeit Oberösterreich	ERDF	EU: € 6 m
Title: Profactor Steyr			
This is a key project to improve the competitiveness of the Steyr-Kirchdorf-region through R&D infrastructure, supporting 87 high-tech jobs. The centre promotes technology and know-how transfer from science to industry, from basic research to industrial production. Its main objective is to analyse the needs and demands of manufacturing industry (local, regional and EU) and to develop sustainable solutions for competitive production. The target group of Profactor are mainly Austrian SMEs, but also international companies, which may be attracted to the region by the well-developed technology suppliers.			

BG	Human Resources Development OP	ESF	EU: € 15.2 m
Creating of employment for young people through providing of opportunity for an internship			
The objective is to support internship for unemployed people under 29 years of age to increase their competitiveness in the labour market and facilitate transition from education to employment. More than 5 035 young people are already included in company internships and more than half of the young people who have already completed an internship, continue to work either for the same or another employer. This intervention contributes to the national target under the "Europe 2020" strategy to achieve a minimum 76% level of employment among the population between 20 and 64 years of age.			

BE	OP Walloon Region	ESF	EU: € 1 m
Job'in - Support to self-entrepreneurship			
Duration: 2007-2013 Job'in aims at promoting entrepreneurship and at stimulating the creation of independent entrepreneurial jobs. The objective is to facilitate the transition from project to sustainable economic activity by providing guidance and assistance (including follow-up) to jobseekers wanting to launch a business activity. Employees can also access Job'in through vouchers for training in business creation.			

BE	OP: Vlaanderen	ERDF	EU: € 0.44 m
Title: SUSPRO3			
The project ran from March 2010 to November 2012 and provided specialist advice to integrate sustainable development practices into SMEs policies. By investing proactively in eco-innovative products and processes, the companies in the Flemish textile, wood and furniture industry are creating long-term benefits to improve competitiveness. The 85 companies supported are introducing eco-innovation processes into their business mainly in the areas of energy, water and materials resources efficiency measures. 51 have already implemented the advice received.			

CY	OP "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion"	ESF	EU: € 9.3 m
Title: Educational Priority Zones			
Programme for the prevention of early school drop-out, school failure and delinquency in areas of educational priority. It aims to improve the quality of education offered in certain zones that have been identified as a priority due to their location or the social-economic profile of residents.			

CZ	OP: Central Bohemian Region	ERDF	EU: € 2.1 m
Title: EXBIO Research and Technology Center			
EXBIO Praha a.s. is a producer of monoclonal antibodies and other immunologic agents and was a spin-off from the Molecular Genetics Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. The company has put into production more than 500 new or innovated products over the last three years. The EU supported the construction of a new research centre including equipment which enabled implementation of several demanding development projects in cooperation with large international companies.			

ES	OP: Cantabria	ERDF	EU: € 12.4 m
Title: Cantabria Coastal and Ocean Basin (CCOB) R&D facility and new buildings for the Environmental Hydraulics Institute			
The Environmental Hydraulics Institute "IH Cantabria" is a joint research centre that carries out research, knowledge transfer and training of specialists in the fields of fresh and saltwater. IH Cantabria has over 140 researchers and thirty years of experience. With a width of 44 m, a length of 30 m and 4-12 m in depth the new CCOB facility is capable of generating multidirectional waves, omnidirectional currents and winds. It is designed to carry out large scale wave tests for coastal and offshore engineering.			

FR	OP Convergence	ESF	EU: € 80 m
Title: Inclusive growth			
Youth unemployment and low qualifications are particularly significant problems for the French overseas territories. The "Service Militaire Adapté" (SMA) is an attempt to address these problems. It is an educational and professionalising program which supports young people, especially socially disadvantaged individuals. It provides training related to communication, education and jobs. Over 70% do not have a school leaving certificate and 30% are illiterate.			

MT	OP: People for more jobs and a better quality of life	ESF	EU: € 8.4 m
Title: Strategic Educational Pathway Scholarships (STEPS)			
Since 2009 This project offers post-graduate bursaries at Masters and Doctoral level for fields of studies in areas of national priority. As at end 2011 more than 500 students had obtained a scholarship. Eight calls for scholarships have already been issued and the schemes are expected to run until 08/2015. The project links with the EU 2020 Strategy and the need for Inclusive Growth in that by 2020 more jobs will require higher qualifications.			

NL	OP: West Nederlands	ERDF	EU: € 4.6 m
Title: Bioprocess Pilot Facility			
This testing facility in Delft has been set up to allow researchers, both public and private, to test new bio-processes in transition from the laboratory to production on an industrial scale. It allows users to construct complex operations by linking separate process modules to produce all kinds of products, such as raw materials for the construction sector, chemicals for biofuels or raw materials for the chemicals and pharmaceuticals industry. The facility is the first of its kind on this scale and became fully operational in May 2012.			

PT	OP: Norte	ERDF	EU: € 17 m
Title: UPTEC – Science & Technology Park, University of Porto (RegioStars winner 2013)			
The Science and Technology Park of the University of Porto promotes technological business-oriented projects while developing Portugal's Norte Region. Traditionally dependent on low-tech industries the Norte Region's Innovation Plan has refocused policy on specific assets in the region's economy and universities. The project focused on health, ICT and production technologies, creative industries, marine technologies and other sea-related activities. UPTEC is driving long-term structural change in the Norte Region's innovation system. It has assisted 110 firms, including 95 start-ups, five large companies and five private innovation centres and created 800 jobs.			

UK	OP for West Wales & the Valleys	ESF	EU: € 1.8 m
Title: Stride Alliance Partnership			
Duration: 2010-2012 The aim was to develop a multi-agency response, to engage with workless people and to integrate employability skills and motivation to assist them to seek further learning / employment. Simulated working environments in hair & beauty, construction, ICT, and business administration were used to attract economically inactive / unemployed people and engage them into activities as a catalyst to develop action plans towards labour market integration. The project workshops integrated both employment skills as well as literacy and numeracy, and work clubs.			

