

The legal nature of Country-Specific Recommendations

The [Country-Specific Recommendations](#) (CSRs) are annually adopted by the Council based on the Commission (COM) proposals within the framework of the European Semester. The CSRs provide integrated guidance on macro-fiscal and macro-structural measures based on the COM assessment of Member States' medium-term budgetary plans and national reform programmes in light of broad policy priorities adopted by the European Council based on the Annual Growth Survey. The Council also adopts policy recommendations to the euro area as a whole in accordance with Article 136 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) following a COM proposal. Table 1 displays the development of the number of CSRs and the minimum and maximum number per Member State.

Table 1: Country-Specific Recommendations - some stylized facts

European Semester	Total number of CSRs	Number of Member States	Minimum number of CSRs per Member State	Maximum number of CSRs per Member State
2012	138	23	4	DE, SE
2013	141	23	3	DK
2014	157	26	3	DK
2015	102	26	1	SE
2016	89	27	1	SE
2017	78	27	1	DK, SE
2018	73	27	1	DK, SE

Source: EGOV based on the European Commission. Note: The number of Member States having received CSRs is lower than the total number of EU Member States, given that CSRs have not been proposed for countries that were/are under a macro-economic adjustment programmes. The share of CSRs by secondary legal base for a given Semester cycle in brackets.

From the legal perspective, the CSRs are underpinned by the EU primary legislation (Articles 121 and 148 of the TFEU) as well as the EU secondary legislation, namely:

- 1) [Council Regulation \(EC\) 1466/97](#) on the strengthening of the surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and coordination of economic policies for CSRs referring to the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP);
- 2) [Regulation \(EU\) 1176/2011](#) on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances for CSRs referring to the Macroeconomic Imbalance procedure (MIP);
- 3) [Integrated guidelines](#) for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy – these guidelines consist of two legislative documents: (1) a Council recommendation on broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union and (2) a Council decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States.

The CSRs are to be taken into account by Member States in the process of national decision-making and, in particular, in drafting the budgetary plans for the forthcoming year. A failure to implement the recommendations might result in further procedural steps under the relevant EU law and ultimately in sanctions under the SGP and the MIP. These sanctions might include fines and/or suspension of up to five European Funds, namely the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

As shown in Table 2, a single CSR is typically underpinned by the Integrated Guidelines; in addition, it is in many cases underpinned by one or both of the two relevant EU secondary legislations (SGP, MIP). For example, the CSRs related to public finances (normally the first CSR per Member State) are in many cases partly based on the SGP and partly based on the integrated guidelines; this distinction is in part of relevance when assessing the compliance with the CSR (please see [separate EGOV overview briefing](#) on the implementation of 2018 CSRs).



Table 2: Country-Specific Recommendations from legal perspective (European Semesters 2012-2018)

Member State	Total CSRs							CSRs based on the integrated guidelines and on SGP							CSRs based on the integrated guidelines and on MIP							CSRs based on the integrated guidelines and jointly on SGP and MIP							CSRs based exclusively on Integrated Guidelines						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Belgium	7	7	6	4	3	3	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	4	3	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	3	2	2	0	2	2	2
Bulgaria	7	7	6	5	4	4	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	3	2	1	0	2	1
Czech Republic	6	7	7	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	6	3	3	2	2	
Denmark	5	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	
Germany	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	
Estonia	5	5	5	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	2	2	1	1	
Ireland	-	-	7	4	3	3	3	-	-	1	1	0	0	0	-	-	3	1	1	1	2	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	2	1	1	1	0	
Greece	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Spain	8	9	8	4	4	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	6	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	
France	5	6	7	6	5	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	5	5	4	3	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Croatia	-	-	8	6	5	5	4	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	7	5	4	4	4	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	0	0	0	0	0	
Italy	6	6	8	6	5	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	7	5	4	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cyprus	7	-	-	-	5	5	5	0	-	-	-	0	0	0	2	-	-	-	4	3	5	1	-	-	-	1	1	4	-	-	-	0	1	0	
Latvia	7	7	5	4	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	4	3	2	2	2	
Lithuania	6	6	6	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	2	2	2	3	
Luxembourg	5	6	5	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	4	3	2	2	2	
Hungary	7	7	7	5	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	5	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	
Malta	6	5	5	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	4	3	1	1	2	
Netherlands	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	
Austria	7	7	5	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	4	3	2	1	1	
Poland	6	7	6	4	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	5	3	2	2	2		
Portugal	-	-	8	5	5	4	3	-	-	1	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	3	4	3	2	-	-	0	1	1	1	-	-	7	1	0	0	0	
Romania	-	8	8	4	4	3	3	-	1	1	0	1	1	1	-	0	0	3	0	0	0	-	0	0	1	0	0	-	7	7	0	3	2	2	
Slovenia	7	9	8	4	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	8	7	4	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
Slovakia	7	6	6	4	3	3	3	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	5	4	2	2	2		
Finland	5	5	5	4	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	
Sweden	4	4	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	
UK	6	6	6	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	
Total	138	141	157	102	89	78	73	18	18	19	11	13	12	11	31	50	58	48	36	27	27	5	6	8	10	9	8	5	84	67	72	33	31	31	30

Source: EGOV based on the European Commission.

Note: (1) Croatia joined the EU on 1 July 2013 and took part in the 2013 European Semester on a voluntary and informal basis only; (2) Member States subject to a macroeconomic adjustment programme are, in accordance with Article 12 of Regulation No 472/2013, exempted from the monitoring and assessment under the European Semester.

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