Research for CULT Committee - ESIF and culture, education, youth & sport
Research for CULT Committee - ESIF and culture, education, youth & sport
The use of European Structural and Investment Funds in policy areas of the Committee

Abstract
The study examines the nature and extent of ESIF funding for education and training, culture, sport and youth, including the legal base for such support. Much activity in these areas is hidden in official data, under other headings, but all of the areas are already making a significant contribution to economic and social development. The study concludes with a recommendation that there be greater recognition in the future of the human contribution of these areas to cohesion policy.
This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCI  Cultural and Creative Industries
CF   Cohesion Fund
CMO  Context-Mechanism-Outcome model
CPR  Common Provisions Regulation
CULT European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education
DG AGRI Directorate-General Agriculture and Rural Development
DG EAC Directorate-General Education and Culture
DG EMPL Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG GROW Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG REGIO Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy
EAFRD European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC   European Commission
ECoC European Capital of Culture
ECVET European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EHL  The European Heritage Label
EMFF European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EPSI European Platform for Sport Innovation
EQAVET European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
EQF  European Qualifications Framework
EP   European Parliament
ERDF European Regional Development Fund
ESF  European Social Fund
ESIF European Structural and Investment Funds
<table>
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EU</strong></td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EYF</strong></td>
<td>European Youth Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ICT</strong></td>
<td>Information and communication technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ISCED</strong></td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEET</strong></td>
<td>Not in education, employment, or training</td>
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<td><strong>OP</strong></td>
<td>Operational Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PIAAC</strong></td>
<td>Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RIS3</strong></td>
<td>Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SME</strong></td>
<td>Small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TFEU</strong></td>
<td>Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union</td>
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<td><strong>UNESCO</strong></td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YEI</strong></td>
<td>Youth Employment Initiative</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Education and training and addressing the needs of young people are critical features of the developing knowledge economy and culture and sport are also making increasingly significant contributions to our contemporary economy and to social development.

This study examines the support of these areas through the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the current and preceding periods. Investigations have been conducted at an EU level and on the ground in eight Member States (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Spain) in order to identify and examine specific programmes and projects.

Key Findings

The possibilities for ESIF support are basically determined by the provisions of the Treaty (TFEU) and the Regulations governing the scope and implementation of the ESIF. This legal framework sets constraints on how the ESIF can be used and establishes the priorities and orientations for use of the ESIF at national and regional levels.

The implementation of the ESIF begins with EU Regulations in the form of the Common Provisions Regulation and Regulations relating to each of the separate Funds. Requirements for ‘thematic concentration’ and ex ante conditionalities reduce flexibility.

- There are 11 Thematic Objectives established, of which one is ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’.
- Culture and Sport are in a very different position from education and training in their legal status.
- Youth is a horizontal theme that can be supported in other actions.

All of the four areas are able to make some contribution to each of the Thematic Objectives.

Evidence is provided on how actions of interest have actually been supported by the ESIF and the Structural Funds previously, but the evidence cannot be comprehensive. Much of the activity in which the study is interested is ‘hidden’ behind other categories of expenditure and examination of activities on the ground has focused on eight Member States, where the extent of information varies.

Spending and absorption data on education and training, culture, youth and sport can be sought through DG REGIO’s databases where information is broken down at the level of the Operational Programme. The crosscutting nature of the areas under consideration makes it difficult to assess exact spending, although some indications exist for some areas. For example, one estimate suggests that for the 2007-2013 period more than € 14.4 billion was allocated to culture and tourism.

Project level data differ in quality from country to country. Good assessments on spending can be made from Polish and Danish funding data.

- Education and training represent a significant economic activity and can be an objective in their own right. They are the main driver of knowledge creation and a major instrument
for addressing unemployment and social conditions. They are also the main instrument for achieving other objectives. This role is under-appreciated.

- Culture’s contribution was recognised in the previous period as making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work, but there was no reference to culture’s contribution to ‘encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy’, nor to ‘creating more and better jobs’.

Italy has an OP dedicated to culture and Poland’s OPs place an emphasis on it. Others have culture-based projects, especially as part of smart specialisation strategies, but some Member States (e.g. Germany, Ireland) make little use of the ESIF to support culture-based projects in the current period.

- Sport has become an important economic sector in the EU, with a share in the national economies which is comparable to agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined, but there is little or no reference to sport in EU policy guidance on the ESIF.

- Young people represent an important source of skills and creativity, but the group of most concern are young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

In spite of their growing economic significance, culture and sport appear to have been squeezed in some countries in the current period, possibly because of concentration of actions.

Based on evidence, typologies of possible intervention are suggested.

Common elements in the four areas are important, including their common character as the human dimension of economic and social development.

The most striking overlaps with other programmes are where they promote innovation and creativeness or address social issues, notably under Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.

**Recommendations**

Education and training, culture, sport and youth have a greater significance than is generally assumed. They constitute some of the most dynamic parts of the contemporary economy, with scope for growth and substantial job creation, but they also add knowledge, imagination and creativeness to many other parts of Europe’s economy and society.

All four areas have had a significant presence in the ESIF and many contributions have been particularly effective, because of their special characteristics.

There are two possibilities in terms of a response to the situation described in this study. It would be possible to argue for a strengthening of the profile of education and training and of the other areas considered by the report. This might take the form of establishing each of the areas separately as priorities or developing a Thematic Objective. There are several problems with this approach.

An alternative way would be to argue for a broader, more strategic approach, proposing as a core theme for the ESIF – the strengthening of human skills and capabilities as Key Enablers of economic and social development. This would include specific reference to the contributions of culture and sport and special provision for encouraging the talents of young people, taking advantage of their enthusiasm and optimism.
The main recommendations are:

- The actual and potential contribution of education and training, culture, youth and sport to contemporary economic and social development should be promoted by the European Commission and Members of the European Parliament.

- While ensuring that ESIF interventions are as effective as possible is important, greater flexibility is required. The aim should be achieved by more coherent programme design rather than by thematic concentration.

- A broad theme ‘Strengthening human skills and capabilities as Key Enablers of economic and social development’, with specific reference to the roles of education and training, culture and sport and with special provision for young people, could be proposed by the CULT Committee as a central theme for the ESIF Common Provisions Regulation for the next programming period.

- Integrating this theme into programme planning should be an ex-ante conditionality of all Thematic Objectives.

- As well as promoting the strengthening of formal education and training, it is necessary to highlight the role of informal education and training, culture and sport in improving skills and competences, encouraging creativity and imagination and engaging with and motivating the widest possible reaches of European society.

- There should be a strong forward-looking element in the formulation of the provisions, especially by assisting the workforce to adapt to industrial change, as envisaged by the TFEU.

- A more explicit modelling of programme implementation processes should become part of ESIF design, reporting and assessment at all levels. Particular attention should be paid to the strengthening of skills and competences and other human capabilities as part of these implementation processes.

- The Operational Programmes implementing smart specialisation should detail the expected human contribution to the strategy’s implementation.

- Appropriate monitoring procedures should be put in place by EU and national authorities to allow for better analysis of the socioeconomic role and impact of education and training, culture, sport and youth.

The engagement of a wide group of stakeholders by the national authorities in the development of Partnership Agreements and smart specialisation strategies should be strengthened and civil society associations, such as cultural, sports and youth organisations should be assisted in order to develop this engagement.

Methodology

The main sources of information used to collate data and forming the basis of the study’s analysis cover EU-level and national and regional data as well as academic and/or evaluation studies. Online databases provided and maintained by DG REGIO in the European Commission provide official data on ESIF planned expenditure and implementation (actual expenditure). Information was collected on the situation on the ground in eight Member States.
1 INTRODUCTION

KEY FINDINGS

- Education and training and addressing the needs of young people are critical features of the developing knowledge economy.
- Culture and sport are also making increasingly significant contributions to our contemporary economy and to social development.
- The study examines support for education and training, culture, sport and youth from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the current programming period (2014 – 2020) and in the preceding period (2007 – 2013). It looks at both programme design and implementation.
- Investigations have been conducted on the ground in eight Member States (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia and Spain) in order to identify and examine specific programmes and projects.
- The main sources of information used to collate data and forming the basis of the study’s analysis cover EU-level and national and regional data as well as academic and/or evaluation studies. Online databases provided and maintained by DG REGIO in the European Commission provide official data on ESIF planned expenditure and implementation (actual expenditure).
- There are, however, considerable difficulties in accessing appropriate data on the areas of interest.

The European Parliament’s CULT Committee is responsible for education and training, culture, sport and youth. The relationship between these areas and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) is one that has developed significantly in the last ten years or so. This is because the importance of education and training and addressing the needs of young people have gained higher prominence as critical features of the developing knowledge economy. It has also become increasingly clear that, as well as being important areas for civic society in their own right, culture and sport are making increasingly significant contributions to our contemporary economy and to social development.

Furthermore, reasonable assessments of the likely trends of European society in the years to come in a series of areas ranging from the possible impacts of technological trends, in areas such as artificial intelligence and automation, to the possible consequences of developments in the health of the population, especially as a result of an increasing average age, suggest that these are areas that need to become more evident in the overall policy of the European Union and its Member States. This study will expand upon these and related themes.
1.1 Aims and Approach

The study’s aim has been to examine how far the four areas of education and training, culture, sport and youth are supported by the ESIF (and the Structural Funds in the previous period) and to draw lessons for the future.

The 4 ESI Funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, and EMFF) have been considered, but the main focus has been on the ERDF and ESF. The Youth Employment Initiative has been excluded from this analysis, since it falls outside of the remit of the CULT Committee.

In order to analyse the nature and extent of ESIF support for the four areas of interest, the approach has been, first, to examine the ‘rules’ that govern the scope and operation of the ESIF. These ‘rules’ are primarily the provisions relating to the ESIF and the four areas of interest in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and those in the Regulations, adopted at a European level, that set the overall objectives and implementation procedures for the ESIF in each programming period. Together, they provide a framework that determines what is possible at a more operational level.

Contrasts are made between the provisions of the current period and those of the previous programming period.

The next stage has been to examine how the EU-level framework is adapted and then implemented at a national and regional level. In Partnership Agreements, Member States set out how the EU Framework is to be applied at a national level, taking into account national priorities, policies and institutional arrangements. Operational Programmes (OPs) then provide the implementing mechanisms at either a national or regional level and it is at this point that it begins to be possible to see what is actually happening on the ground, though the final detail is only available by examining specific projects and actions that have received support from the Operational Programmes.

By this stage, there can be considerable variation around the common themes established at an EU level, but it is really at this level that the extent and nature of ESIF support for education and training, culture, sport and youth can be established. Unfortunately, it is not possible to obtain a detailed overview of all the projects that are supported in the areas of interest. First of all there are a large number of them. It is known, for instance, that just in France there have been over 2,000 projects involving sport that have been supported by the ESIF and the preceding programmes (CSES and B&S, 2016). Then, the information available on the activities of each project varies considerably and, in any event, relates only to one specific project, making it difficult to generalise. Nonetheless, it is possible to gain a valuable insight into what is happening on the ground by a selective examination of particular Operational Programmes and their projects.

The approach adopted, therefore, has been to build on existing knowledge of these interventions, derived from a range of studies, by a selective examination of the situation in particular Member States. Those selected for the study were:

- Denmark
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Spain.
This set of countries includes both smaller and larger Member States, east and west, north and south and also Member States in different stages of development, as indicated by their respective positions in the European Innovation Scoreboard. There is also a variation in the organisation of national implementation among these Member States. Most have both national and regional Operational Programmes, but Denmark and Slovakia only have national OPs, though in Denmark’s case with some regional variations, and Ireland has OPs for each of the two regions.

Investigations in each of these countries considered the strategic ESIF documents at a national level – the Partnership Agreements and the Operational Programmes, but also evidence on how these Programmes have been implemented in specific projects. Implementation involves deciding on priorities between the different Thematic Objectives defined at an EU level. But the mechanisms through which the OPs are implemented are also important, especially the terms of calls for proposals, and the subsequent selection of projects. They reveal how national officials in the Managing Authorities influence ESIF implementation at a regional or local level.

Another important consideration in the analysis of the nature of interventions across the four areas of interest is the extent to which each of them is involved in special initiatives under the ESIF. For instance, being a theme for a smart specialisation strategy has implications for levels of organisation, funding and impact that are of a different order from being a theme for a specific project developed within, for example, a regional Operational Programme. The RIS3 smart specialisation platform\(^1\) identifies smart specialisation strategies in which themes of interest are mentioned. It should be said that this source relies on the input of regional authorities to provide the information and so there are some gaps in coverage, but for this particular area the site and especially the eye@RIS3 Tool, is extremely valuable.

Comparisons were also made with the support for the areas of interest from other EU programmes, particularly Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, but extending to a wider range of EU actions such as the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label.

A fuller explanation of the methodology adopted for the study is provided in Annex One.

1.1.1 Sources of Information

The main sources of information used to collate data and forming the basis of the study’s analysis cover EU-level and national/regional level data, plus academic and/or evaluation studies.

A key limitation in examining these data and in assessing the share of culture, education & training, youth and sport in overall spending is that they are partly horizontal thematic areas. Consequently, although education and training is a Thematic Objective and culture, tourism and youth are identified at the level of investment priorities and thus have corresponding data collected, all four areas also make contributions to meeting other objectives and these activities are hidden in the data. So, if a sport organisation develops performance monitoring systems, using funds available for ICT developments, data on the project are recorded under ICT activities rather than sport. **It will be seen that a lot of the activities in the four areas of interest are ‘hidden’ in this way.**

\(^1\) [http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/)
There are two main data sources for assessing spending. DG REGIO provides comprehensive top-down data, but this lacks the level of detail required to identify all relevant spending and suffers from the problem just explained. The second data source is project level data provided by the national Managing Authorities in each Member States or the projects themselves. The main issue with these datasets is that they have a varying level of sophistication and quality. This makes it difficult to compare across countries and also means that the evidence that is available relies on a narrow selection of activities.

These data limitations are crucial to bear in mind in the discussion on spending to date and any amounts cited in the report should be treated with caution, taking all the caveats into account.

The methodological annex (Annex One) also provides greater detail on information sources.

Finally, by way of introduction, it should be recalled that the study is intended to provide overall recommendations that are evidence-based and feasible, on:

- how to include the fields of education, youth, culture and sport in the relevant EU regulations and, where appropriate, delegated and implementing acts and guiding documents, and
- how to address issues detected in national regulations and practices in the Member States and the Commission services responsible, with a view to informing one or several potential legislative opinions on the next generation of the ESIF by the CULT Committee, and the orientation of the next programming period.
2 THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESIF AND THEIR OBJECTIVES

KEY FINDINGS

- The possibilities and constraints of the ESIF legal framework are determined by the provisions of the Treaty (TFEU) and the Regulations governing the scope and implementation of the ESIF in the current and preceding periods.
- This legal framework sets constraints on how the ESIF can be used and establishes the priorities and orientations for use of the ESIF at national and regional levels.
- The implementation of the ESIF begins with EU Regulations in the form of the Common Provisions Regulation and Regulations relating to each of the separate Funds.
- There are 11 Thematic Objectives established, of which one is ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’.
- Requirements for ‘thematic concentration’ and ex ante conditionalities reduce flexibility.
- Culture and Sport are in a very different position from education and training in their legal status.
- Youth is a horizontal theme that can be supported in other actions.
- However, much of the activity in which the study is interested is ‘hidden’ behind other categories of expenditure.
- It is with the Operational Programmes that the real implementation detail begins to be found.
- All of the four areas are able to make some contribution to each of the Thematic Objectives of the ESIF.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will first set out some of the general considerations on the legal provisions applying across the board in all the areas under consideration before going on to consider the current situation with respect to each of the four areas separately (sections 2.3 to 2.6). The provisions relating to the current programming period will then be compared with those for the previous period, 2007 to 2013 (section 2.7). Subsequently, the way that some of the activities of all four are hidden is explained (section 2.8), before the mechanisms for implementing actions on the ground are considered and an explanation given of which funds support which types of investment (sections 2.9 and 2.10). Finally, the relationship between support available under ESIF and that available under other EU policies is considered (section 2.11).

A basic point to consider in relation to how far education, youth, culture and sport can be supported under the European Structural and Investment Funds is the possibilities and constraints arising from the provisions of the EU’s legal framework. These arise both from the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Regulations governing the scope and implementation of the ESIF in the current and preceding periods. Together, these determine how far action in the four areas falls within the competences of the European Union and the provisions made for a specific programming period. This legal framework sets constraints on how the ESIF can be used and establishes the priorities and orientations for
use of the ESIF at national and regional levels. Together they are important considerations, establishing the rules under which the ESIF operate. Although these rules can be changed to a certain extent from one programming period to the next (especially in relation to priorities), it has to be recognised that the basic design of the ESIF is more fundamentally determined by Treaty provisions that are not likely to change in the near future.

An important point to make, initially, is that the TFEU provisions generally make education, youth, culture and sport areas of competence for the Member States although they also provide a role for the EU in supporting the Member States in their development of provision in these areas through mutual co-operation and the exchange of best practice. Actions relating to education, youth, culture and sport also contribute to the development of policies in areas where there is more direct responsibility at an EU level. Under Cohesion policy, there is a shared responsibility between the EU and the Member States.

A second basic consideration is that the ESIF processes that direct attention and funding to education, youth, culture and sport operate at different levels and the interaction between these levels is an important factor in determining what happens in practice. The framework for the ESIF is established at a European level at the beginning of the process, initially by the Treaty provisions and then by Regulations of the Council and European Parliament – the Common Provisions Regulation and the Regulations relating to each of the separate Funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF etc.). The way that the priorities at the EU level are then implemented depend, at a national level, on the Partnership Agreement and the formulation of national Operational Programmes and, at a regional level, on regional Operational Programmes and agreements (such as those in Denmark) for regional bodies to implement national Operational Programmes. At each of these levels there is room for differences in both perceived priorities and the instruments that are used. This is by design in order to allow the general framework to be adapted to local circumstances, but it does mean that the overall situation is complex. There can be considerable variation in practice from place to place and above all the Managing Authorities and those implementing the ESIF, even at regional and local level, can have a major influence on the shape of ESIF expenditure.

Thirdly, it will be seen that there are important differences in the way that the ESIF is able in principle to support the different areas that are of interest to the CULT Committee. This is a theme that will continue to be developed, but it should be noted initially that these differences arise from the following:

- by the way that the provisions of the TFEU have been interpreted in the design of the ESIF;
- by the choice of the priorities made in the Regulations governing the ESIF and the separate funds; and
- by the way that Member States have shaped the Partnership Agreements and the formulation of Operational Programmes at national and regional levels.

Finally, another important contextual element shaping interventions is the strategies and policies of Member States in the areas in question and in relation to economic and social development in general. Member States are encouraged to develop an integrated approach and consequently, these policies have a major influence on the Partnership Agreements that are made with the Commission and the formulation of Operational Programmes, including the relative emphasis on particular thematic areas and objectives from among those set at a European level. Here, the study relies on generating a representative picture from the information gathered at a national level in the eight Member States that have been covered.


2.2 The Framework for ESIF interventions

The separate funds that make up the European Structural and Investment Funds are the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). There are separate sections of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that deal with each of them.

Title XI of the TFEU deals with the European Social Fund, beginning with Article 162, which establishes the ESF in order to improve employment opportunities for workers in the internal market and to contribute to raising the standard of living. Its aims are stated as follows:

- to render the employment of workers easier
- to increase their geographical and occupational mobility within the Union,
- to facilitate their adaptation to industrial changes and to changes in production systems, in particular through vocational training and retraining.

The articles on the ESF are immediately followed by Title XII on Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Sport, which expand on the reference to vocational training and retraining in the stated aims of the ESF, by setting out the principles for EU action on education and training in general and on youth and sport as well. These and more detailed provisions will be considered below in relation to each of the areas covered, but as far as the overall framework of the ESF is concerned, it should be noted that the limits to the competences of the EU are made clear. Article 165 states that:

‘the Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity’.

The article goes on to say that the EU can adopt incentive measures, in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, but excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

Similarly, Article 166, which states that ‘the Union shall implement a vocational training policy’ goes on to say that this should support and supplement the action of the Member States and fully respect ‘the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training’.

It is clear that any action by the EU, including under the ESF, must respect the Member State competence in determining the content of teaching and training and the organisation of the education and training systems and the laws and regulations in these areas.

Article 167 under Title XIII on Culture makes similar provisions.

Title XVIII on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion sets out the Treaty provisions relating to the strengthening of the EU’s economic, social and territorial cohesion. The aim of this policy is to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions. The instruments for achieving this aim are the European Regional Development Fund, but also the European Agricultural Guidance and
Guarantee Fund - Guidance Section and the European Social Fund, supported by the European Investment Bank and other existing Financial Instruments.

Article 177 establishes that the European Parliament and the Council determine the tasks, priority objectives and the organisation of the Structural Funds, along with the general rules applicable to them and the provisions necessary to ensure their effectiveness. These provisions are also expected to ensure the coordination of the Funds with one another and with the other existing Financial Instruments. In this area, the European Parliament and the Council act by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, including consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

The Cohesion Fund supports projects in the fields of environment and trans-European networks in the area of transport infrastructure.

In line with Article 177, the implementation of the EU's Structural Fund provisions in any of the seven-year programming periods begins with the Regulations adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of a proposal from the European Commission. These take the form of the Common Provisions Regulation and Regulations relating to each of the separate Funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF etc.).

In the current period, the Common Provisions Regulation – CPR - (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), sets out **11 Thematic Objectives** on which to build national and regional strategies. These are as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 2 Thematic Objectives of the Common Provisions Regulation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICT).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration</td>
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</table>

The intention was that objectives 1 – 7 would largely be implemented by the European Regional Development Fund and objectives 8 – 11 would be more evident in the European Social Fund. Objective 3 is particularly relevant, of course, for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.
It was intended that the various funds, and especially the ERDF and the ESF, would be co-ordinated and would reinforce each other. One implication of this is that proposals for stand-alone ESF projects, for example, are likely to be seen less favourably now than those that contribute to a more integrated training provision.

Each of the Thematic Objectives has sub-themes in the form of Investment Priorities – areas where the investment under the Operational Programmes takes place in pursuit of a particular Thematic Objective. These will be considered in greater detail in relation to the four areas under consideration.

Member States have to choose the way that they incorporate the Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities into their Operational Programmes, how they interpret the themes and the relative weight that they place on them. They were also encouraged to concentrate resources on the pursuit of particular objectives in the overall list, in order to increase their impact. This is of some importance for the current study.

The Common Provisions Regulation sets out, under Article 18, a requirement for ‘thematic concentration’:

‘Member States shall concentrate support, in accordance with the Fund-specific rules, on interventions that bring the greatest added value in relation to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.’

This principle of maximising the contribution of the ESI Funds to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth is further elaborated in Annex I of the CPR, which sets out a Common Strategic Framework for the implementation of the ESIF, providing strategic guiding principles, with the intention of achieving an integrated development approach using the ESI Funds in co-ordination with other Union instruments and policies. In these guidelines, Member States are encouraged to indicate in their Partnership Agreements how they are taking an integrated approach to territorial development, how interventions supported through the ESI Funds are complementary and are implemented in a coordinated manner. Coordination of the various bodies contributing to the national position is part of this process.

This approach of encouraging a consistent and co-ordinated set of interventions is further reinforced by the article 19 on ‘ex ante conditionalities’. These are conditions that Member States have to fulfil if they are to include in their Operational Programmes support for addressing particular Thematic Objectives. They mainly involve having appropriate national policies in place. A list of the thematic ex ante conditionalities is provided, along with the criteria for fulfilment in Annex IX of the Common Provisions Regulation.

As a result of the ex ante conditionalities, Member States have to assess, when preparing programmes and the Partnership Agreement, whether specific requirements on policy coherence, relating to each of the Thematic Objectives are applicable and fulfilled. They are required to conduct an assessment of their compliance with the relevant ex-ante conditionalities and to provide a summary of this assessment in the Partnership Agreement.

A number of these ex-ante conditionalities are of relevance for the current study, especially in the area of education and training, but also including active and healthy ageing, for instance, which has implications for sport. A more general ex-ante conditionality relates to the need to have a smart specialisation strategy in place, if the first Thematic Objective (Strengthening research, technological development and innovation) is to be addressed.
Smart specialisation strategies are an important vehicle for engaging with culture and sport in particular (cf. section 3.5). Their development and other thematic ex ante conditionalities derive from the CPR.

The Regulations on the separate funds add to the orientations provided by the CPR. Much of the detail that is of interest for this study will be considered under the sections on the framework for each specific area, including the Investment Priorities that are listed, under each of the Thematic Objectives that add detail about the actions that are to be supported. However, there are also some elements that it is worth mentioning at this point.

One of these elements is the provisions for ‘thematic concentration’. The motivation for these provisions is the aim of making the most effective contribution possible to the achievement of the EU’s priorities. As is stated in recital 5 of the ERDF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013), ‘the ERDF should contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ by a ‘greater concentration of ERDF support on the priorities of the Union’.

This leads to a stipulation that, in more developed regions, at least 80% of the total ERDF resources at national level should be allocated to two or more of the Thematic Objectives defined as points 1, 2, 3 and 4 above. This means a significant concentration on research and innovation, information and communication technologies (ICT), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and promoting a low-carbon economy. In addition, there is the further provision that at least 20% has to be allocated to promoting a low-carbon economy. The concentration for transition regions is somewhat less - at least 60%, and for less developed regions, it is at least 50%; there are also lower concentrations of support for promoting a low-carbon economy in these types of region - at least 15% and at least 12% respectively.

Similarly, under the ESF Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013), for more developed regions, Member States have to concentrate at least 80% of the ESF allocation to each Operational Programme on up to five of the 20 investment priorities set out in Article 3(1) of the Regulation. For transition regions and for less developed regions, the degree of concentration is at least 70% and at least 60% respectively. In addition, at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State have to be allocated to the Thematic Objective ‘promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination’. The situation is summarised in the following table.
Table 2.1: Thematic concentration 2014-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>More developed regions</th>
<th>Transition regions</th>
<th>Less developed regions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>80% of the financial allocation to two or more of TOs 1,2,3,4</td>
<td>60% of the financial allocation to two or more of TOs 1,2,3,4</td>
<td>50% of the financial allocation to two or more of TOs 1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20% to TO 4</td>
<td>15% to TO 4</td>
<td>12% to TO 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>80% up to 5 IPs</td>
<td>70% up to 5 IPs</td>
<td>60% up to 5 IPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20% to TO 9</td>
<td>20% to TO 9</td>
<td>20% to TO 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted by CSES from the Regulations governing the ESIF. The point is that the provisions for thematic concentration in the ERDF and ESF Regulations tend to squeeze out areas whose contribution is believed to be less significant and, while this may benefit education and training, it may also lead to the exclusion of culture and sport.

On the other hand, other provisions for the Regulations covering the specific Funds may be more helpful.

Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation addresses sustainable urban development through strategies and integrated actions to tackle the economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges affecting urban areas, while also taking into account the need to promote urban-rural linkages. The Regulation envisages that sustainable urban development will take the form of integrated territorial investment or a specific operational programme, or a specific priority. In any event, at least 5% of the ERDF resources allocated at national level under the Investment for growth and jobs goal has to be allocated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development. The Member States are required to set out in their Partnership Agreements the principles for the selection of urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented, together with an indicative allocation for those actions at national level.

The significance of these provisions is that actions based on culture and sport, but also broader actions supported by education and training and involving young people, can make major contributions to sustainable urban development. This is especially the case where there is a response to the invitation to ‘identify or test new solutions which address issues that are related to sustainable urban development and are of relevance at Union level’ (mentioned in recital 20 of the ERDF Regulation). These contributions can range from making the urban areas more attractive and vibrant and having a role in shaping the physical environment to offering opportunities for enterprise, including social entrepreneurship, and being excellent vehicles for promoting social cohesion. Subsequent examples will illustrate these points.

There is also provision, under Article 12 of the ESF Regulation, for support from the ESF, especially when complementing ERDF interventions, for community-led local development strategies in urban and rural areas and local initiatives for employment, including youth employment, education and social inclusion, together with integrated territorial investments.

Similarly, Article 4 (2) of the ESF Regulation states that at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State have be allocated to the thematic objective ‘promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination’. This is an area where education and training are important, but also where, as will be seen, culture and sport are particularly
effective in engaging with excluded groups that need to be involved and in starting a process of skills development, especially basic transversal and social skills. Similarly, although outside of the scope of this study, the Youth Employment Initiative, which targets young persons under the age of 25 who are not in employment, education or training, is funded outside of the concentration provisions and is an important initiative in the area of youth.

The provisions on thematic concentration therefore work in both directions, on the one hand, making it potentially more difficult to involve the four areas under consideration in programmes and projects supported by the ESIF, but equally in some instances strengthening aspects of the ESIF, where the four areas can make distinctive and powerful contributions.

A general conclusion from a consideration of the overall legal framework governing the ESIF, however, is that the rules are coherent, but relatively complex and that they need considerable attention, if arguments in favour of greater involvement of education and training, culture, sport and youth are to be successful.

### 2.3 The Framework for Education & Training

Specific reference to education and training in the TFEU is under Article 165, where EU action is envisaged in areas such as the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States, encouraging mobility of students and teachers, and the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study, promoting cooperation between educational establishments, encouraging the development of distance education and developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States.

More directly, Article 166 of the Treaty refers to the implementation of a vocational training policy to support and supplement the action of the Member States. This can involve facilitating adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining, and improving initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market.

This theme is also mentioned in the Common Provisions Regulation, where there is reference to an ex-ante conditionality relating to the adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change. This refers to the need to ensure the existence of policies aiming to favour anticipation and good management of change and restructuring, along with instruments to support social partners and public authorities in developing and monitoring proactive approaches to change and restructuring and measures to promote anticipation of change and preparation for, and management of, the restructuring process.

Overall, education and training have a strong position in the legal framework for the ESIF and, as has been seen, the promotion of education and training is a central objective of the ESIF. ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’ is one of the 11 Thematic Objectives (No. 10) established under the Title on the Strategic Approach for the ESIF in the Common Provisions Regulation. Furthermore, Thematic Objectives 8 and 9 (‘Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility’ and ‘Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination’) can also easily involve education and training.
In the guidance provided in Annex I of the CPR on the Common Strategic Framework there is also a specific reference to co-ordination with the Erasmus+ Programme, where it is stated that the Member States should ‘seek to use ESI Funds to mainstream tools and methods developed and tested successfully under “Erasmus+” in order to maximise the social and economic impact of investment in people and, inter alia give impetus to youth initiatives and citizens actions’. Erasmus+ is the EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport and its relationship with the ESIF will be considered later in more detail, but for the moment, it should be noted that a specific link with the ESIF is one of the provisions of the Common Strategic Framework and this suggests a particular role for the ESIF in reinforcing and multiplying actions developed under Erasmus+.

Thematic Objectives 8, 9 and 10 are addressed by the ESF in particular, which sets out a series of more detailed ‘investment priorities’ in relation to each of them.

In relation to ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’, the following investment priorities are stated:

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

(ii) 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;

(iii) 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;

(iv) 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.

This provides a lot of scope for education to figure in Partnership Agreements, national plans and Operational Programmes, though, of course, it should always be remembered that education is a competence of the Member States and EU action is in support of national provision. In fact, the measures supported by the ESF are clearly designed to fit around the normal school and higher education curricula, improving equal access, adding to tertiary education, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, especially through lifelong learning, and improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems.

In relation to other Thematic Objectives supported by the ESF, there is little explicit reference to education and training as such, when the investment priorities are set out, but there are a number of opportunities for education and training to be part of the response. For instance in relation to the Thematic Objective ‘promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility’, among the investment priorities listed are ‘Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises’ and ‘Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change’ both of which could easily involve education and training, even if it is in a relatively unstructured form, such as through mentoring or providing advice.
It is, however, surprising, given the prominence in the Treaty of facilitating ‘the adaptation of workers to industrial changes and to changes in production systems, in particular through vocational training and retraining’ and the fact that it is one of the three aims of the ESF, that it has such a relatively low profile in the ESF Regulation. This objective is actually mentioned where the missions of the ESF are stated in Article 2, but ‘Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change’ is only included as one of seven investment priorities under just one of the Thematic Objectives. This position does not seem to be commensurate with the emphasis given to adaptation to industrial change under the Treaty.

The ERDF Regulation supports the main Thematic Objective relating to education and training, by making provision for developing education and training infrastructure, but there are also other elements under the other Objectives where education and training have a place, from making inputs into the development of research and innovation capacity to strengthening ICT applications for e-learning.

Overall, however, with a specific Thematic Objective of ‘investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’, it can be expected that education and training will have a significant place in national and regional Operational Programmes as an objective in its own right. In this respect education and training differ from the other three areas under consideration.

2.4 The Framework for Culture

In contrast Culture (and as we shall see, Sport) is in a very different position to education and training. In general, it is not even intended that culture, as such, should be promoted by the ESIF, only that culture and sport may be suitable vehicles for delivering other key objectives of the Funds. Understanding this position starts with an appreciation of the legal framework in relation to culture.

Title XIII of the TFEU is on Culture. Article 167 states that the Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity. Action envisaged by the Union relates mainly to encouraging cooperation between Member States in cultural matters such as improving the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples, conserving cultural heritage of European significance and non-commercial cultural exchanges and fostering cooperation with third countries and international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe. However, the TFEU does say that the Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties and it is envisaged that the European Parliament and the Council, after consulting the Committee of the Regions, could adopt incentive measures, and the Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, could adopt recommendations. Any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States on cultural matters is excluded.

At the level of the Regulations, the Common Provisions Regulation makes a single reference to culture in the form of an ex-ante conditionality for Member States intending to develop actions relating to the second Thematic Objective, ‘Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICT)’, particularly with a view to pursuing the ERDF investment priority ‘Strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health’. This requires a strategic policy framework for digital growth to stimulate affordable, good quality and interoperable ICT-enabled private and public services and increase uptake by citizens, including vulnerable groups, businesses and public
administrations including cross border initiatives. Part of the criteria for meeting the conditionality is that an analysis of balancing support for demand and supply of ICT should have been conducted. In other words, the Regulation envisages that as part of a strategy to develop access to, and use of ICT, the Member State authorities might envisage using e-culture as a vehicle for engaging businesses and citizens, along with other applications such as e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion and e-health’.

Other references to culture are to be found in the separate ERDF and ESF Regulations.

In the ERDF Regulation, Recital 8 says:

It is necessary to promote innovation and the development of SMEs, in emerging fields linked to European and regional challenges such as creative and cultural industries and innovative services, reflecting new societal demands, or to products and services linked to an ageing population, care and health, eco-innovation, the low-carbon economy and resource efficiency.

It is interesting that the ERDF Regulation envisages the creative and cultural industries contributing to innovation and the development of SMEs in dynamic areas of the economy and particularly those that address European and regional challenges. Recital 11 adds to this, stating:

In order to maximise their contribution to the objective of supporting employment-friendly growth, activities supporting sustainable tourism, culture and natural heritage should be part of a territorial strategy for specific areas, including the conversion of declining industrial regions. Support for such activities should also contribute to strengthening innovation and the use of ICT, SMEs, environment and resource efficiency or the promotion of social inclusion.

A more social role is suggested in Recital 15:

In order to promote social inclusion and combat poverty, particularly among marginalised communities, it is necessary to improve access to social, cultural and recreational services, through the provision of small-scale infrastructure, taking account of the specific needs of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

The orientations provided in the recitals are carried over into some of the main provisions of the Regulation.

Article 3, which sets out the type of activities that are to be supported, in order to contribute to the investment priorities, talks of ‘investment in the development of endogenous potential through fixed investment in equipment and small-scale infrastructure, including small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure, services to enterprises, support to research and innovation bodies and investment in technology and applied research in enterprises. The role of cultural infrastructure is thus recognised as part of the process of developing potential.

Then, when setting out the investment priorities, there are a series of references to the contribution of culture:

- ‘Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage’ is seen as a possible contribution to Thematic Objective 6 – ‘preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency’
• ‘Enhancement of accessibility to, and development of, specific natural and cultural resources’ is seen as part of supporting employment-friendly growth through a territorial strategy contributing to the achievement of Thematic Objective 8 ‘promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility’

• ‘Promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services and the transition from institutional to community-based services’ is seen as a potential contribution to Thematic Objective 9 ‘promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination’

• As suggested in the Common Provisions Regulation, there is also provision for strengthening ICT applications for e-government, e-learning, e-inclusion, e-culture and e-health as a way of addressing Thematic Objective 2 ‘enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT’.

Finally, in the list of common output indicators, there is mention of an indicator on sustainable tourism: ‘Increase in expected number of visits to supported sites of cultural and natural heritage and attractions’, suggesting that cultural tourism is expected to figure in the actions undertaken in the Operational Programmes.

In the ESF Regulation, there is the interesting remark in Recital 10:

‘The ESF should also contribute to cultural and creative skills. Socio-cultural, creative and cultural sectors are important in indirectly addressing the aims of the ESF; their potential should therefore be better integrated into ESF projects and programming’.

It is unfortunate, however, that there are no further references to culture in the main provisions of the Regulation that might assist the realisation of this insight.

In summary, there are a few signs in the legal framework for the ESIF at a European level that there is the beginning at least of a recognition that culture and the creative industries can make an important and specialised contribution to achieving the aims of the Funds, but consideration of the detail of the provisions in the legal documents reinforces the point that culture is seen in an instrumental way, as an effective means of contributing to the achievement of several of the Thematic Objectives rather than as an activity to be supported in its own right. In this respect, the Regulations governing the ESIF are clearly reflecting the Treaty provisions on the role of the Funds.

To a certain, although limited, extent, the coverage of culture in the legal framework for the ESIF and especially the Regulations for the 2014 – 20 period, does reflect greater attention to the role of culture and related sectors in economic and social development, particularly as a result of the Commission’s Green Paper on ‘Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries’ - European Commission (2010), and the study supporting it (CSES 2010).

2.5 The Framework for Sport

Sport is in a similar position to culture in terms of the legal framework governing the ESIF. It too is not supported as such and any support for sport activities is only to the extent that sport can contribute to achieving the ESIF objectives. In fact, because the role of sport as a vehicle for economic and social development has only been highlighted more recently (e.g. CSES 2016), there is even less explicit reference to sport in the framework documents than there is to culture. There are nonetheless certain areas that are worth highlighting.
In the TFEU Title XII on Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Sport, Article 165 states that the Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function. It also refers to developing the European dimension in sport, by promoting fairness and openness in sporting competitions and cooperation between bodies responsible for sports, and by protecting the physical and moral integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen, especially the youngest sportsmen and sportswomen and by fostering cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of sport. The European Parliament and the Council, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, may adopt incentive measures and the Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, may adopt recommendations. Any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States are excluded.

In terms of reference to sport in the Regulations for the current programming period there is no specific reference to sport and just a few references to aspects of health where the promotion of physical activity may be relevant.

In the Common Provisions Regulation there is an ex-ante conditionality relating to active and healthy ageing, where the requirement is that active ageing policies are designed in the light of the Employment Guidelines and that relevant stakeholders are involved in the design and follow-up of active ageing policies with a view to retaining elderly workers on the labour market and promoting their employment. The Member State also has to have measures in place to promote active ageing.

Similarly, the ERDF regulation refers to investing in health and social infrastructure contributing to national, regional and local development, reducing inequalities in terms of health status, promoting social inclusion through improved access to social, cultural and recreational services as an investment priority addressing Thematic Objective 9 'promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination'.

In both these cases, actions involving the promotion of physical activity could make a useful contribution, but, in general, it has to be said, the legal framework makes little provision for sport and physical activity.

2.6 The Framework for Youth

Again TFEU Title XII on Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Sport provides the Treaty framework for the EU’s action on Youth. In Article 165, a number of the references to other areas, notably education, also apply to youth, but there is specific reference to ‘encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe’. The legislative provisions, relating to incentive measures and recommendations and including the exclusion of any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States, are also the same.

The nature of youth as a horizontal theme continues into the implementation of the ESIF. Many of the training schemes supported by the ESF, for instance, are aimed at young people as a target group. Similarly, sport-based or culture-based actions can implicitly or explicitly target young people as a group to be engaged in the respective projects and the same can be said for other initiatives covering a wide area, such as initiatives to address urban problems through new forms of social innovation. This sometimes makes it difficult to attribute actions unambiguously to the category of support for ‘youth’, but this is not always
the case. There are actions directed explicitly at youth, not least because of the appreciation that the financial crisis in the years preceding the current programming period had led to a particularly sharp rise in unemployment of young people. It is as a result of this that we see in Recital 82 of the Common Provisions Regulation that:

‘Member States should concentrate support to ensure sufficient investment is targeted at youth employment, labour mobility, knowledge, social inclusion and combating poverty, thus ensuring that the share of the ESF as a percentage of total combined resources for the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund at Union level, excluding the support from the Cohesion Fund for transport infrastructure under the CEF and support from the Structural Funds for aid for the most deprived, in Member States is not less than 23.1 %’.

Recital 83 also talks of ‘the urgent priority of addressing youth unemployment in the Union’s most affected regions, as well as in the Union as a whole.

It was for this reason that the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was created and funded from a specific allocation under the ESF. The YEI has been excluded from the scope of this study, since it is not part of the remit of the CULT Committee and there will not be a detailed consideration of how it operates or its results. However, it will be important to acknowledge its presence in the support landscape, not least because, in itself, it is a significant initiative targeted at youth, but also because the intention was that it would add to and reinforce the considerable support already provided through the ESI Funds. There are, therefore, similar actions that do form part of the remit of the current study.

For these reasons, we should note that the YEI aims to support young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training residing in the eligible regions and it is implemented as part of the Investment for growth and jobs goal.

The orientation that gave rise to the YEI is also more generally present in the requirements set out in the Regulations. The guidance provided in the Common Strategic Framework (Annex I) of the Common provisions Regulation refers to the need for Member States in their planning of the interventions to ‘take account of maintaining or reinforcing the coverage and effectiveness of employment services and active labour market policies in order to combat unemployment, with a focus on youth’ and to ‘tackle the social consequences of the crisis, and promote social inclusion’.

A goal of the ESF is to contribute to the “Youth on the Move” initiative, which provides support to young people to work, train and study abroad. It aims to make education and training more relevant to young people’s needs, encourage them to take advantage of EU grants to study or train abroad, and encourage EU countries to simplify the transition from education to work.2

Similarly, the reference to the mainstreaming tools and methods developed and tested successfully under Erasmus+, emphasises the need to facilitate inclusion of all age groups, including through improved access to education and social support structures, with a view to enhancing job opportunities for the elderly and young people and with a focus on regions with high rates of youth unemployment in comparison to the Union average rate.

In addition, the ex-ante conditionalities require the existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, though strictly this conditionality applies only for implementation of the YEI.

In terms of the Regulations for the specific Funds, the most specific provision other than the YEI, is the investment priority under the Thematic Objective 'promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility': 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.

Although young people are not specifically mentioned, the investment priorities under the Thematic Objective 'investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning' concerns young people to a large degree, from measures envisaged for early-childhood, primary and secondary education through to those that aim to improve the labour market relevance of education and training systems and facilitate the transition from education to work.

The ERDF makes no specific mention of youth.

### 2.7 Contrasts with the 2007-13 Programming Period

As well as making reference to the ESIF’s current programming period, the study has also considered the previous period from 2007 to 2013, which provides interesting evidence on the role of the four areas of interest in the ‘Structural Funds’, as they were still called. The context in which the Structural Funds in this period were initially designed was different from that for the current period in a number of respects. The Europe 2020 strategy, of course, had not yet been launched, but the current strategy’s preceding framework policy, the Lisbon Agenda, played a similar role, especially after the re-launch of the Agenda in 2005 (European Commission 2005a). This strategy aimed to renew the basis of its competitiveness, increase its growth potential and its productivity and strengthen social cohesion, placing the main emphasis on knowledge, innovation and the optimisation of human capital. Growth and employment were important themes, but after the relatively recent extension of EU membership at the time, another significant theme was fostering real convergence across the Member States. For this reason, there was emphasis placed on the Structural Funds acting coherently as a whole in the pursuit of ‘Cohesion policy’. Of course, the development of this strategy preceded the financial crisis that began in 2007 and changed subsequent perceptions in a variety of ways.

Funding of €347 billion (at 2010 prices) was allocated.


A ‘governing principle’ would be ‘concentration’ a focusing at the level of programmes and projects on only those elements that can contribute to the growth and jobs agenda.
Three broad objectives were established:

- **Convergence** (81% of the funds) for the least developed regions with GDP per capita at below 75% of EU average
- **Regional competitiveness and employment** (15.95%) for the regions not covered by the Convergence Objective and those that benefit from the transitional support for regions affected by the enlargement statistical effect
- **Territorial co-operation (or INTERREG IV)** (2.52%) for regions (NUTS 3 level) situated along internal land borders, certain external land borders and certain regions situated along maritime borders separated by a maximum of 150 km.

A single framework was proposed for 'Cohesion policy' that the Member States and regions were invited to use when developing national and regional programmes. They were asked to target resources on the following three priorities:

- Improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment
- Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies
- Creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

In the Guidelines, education and training are recognised as one of the drivers of growth and employment and increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills is one of the three priorities for action in the Employment Guidelines that were a component of the Lisbon Agenda and a key way of creating more and better jobs.

A series of developments are highlighted as important in the education and training area. They include:

- Supporting coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, with particular attention given to addressing the skill needs of the knowledge economy,
- Adapting education and training systems in response to new competence requirements and,
- Supporting the development and introduction of reforms in education and training systems using common European references and principles, where relevant.

Under the "Convergence" objective, it is noted many Member States and regions were faced with very significant education and training challenges. Consequently the Guidelines propose a series of ways that financial resources should also be used for the implementation of reforms, addressing the following specific priorities:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of attractive, accessible and high quality education and training provision at all levels, including flexible learning pathways, a significant decline in early school-leaving and higher completion rates of upper secondary education;
- Supporting the modernisation of higher education and the development of human potential in research and innovation, through post-graduate studies, further training of researchers, and attracting more young people into scientific and technical studies;

- Promoting the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training, including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship education;

- Ensuring, where appropriate, greater mobility at regional, national or transnational level, and promoting frameworks and systems to support the transparency and recognition of qualifications and the validation of non-formal and informal learning;

- Investment in education and training infrastructure including ICTs, where such investments are necessary for the implementation of reform and/or where they can significantly contribute to increasing the quality and effectiveness of the education and training system.

In other words **substantial investment in education and training was envisaged for Cohesion regions.**

Enhancing participation in vocational education and training is also recognised as a way of improving the employability of people, who are at a disadvantage or at risk of social exclusion, and integrating them into the labour market. These people would include early school-leavers, the long-term unemployed, minorities and people with disabilities.

Finally, education and training are said to have a role in cross-border cooperation.

Overall then, as in the current period, education and training can be seen to have had a significant role in the design of the Structural Funds for the years 2007 - 13.

**References to culture in the Guidelines are nowhere near as comprehensive as those providing guidance on education and training.** Nonetheless they have a place within the overall framework and there appears to be a broad conception of the possible contribution of culture.

Under the Guidelines relating to ‘making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work’, there is reference to developing attractive conditions for businesses and for highly skilled staff, including the rehabilitation of the physical environment and ‘the development of natural and cultural assets’.

Similarly, under the guideline on ‘more and better jobs’, which is co-ordinated with the European Employment Guidelines, there is reference to investments to create improvements in social, health and cultural infrastructures as part of the overall orientation.

The most evident position for culture, however, comes under the provisions for the Territorial Dimension to Cohesion Policy. Here, first of all, culture is seen as an integral part of urban development, supporting the contribution of cities to growth and jobs and even being part a new conception of ‘territorial cohesion’ in this context, ‘linked to each Member State’s history, culture or institutional situation’. The role of culture in attracting and retaining very highly skilled personnel is equally recognised, together with its place in the rehabilitation of the

\[3\] This conception is explored in greater detail in a study on the Contribution of Culture to Local and Regional Development (CSES and Ericarts 2010) and in the findings chapter, but the main elements are presented here.
physical environment and the redevelopment of brownfield sites through the preservation and development of historical and cultural heritage.

There is no mention of sport or physical activity in the Guidelines, and although ‘helping to maintain a healthy labour force’ is seen as an element in addressing the aim of creating more and better jobs and in responding to changes in the EU’s demographic structure and its ageing population and the need to take steps to increase the number of healthy years of work for members of the EU’s workforce, the contribution of sport to these processes does not seem to have registered and the discussion is mainly in terms of improving healthcare systems.

Youth is referred to only once in the Guidelines, but this is a fairly significant mention in that it is said that special attention should be paid to implementing the European Youth Pact, by facilitating access to employment for young people, by easing the transition from education to work, including through career guidance, giving assistance in completing education and providing access to appropriate training and apprenticeships.

Overall, therefore, the provisions in the framework for the Structural Funds for the 2007 – 2013 programming period were broadly similar to those that apply in the current period, as far as the four areas of interest to the study are concerned. Education and training had a major role, especially for the Convergence regions, where the bulk of the funding was concentrated, some role for culture is envisaged, especially as a contribution to regional development, but sport hardly figures and actions in relation to youth are intended to support a separate strategy.

There should in this context be mention of other features of comparison with the previous programming period, notably in relation to the institutional arrangements and the processes whereby the framework defined at a European level is implemented at national and regional levels.

The current period has seen a continuation of many of the features of the earlier periods, such as the use of Operational Programmes to translate the EU objectives into implementation programmes that take account of national and regional strategies and circumstances. However, in order to reinforce the cohesiveness and impact of the strategy agreed at an EU level, a new feature for the current period has been the introduction of Partnership Agreements between the European Commission and individual EU Member States that set out the national authorities’ plans on how to use ESIF funding over the 2014–2020 period (developing the National Strategic Reference Frameworks introduced for 2007-13). These outline each country's strategic goals and investment priorities and link them to the overall aims of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. These documents therefore have a determining role in how the ESIF are allocated at a national level.

At the same time, at all levels there has also been a greater emphasis for the current period on involving all the relevant stakeholders in developing strategies and plans. National, regional and local authorities are expected to work closely with enterprises, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, including education and training providers and bodies such as cultural, sport and youth organisations. This development has provided scope for informed input from those operating on the ground.
2.8 The Hidden Role of All Four Areas

It has been seen that each of the four areas of interest for this study has a different status in terms of its formal recognition within the Regulations governing the ESIF. Education and training has a strong position, being recognised in one of the 11 Thematic Objectives and having a series of investment priorities defined. Youth is recognised through the Youth Employment initiative, but also in other areas. Culture and sport are not recognised at all as target areas for the implementation of the various Funds, but (to a differing degree), they are seen as a means of achieving other objectives and targets. This difference in formal status and profile is reflected in the data on ESIF expenditure on the four areas. Broadly data are collected and published showing how far the programmes and projects implementing the Funds’ Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities have been put into operation. Data on actions addressing the Thematic Objective of ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’ are available as will be seen, along with expenditure on various sub-categories. However, there is no equivalent for culture or sport. Expenditure on projects that have strong culture and sport-based elements will generally be classified under other objectives and priorities. They may be innovation projects that are contributing to meeting the Thematic Objective ‘Strengthening research, technological development and innovation’ or ICT projects involving culture or sport and therefore contributing to ‘Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICT)’ or they may be contributing to the broad objective of ‘Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs...’.

Much of the activity in which the current study is interested may, therefore be ‘hidden’ behind other categories of expenditure, defined by the formal objectives of the ESIF.

This initial observation in fact is only the beginning of the story. There are a number of other considerations to be explained, but it can already be seen that the main figures that are published on expenditure on the ESIF are directed at answering a different question from the one that is of interest for the current study. Much of the expenditure on the four areas of interest is hidden behind other categories in the main official figures. Put clearly, it is not possible to have definitive, unambiguous figures setting out ESIF expenditure on the four areas that are of interest. The figures provided below are therefore indications at best of some of the main areas that can be identified and it is important to be aware that they can seriously under-estimate the range and extent of the activity related to the areas of interest. Much of the subsequent discussion will be throwing light one way or another on the activities relating to the four areas of interest that can be identified and this will show how complex the picture is. It is however, necessary throughout to bear in mind the ambiguities that the following paragraphs will explain.

The first variation in the overall picture arises because there are differences at a national level from the framework established at the European level. Partnership Agreements, national strategies and the detail of Operational Programmes can mean that a different emphasis appears in the priorities established and consequently in the data that are collected. It will be seen, for instance that Poland has given a relatively high priority to culture. This has meant that data are collected on this area, whereas other Member States don’t have the same priorities and naturally the data collected are different for this reason. But on top of that there are also differences in the way that data are collected and aggregated. It is easier, for instance, for Member States that have single Operational Programmes at a national level to bring all the data together consistently than it is for those that have multiple Operational Programmes at a regional level with different objectives and priorities. It has also been found that there are variations in the effort put into data collection at a national level and in the
detail provided in the published data. The extent to which it is possible to identify the areas of interest in these data at the national level therefore varies.

Coming back to the information at a European level, there are other considerations to take into account, which makes even the situation with education and training less clear than it initially appears. The information available, as stated, relates to expenditure directed at Thematic Objective 10. ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’ and the related investment priorities. However, education and training is used to deliver actions in many other areas. Many of the actions to promote innovation involve a development of the skills and competences of those involved. Similarly, actions to enhance access to, and use of ICT and especially those that aim to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs will involve training. The training will often involve formal training sessions, but equally it could be more informal measures that are adopted. For instance, advice sessions or mentoring may be arranged for the management of the enterprises involved or there may be even less formal arrangements for knowledge exchange. The approach that has been taken for this study is that all forms of education and training are recognised that can be identified as such, either by being an explicit part of the objectives of a programme or project or else involving specific activities that aim to improve the skills and competences of participants. Activities that involve general learning by doing or assimilation are therefore excluded. Nonetheless, there is clearly a lot of education and training in the system beyond that specifically addressing Thematic Objective 10.

There is an interesting matter that arises from the discussion of the contribution of education and training to the wider ESIF system and that is the difference between pursuing education and training as an objective of policy and making use of it as an instrument for delivering results contributing to the achievement of other objectives. The distinction is quite important for the design of policy measures and certain approaches to evaluation (e.g. Pawson and Tilley 2004) have stressed that it is not sufficient to assess policies purely in terms of their outcomes in relation to the objectives set. To get a full understanding of how a policy works and, probably more importantly, to develop ways of improving policy, it is necessary to understand how the results are generated and seek to improve these delivery mechanisms. This issue will be picked up subsequently in the study.

A similar issue is the question of whether a categorisation of activities, should be on the basis of objectives, implementation methods or targets. The distinction between the first two has just been referred to, but there is also the element of targeting. In the areas being examined, as we have seen, education and training can either be an objective or implementation mechanisms. Culture and sport can be objectives in theory, but, given the implementation framework for the ESIF, they are principally used as delivery methods. ‘Youth’ though defines the targets of certain measures and this allows the exact nature of the measure to vary quite considerably depending on its operational objectives and implementation features. It might be a measure to assist young people to start their own business, for instance or to promote international mobility of young people. The common feature is that the target group is youth. Given the way that the ESIF function currently, the four areas of interest for the study have different relationships with the policy’s intervention logic and this needs to be taken into account in any discussion of future policy. For the moment, however, consideration is being given to all four areas no matter what their functional relationship to the ESIF is.
Especially given the different roles that the four areas have within the ESIF, another issue for consideration is that there can be a considerable overlap of the areas and on occasions it can even be difficult to say whether a specific project is about culture or training or youth. Clearly a training programme or project can be directed at young people. Such a project may also use music or other art forms to engage the target population. Is this then a training measure, a culture measure or a youth measure? In the overall scheme of things, this does not really matter and, in fact, it is a positive thing that people from the arts can be involved in a training measure, because of the strengths that they have in terms of being able to get young people interested and engaged. The question only arises if one is trying to make a distinction between the amount of funding going to training, the amount going to culture and similarly with youth. The distinction is clearly artificial to an important extent, but it has arisen at a practical level in the current study when trying to analyse the spending on these different areas in particular countries. As will be seen, in order to avoid the danger of double counting, attention has to be paid to the precise context in which the various figures are discussed.

The final issue that should be raised in relation to the hidden nature of much of the action in the areas under consideration is the extent to which the areas of interest contribute to other developments that have a higher profile. Two significant examples of this are actions relating to tourism and health. In the first case, measures labelled as tourism promotion may well have significant cultural and/or sport elements. This is particularly the case since modern tourism strategies are seen to be part of the development of the Experience Economy (as for example in South Denmark). Tourism has increasingly tried to diversify its offer and extend the season, but staging cultural or sport events and the promotion of cultural and sport tourism has grown, as destinations have tried to make a more varied and sustainable offer and cities such as Bilbao and Manchester have used culture and sport to develop their tourism sector. Furthermore the destination management model of tourism development places tourism in a strategic role in co-ordinating a destination’s attractions. It is therefore, not surprising that, culture, sport and youth elements may be included in broader strategies that nonetheless may succeed in masking this contribution unless the initiative is examined in detail.

A similar situation arises with health, which has increasingly become a focus even for economic development policy, and consequently has a significant profile in the ESIF. Various aspects of health are raised, but the health consequences of an aging population is important among them. Actions to promote ‘healthy and active aging’ are commonly part of the response, but this is an area where sport organisations are often involved and physical activity in general is an important part of current sport policy. Sport also provides the basis for a growing area of research on human health, especially in relation to measuring performance or developing ways to address sport injuries. Actions that are addressing ‘health’ issues, then, often have a significant sport element, but again this can be hidden behind the headlines.

All these considerations need to be borne in mind, when considering the data that are available on ESIF spending, which are presented in the next chapter.
2.9 The implementation mechanisms

Within the overall framework, determined at a European level, national and regional variations make a major difference to what actually happens on the ground. The process is that national and regional authorities implement the ESIF according to national and local circumstances. In the current period, this began with the formulation by each Member State of a Partnership Agreement, which set out an analysis of the situation facing the particular Member State and how the various ESIF could be shaped to respond most effectively to national and regional needs. The Partnership Agreement had to describe in considerable detail, how the proposed actions at a national level corresponded to the Thematic Objectives and the Investment Priorities in the Regulations and how these are to be implemented in Operational Programmes. The situation is as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 2.1: Implementation Process

Source: CSES

In line with the provisions on thematic concentration in the European Regulations described above, Member States have to decide which areas they are to concentrate their spending on. For those Member States that have a relatively low allocation of funds, this concentration is all the more important, in order to ensure that the interventions have sufficient impact. In addition to demonstrating a compliance with the ESIF framework, in this way, the Partnership Agreements also have to show how the proposed developments are consistent with national policies and other EU policies, such as Horizon 2020 and COSME and then explain arrangements for administering the funds, monitoring them and conducting evaluations. After the initial formulation, the Partnership Agreement was subject to discussion with the European Commission, until a final version was agreed.
The Partnership Agreement also has to show how the ex-ante conditionalities set out in the Common Provisions Regulation are complied with by the Member State concerned. Of course, which conditionalities apply depend on the choices Member States make about their priorities and in some cases, Member States need to show that they have policies in place that can give effect to the intended processes envisaged as contributing to the achievement of specific Thematic Objectives or Investment Priorities. However, certain of the conditionalities required the formulation of new strategies in almost every case. The ex-ante conditionality for the first Thematic Objective ‘Strengthening research, technological development and innovation’ required ‘smart specialisation’ strategies to be in place, detailing which sectors were to be the focus of attention and support. The choice of the key sectors had to be based on perceived competitive advantages of the countries and regions concerned, after a process of widespread dialogue with the authorities, social partners and communities concerned. The point, however, is that the process of complying with the smart specialisation conditionality adds to the selectivity that is inherent in the decision processes leading to implementation of the ESIF at a national and regional level. Deciding where best to concentrate ESIF makes a lot of sense, but it should be appreciated that these decisions also exclude or make it more difficult for organisations in sectors that are not favoured to obtain support. The danger is that cinderella sectors, such as the cultural and creative industries or the sport and physical activity sector, could have found a barrier being raised at this point to their finding support from the ESIF. It will be seen, however, that in a number of interesting instances, this has not happened and these sectors have, in fact, been included in smart specialisation strategies.

The next stage to consider is when the Operational Programmes for each of the Funds are established. These can take the form of national or regional Operational Programmes (OPs) in the larger Member States or just national OPs in smaller Member States, although as in the case of Denmark and Sweden, national OPs can be implemented with regional variations. Some of the national OPs are dedicated to particular policy areas and a small number have been specifically or partially dedicated to culture, for instance.

However they are organised, it is with the OPs that, we begin to find the real detail of how the ESIF are to be implemented on the ground in specific countries or regions. They give the first real indication of what can be eligible for finance in the particular national or regional circumstances of individuals or organisations looking for support. However, there are other considerations to take into account before determining what might be available.

First, it has to be remembered that the financing happens over the whole programming period and that there is a tendency for the allocation of funds to start slowly, then to gather pace in the middle of the period and taper off towards the end. The Partnerships Agreements give indications of the intended rate of funds allocation over the programming period.

It also has to be remembered that the OPs determine the ways in which support can be provided. Some of the support available is directed to existing agencies or institutions that play a significant part in the policy areas targeted. They might use these funds directly in their own programmes or offer them as grants or as part of an open competition to final potential beneficiaries who have to submit proposals. Other funds are made available through the Managing Authorities. The current period has seen an extension of the tendency for direct support to enterprises or other final beneficiaries in grants or subsidies to be replaced by indirect support in the form of support services (advice, training etc.) and similarly, elsewhere grants have been replaced by loans or equity investment that can be realised at a later stage and applied in a revolving fund. This raises the question of who the main beneficiaries are.
Increasingly they are intermediary organisations, which may then provide services for free or at a subsidised rate to businesses or other final beneficiaries, such as universities or associations of businesses in various forms. For example, support for cluster organisations has been a common measure, often supported by the ERDF. These organisations then seek to expand cluster membership and, above all, provide services to cluster members. This might be in terms of building the competences of member firms, arranging match-making or networking events, building relationships with knowledge institutions or assisting with international marketing. The ultimate beneficiaries of the intervention are the cluster members, but the funding goes to cluster managers.

This aspect of the development of the ESIF is quite important for the process of accessing funds. It is less and less a matter of individual enterprises seeking to access funds and needing to know if they are eligible or not. It is more a matter of sectoral organisations being able to design, propose and, if successful, administer projects that meet the terms of the relevant OP, although the targeting of these projects remains important and so eligibility criteria continue to play a significant role. Frequently public authorities at national and local levels make a major contribution to prompting or initiating the work needed to put together a successful proposal for funding, but it is increasingly sectoral organisations that are becoming more significant in these processes.

In the areas of interest for the study, it has always been the case that education (especially higher education) and training organisations have been active in accessing the Structural Funds and in administering projects. But, increasingly cultural, sport and youth organisations have been giving thought to developing their own projects and many have already been successful in doing so. In this they have been encouraged from many sides.

DG Education and Culture in the European Commission (DG EAC) has recently been encouraging sport organisations to become more active in developing proposals. As part of the study on the contribution of sport to regional development through the Structural Funds (CSES and B&S 2016) a document was prepared, entitled ‘Practical Guidance on Developing Sport and Physical Activity Projects under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)’. This document was translated into all EU languages and is available online by clicking the link to the title. It is addressed to organisations that have an interest in developing sport activities that they think can have a beneficial impact on their community, city, region or country. This might include sport organisations or federations or sport businesses and clubs and public authorities at national, regional or local level, but it could also be relevant for voluntary organisations, training organisations or those with a professional interest in economic development. The guidance warns that obtaining support in this way can be a complex process. It also warns that those attempting to develop sport projects have to show how the sport-based activity they have in mind can contribute to economic and social development or, more specifically, to meeting the objectives and priorities of the particular OP under which an application is being made. However, for those organisations which wish to follow this route, a process is set out to help them go through each of the stages that are necessary in order to develop a successful project. 10 steps are defined, identifying each stage in the process. This helps these organisations to think through what they need to do at each point, the documents they need to refer to and who they need to speak to. A set of questions conclude each section that help make sure that all the right considerations have been taken into account in developing a proposal and project.

The guidance also suggests some steps that can be taken to help influence the future direction and orientation of the ESIF.
Similar material was made available on the DG EAC website after the earlier publication of the study on the contribution of culture to local and regional development, with evidence from the Structural Funds (CSES and Ericarts 2010), though this was only available in English.

A similar publication was made available by DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) in the European Commission: ‘The Guide to EU Funding for the Tourism Sector’ is available in English and French and obviously relates to tourism, but also has a lot of information that is relevant for culture and sport.

Other information is available at national level. For example, the French Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sport published a guide to funding sources for sport, which covers both the ESIF and Erasmus+. Its title is: Guide des financements européens pour le sport. Similarly, sectoral organisations have been active in providing information of this kind. The European Olympic Committees’ EU Office publishes ‘Funding for Sports in the European Union’, for instance.

There has, therefore, been a mobilisation of sport and cultural organisations in recent years and youth organisations too, with a view to increasing the number of projects relating to these areas supported by the ESIF. However, it is not only a matter of making proposals, the proposals have to be assessed and accepted and this points to the particular role played by the Managing Authorities, in the allocation of funds under the ESIF. The Managing Authorities are the bodies – public authorities – responsible for the implementation and management of Operational Programmes. They have a number of functions, but one of them is to decide on which proposals to encourage and support. Critical in this, especially as far as projects in areas such as culture and sport are concerned, is their ability to understand what the culture and creative industries and sport can achieve in terms of economic and social development. Unfortunately not all Managing Authorities are as well versed in the potential of these sectors in a modern economy as they should be. As a result in some regions, cultural and sport organisations especially have had difficulty in persuading them that culture or sport-based projects are eligible and can be effective and these attitudes can also be reflected at a national level too and even at a European level. Considerable effort has been put into producing and publishing examples of good practice in these areas, as a way of providing concrete evidence of the effectiveness, for example of culture and sport-based actions, but there is a need to continue efforts of this kind.

In the area of youth actions, a key partner is the European Youth Forum (EYF): an advocacy platform, made up of national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations from across Europe. EYF aims, inter alia, to improve access to EU funding for youth organisations. However, it has also drawn attention to the difficulties faced by youth organisations in getting involved in EU-funded projects. To this end, it has published a Resolution (European Youth Forum, 2015) which criticises the fact that EU funding programmes (other than Erasmus+) have high minimum ceilings or criteria that tend to exclude youth organisations. The Forum thus recommends that the EU:

- Reduce bureaucratic requirements and the administrative workload for youth organisations wishing to access EU funding
- Map if there are any national youth councils or international youth organisations that have not applied for EU funding due to the bureaucratic complexity.
- Make programmes such as the employment funds more accessible to youth organisations.
The engagement of sectoral organisations cannot be taken for granted, therefore. In this section it has been seen that in order to develop actions involving the four areas under consideration, it is not only necessary to have an appropriate framework at a European level and favourable provisions in national and regional Operational Programmes. It is also necessary to have straightforward procedures and a receptive approach on the part of the Managing Authorities and local authorities and sectoral organisations that are able to organise and draw up effective projects and proposals. They also need to be capable of implementing projects efficiently.

### 2.10 Which Funds Support Which Types of Investment

In spite of the potential obstacles that the last section has revealed, there are clearly also a lot of opportunities in the framework established for the ESIF in the current and preceding periods. The extent to which these opportunities have been exploited will be gauged in the chapter on the findings of the study. However, even at this stage it is possible to say a priori, which areas of the ESIF would seem to be favourable for action relating to the four areas of interest.

The following table sets out which of the Thematic Objectives offer the greatest potential for action.
Table 2.2: Potential Areas for ESIF Action for Education and Training, Culture, Sport & Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Objective</th>
<th>Education &amp; training</th>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Youth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies</td>
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<td>3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector and of the fishery and aquaculture sector</td>
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<td>4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</td>
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<td>5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management</td>
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<td>6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility</td>
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<td>9. Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** areas of extensive activity

** areas where significant levels of activity can be undertaken

* areas where potential activity is limited

Source: research conducted by the authors

It should be noted that **all of the four areas are able to make a contribution to each of Thematic Objectives of the ESIF**, although there will be some gaps at the investment priority level. Even in areas such as Thematic Objectives 4 and 5 – ‘Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors’ and ‘Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management’, there is a role for education and training and also for actions to raise awareness and engage the public, especially young people. Cultural and sport events can contribute to this and there is also a role for cultural, sport and youth organisations, as owners or custodians of widespread facilities and infrastructure to play their part in improving energy efficiency and improving material use, through design and re-cycling.
Sport has a particular role to play in relation to Thematic Objective 7 'Promoting sustainable transport...', by engaging with planners of urban and regional transport to promote healthier forms of transport that also demand less energy, notably cycling and walking.

Overall, it is clear that education and training can make a significant contribution to all areas, not only in complementing the formal curricula of schools and higher education and in systematic training courses, which are central to Thematic Objective 10 'Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning', but also in the more informal development of skills and competences that, as already noted, play a very important part in the support for innovation through business support services, cluster development and the development of competence and knowledge centres. The same applies to the role of education and training in relation to most of the other objectives and notably Thematic Objective 3 'Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs...', where skills development is often critical for the survival and growth of both new and established enterprises and Objectives 8 and 9, where education and training are central to developing sustainable and quality employment and enabling labour mobility and to tackling problems of social inclusion, poverty and discrimination. E-learning is a potentially major element in Thematic Objective 2 'Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies' and, even in relation to Thematic Objective 11 'Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration', education and training can make a major contribution to improving the performance of public authorities.

Culture and sport can make special contributions through their potential creative contributions to the development of new products and services in the contemporary economy, the employment potential of many of their actions, their role in marketing and promotion and their power to engage wide cross-sections of the population. This makes them important potential contributors to the Thematic Objectives relating to innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, but also as content for ICT and in ways in which access can be encouraged. Their engaging qualities make them a powerful instrument in promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and discrimination.

Youth can be the target of many measures, being particularly open to new products and services and the use of ICT, but also a direct target, for instance in encouraging the setting-up of new enterprises by unemployed graduates or others emerging from skills training or in encouraging labour mobility. Youth is also a major target when promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and discrimination.

The picture of the potential for action relating to the four areas of interest, therefore, is that there is plenty of scope, not only in relation specifically to Thematic Objective 10, but in other areas too, especially when the effects of concentration are taken into account. It should not be forgotten too that many actions may involve more than one of areas of interest and will frequently do so. A lot of education and training under Thematic Objective 10 will be aimed at young people, for instance. Indeed, it is possible to conceive of an action with a significant education and training element, promoting the experience economy, with both cultural and sport elements that specifically targets young people. The actual extent of the overlaps between the areas of interest, however, is a matter to be addressed in the findings.
2.11 Relations with other EU policy areas

Another dimension to take into account is the relationship between support for the four areas under the ESIF and support for these areas from other EU programmes, especially since, as we have seen, explicit links to other forms of support are made in the framework documents. In line with the approach to other issues in this chapter, the discussion will first say what the links with other sources of finance are in principle, while leaving the actual situation to the chapter on findings. First of all, it is necessary to say something briefly about the policy framework for the four areas, under which the initiatives to be discussed have been developed.

The Education and Training 2020 programme (ET2020) adopted in 2009 and the Flagship Initiative ‘An Agenda for new skills and jobs’ adopted the following year, currently provide a broad framework for the development of EU Education and training policy, but after a stocktaking in a Joint Report of the Council and Commission (European Commission, 2015c), six new priorities were established for European cooperation in education and training in 2015, the first of which (the most relevant to the current context) was:

- Relevant and high-quality skills and competences, focusing on learning outcomes, for employability, innovation and active citizenship

The pursuit of this priority is an important context for the analysis of initiatives supported in this area by ESIF. Similarly for the other areas.

The EU Youth Strategy (European Commission, 2009) sets out the current framework for cooperation on youth policy in the EU (although preparations for a new strategy after 2018 are already under way). It has two main objectives:

1. To provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market
2. To encourage young people to actively participate in society

The EU Youth Strategy proposes initiatives in eight areas of which two directly overlap with other CULT areas (education and culture): 1. Employment and entrepreneurship, 2. Social inclusion, 3. Participation, 4. Education & training, 5. Health & well-being, 6. Voluntary activities, 7. Youth & the world, 8. Creativity & culture. A major part of the strategy is ‘Significantly Mainstreaming’ cross-sector initiatives with a significant impact on young people ‘that ensure youth issues are taken into account when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other fields’ is.

The Communication from the Commission on ‘Promoting cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU’ (European Commission, 2012) still provides the basis for policy in this sector. It identified the cultural and creative sectors as an ‘untapped resource for the EU 2020 strategy’ and advocated a vigorous approach to exploiting this resource, including taking advantage of the opportunities from the Cohesion Policy funds.

A key document setting out the Commission’s approach in the final area is the White Paper on Sport (European Commission, 2007). The White Paper’s overall objective was ‘to give strategic orientation on the role of sport in Europe’. Following up on the White Paper in 2011, the Commission’s Communication on ‘Developing the European Dimension in Sport’ (European Commission, 2011a) underlined the role of sport in contributing to the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy by ‘improving employability and mobility’. As the title indicates, this emphasised the potential of sport to contribute to economic growth and be a contributor
to the Europe 2020 strategy. In turn, the EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017 (European Council, 2014) includes ‘the economic dimension of sport, in particular sustainable financing of sport, the legacy of major sport events, economic benefits of sport and innovation’ among the three priority areas for action.

All four areas, therefore have strong policy orientations relating to their economic development role.

At a more operational level, however, attention needs to be paid to the relationship between initiatives supported by ESIF and actions promoted by Erasmus+, Creative Europe and initiatives such as the European Capitals of Culture, the European Heritage Label and the European Week of sport and physical activity.

The Erasmus+ Programme (2014-2020) funds activities in all four of the fields of interest. It is made up of three ‘Key Actions’ and two additional actions, including (for the first time) a dedicated action for sport:

- Key action 1: Mobility - learning mobility of individuals;
- Key action 2: Cooperation - cooperation for innovation and good practices;
- Key action 3: Policy - support to policy reforms;
- Jean Monnet: supporting teaching, studies and debate on the EU;
- Sport: promoting the development of the European dimension in sport.

All the action areas will be of interest and the team will consider the main initiatives launched through calls for proposals of all the actions, but it is likely that initiatives supported under Key action 2 will have the most direct links with those supported by ESIF.

Creative Europe was launched in 2014, following the successful implementation of the Culture and MEDIA programmes, and now represents a consolidated framework programme supporting Europe's cultural and creative sectors. Nonetheless the main components of the programme support respectively the cultural sector and the audiovisual sector, though these in turn are supported by a cross-sectoral strand that includes a Guarantee Facility and transnational policy cooperation. Other initiatives, such as the European Capitals of Culture, the European Heritage Label and the European Week of Sport are known to have useful links with actions supported by the ESIF. For example, the Week of Sport can give a greater profile to projects being undertaken with ESIF support. Interaction with the European Capitals of Culture programmes in contrast can be very detailed and productive and the ESIF contribution can help to develop infrastructure of cultural events and also ensure the sustainability of Capital of Culture initiatives.

Finally, it should be mentioned that broader areas of EU policy, relating to innovation, enterprise and small firms, ICT, employment and social policy etc. are often vehicles for action that also involve education and training, culture and sport or have a specific youth dimension. In general they are less systematic than the links with the policy areas covered above and are best considered on almost a case by case basis.
3 THE NATURE OF THE FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS

- Evidence is provided on how actions in the areas of interest have actually been supported by the ESIF and the Structural Funds in the previous period, but the evidence cannot be comprehensive. Aggregate data hide a lot of activities under other headings and although examination on the ground has covered the varied situation across eight Member States, this has also meant that the extent of the information available varies.

- Most Member States have a strong role for education and training and culture has strong support in Italy and Poland, but sport has a low profile in most countries. Youth is the target of relatively significant provision across the EU, especially in Italy and Spain.

- Smart specialisation has increased the role for culture and sport especially.

- Education and training represents a significant economic activity in its own right and is the main driver of knowledge creation. It is also a major instrument for addressing unemployment and social conditions, in the wake of the 2007 financial crisis. The importance of investing in skills has been increasingly recognised.

- These issues are longstanding and have formed a major element in Cohesion policy going back over many programming periods.

- Culture’s contribution was recognised in the previous period as making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work, but there was no reference to culture’s contribution to ‘encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy’, nor to ‘creating more and better jobs’ - significant objectives set for that programming period.

- Sport has become an important economic sector in the EU, with a share in the national economies which is comparable to agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined, but there is little or no reference to sport in EU policy guidance.

- Young people represent an important source of skills and creativity, but the group of most concern are young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

- Based on evidence, typologies of intervention are suggested but, while education and training are pervasive in the ESIF and there is widespread provision for youth, with the exception of certain countries, support for culture and sport may even have declined in the current period.

- Common elements in the four areas are important, including their common contribution to enhancing the human dimension of economic and social development in a modern economy in which services have a major role.

- The most striking overlaps are where programmes promote innovation and creativeness or address social issues, notably under Erasmus+ and the Creative Europe programmes.
3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has shown that there is considerable potential for actions based on education and training, culture, sport and youth to be supported under the ESIF. With the exception of education and training, the areas of interest are not supported directly as such, but there are possibilities for actions stemming from culture and sport or with an orientation towards youth to be supported, if they are contributing to the achievement of other objectives and priorities set by the legislation and implementing instruments of the ESIF at European, national and regional levels. At the same time, some of the constraints were pointed out.

This chapter examines evidence about how actions in the areas of interest have actually been supported by the ESIF and the Structural Funds previously. Gathering this evidence is not straightforward, as will be seen, and several different approaches have been adopted in order to obtain a rounded picture of what is happening in practice. The different elements are as follows:

- An overall consideration of how each of the four areas in succession contributes to economic and social development and hence the types of activity that can be supported (section 3.2);
- Evidence collected and published at a European level on activities of interest that are being funded in the current programming period (section 3.3.1);
- More extensive evidence available at a European level on activities funded in the previous programming period (section 3.3.2);
- Information gathered on the ground in eight Member States, chosen to offer a broad indication of what is happening across the EU (section 3.4);
- A further insight provided by examining a cross-cutting theme: smart specialisation strategies focus in a number of instances on areas of interest to the study, bringing to light additional information on how culture and sport in particular are being supported on the ground (section 3.5).

It will be seen that the evidence from each of these sources is partial and can be of a restricted extent, especially for the current period. It should be appreciated, therefore, that the evidence cannot be comprehensive. It was not possible to examine all Member States and, in any event, the information that is available on the activities in the areas of interest is often listed under other categories in published data or only available after exhaustive enquiry at project level. It also varies in detail from one Member State to another.

On the basis of the evidence gathered from the different sources, the chapter then goes on to summarise the findings. First there is a proposed systematic classification of the main types of activity that contribute to economic and social development in each of the four areas of interest (section 3.6), followed by an overall assessment of the main findings (section 3.7). Finally consideration is given to the relationship between other EU programmes that support one or more of the four areas of interest and the ESIF (section 3.8).
3.2 The Contributions of Education and Training, Culture, Sport and Youth to Economic and Social Development

3.2.1 Education & Training

Across Europe, education and training represents a significant economic activity in its own right. It employs large numbers of people, who are themselves relatively highly educated, it requires substantial infrastructure investment and maintenance and it contributes to economic growth, not least by increasing the productivity of those who make use of its services.

Employment in education includes an estimated 5.7 million school teachers employed across the EU (in 2015) (Eurostat, 2017a), but the total employment is much higher, once teaching assistants, catering and cleaning staff, administrative staff and other roles are considered. Women are predominant within education, accounting for 72% of teachers (Eurostat, 2017a).

Public expenditure on education in 2014 amounted to € 683 billion, or just over 5% of European GDP (Eurostat, 2017b) averaged across 25 Member States (2013 data for Estonia and Hungary; no data available for Denmark, Greece and Croatia). At the level of individual Member States, expenditure ranged from just under 3% of GDP in Romania to just over 7% in Sweden. For most Member States, the majority of this spending is on teachers’ salaries (Eurostat, 2017b).

These figures hide some interesting differences between countries. The lowest share of expenditure was generally on pre-primary education (between 2-6% of expenditure on most Member States). Notable exceptions to this are Bulgaria and Sweden, both of which dedicated 20.3% of expenditure to pre-primary education. Tertiary education made up 20-33% of total educational expenditure in all of the 25 EU Member States for which data are available, except for Luxembourg (which was below this range) and Lithuania (which was slightly above it, 34.0%). Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education typically accounted for one sixth to one quarter of total educational expenditure, with lower shares recorded in Lithuania and Sweden, and higher shares in Belgium and Italy.

Education and training has a major strategic importance in the European economy and society. One of the major difficulties facing the EU-28 is social inequality. Brought into stark focus by the financial crisis beginning in 2007, social exclusion, income inequality and relative poverty are a threat to social cohesion both within Member States and at the broader European level. There is clear evidence (European Commission, 2017a) which points to the intergenerational nature of inequality, with the socio-economic position of parents providing an indicator of children’s likely education level, occupational status and income. A Cedefop (2017) study into the skills gap highlighted that low-skilled adults face weaker labour market conditions, such as higher unemployment, higher long-term unemployment, lower transitions out of unemployment, lower wages, as well as higher risks of poverty and social exclusion.

Education and training, particularly at tertiary level, can be key tools in breaking this cycle. According to the European Commission’s (2017a) Education and Training Monitor, there is a strong link between educational attainment and social outcomes. People with only basic education are almost three times more likely to live in poverty or social exclusion than those with tertiary education, for example. Data gathered in 2016 shows the impact of education levels on employment: Unemployment for those with a basic education in the working age population (aged 15-64) was 16.6% for those with a basic education as compared to 5.2%
for those who completed tertiary education. For young people aged 18-24, just 44% of those who had finished school below the upper secondary level were employed (European Commission, 2017a).

Education also appears to impact on life expectancy, with a difference of up to 10 years between the low-qualified and highly qualified. According to data gathered in 2015 (European Commission, 2017a), 80.4% of people with tertiary education perceived their health as 'good or very good', compared to just 53.8% among those with only basic education (53.8%).

About 80 million people in the EU-28 have only low or basic education, while lifelong learning principally benefits the more educated. The OECD (2016) study recorded low scores under the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)4 for 18% of adults in literacy and 20% in numeracy for the 17 EU countries included in its Survey for Adult Skills. Despite significant improvements over the last thirty years, in 2016 the proportion of adults aged 25-54 years with low educational achievement (International Standard Classification of Education ISCED levels 0-2) was 20.5% for the EU-28; the percentage of those with basic education increases to 36.3% among the 55-74 age group (Eurostat, 2017c). Recent trends show a significant decrease in the percentage of women leaving school early in the younger age group compared to men (Cedefop, 2017).

In addition, although there has been a significant improvement in tertiary education attainment, qualifications are often not in line with labour market needs, and by international standards too many Europeans acquire only a low level of basic and digital skills (European Commission, 2016).

Young people tend to have higher education levels than older generations; however the number of people leaving school with only basic education, although declining, remains relatively high in the EU-28: in 2016 an average of 10.7% of young people (aged 18-24) had completed at most a lower secondary education and were not in further education or training during the four weeks preceding the survey. In addition, in 2012 about one fifth of 15 year olds showed insufficient abilities in reading, maths and science (Eurostat, 2017c). Young men, foreign-born residents and ethnic minorities are more likely to leave education and training with at most lower secondary education. For example, foreign-born and Roma young people are on average 10% more likely to leave education early than nationals, with peaks of around 20% in Greece and Italy.

The Cedefop (2017) study shows significant differences in education levels across EU Member States. The share of population aged 25-54 with low educational attainments is highest in Southern European countries: Malta (48.8%), Portugal (46.4%), Spain (37.4%); Italy (36.2%). Malta, Spain and Romania show the highest shares of early school leaving among young people, especially males, with 18.5% or more (Cedefop, 2017). Country differences reflect both socio-economic conditions and divergence in policy approaches (Cedefop 2017). While in better performing Nordic countries, skills policy is characterised by a preventative approach that involves a high level provision of education, and active labour market policies focusing on upskilling and lifelong training; in low performing Mediterranean countries, skills policy is often characterised by lower expenditure on education and training.

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4 The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) measures proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments and gathers information and data on how adults use their skills at home, at work and in the wider community.
Future projections (McKinsey Global Institute, 2012) suggest that **Europe will face a significant high-skill shortfall of between 5 and 8 million people by 2020 in the application of new technologies.** In particular, digital competences and the ability to manage information and solve problems in technology-rich environments are increasingly required in the labour market. Conversely, technological developments, globalisation and offshoring will reduce job opportunities and labour income for the low- or even medium-skilled people. There will be fewer jobs of an elementary nature in future, and even jobs that traditionally have required low-level qualifications or no qualifications will require some level of digital competence and relational skills (European Council, 2016). The use of ICT affects not only the workplace, but also classrooms and homes, as well as social interaction more widely. Individuals with higher proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving in technology-rich environments are more likely to be employed and to benefit from higher earnings and social inclusion (OECD, 2016).

It is necessary to ensure the **quality and inclusivity of educational and training systems**, to improve vocational and technical education, and to support lifelong learning and continuing education. To be effective, implemented policies should address all existing barriers and challenges impacting on education and training systems in the EU Member States, including:

- **population ageing and migrant inflows** asking for new individualised approaches to education/training and the valorization of formal and informal learning;
- **technological change and globalisation** impacting on skills needs and skill mismatches, but also affecting the ways education and training can be delivered;
- **lack of resources and funding.** Austerity measures have reduced the already scarce public resources allocated to education and training;
- **difficulty in reaching disadvantaged young people and low skilled adults and to motivate them** to participate in education and training, in order to reduce early school leaving and drop-out rates. The lack of motivation is often influenced by poor experiences of schooling (OECD, 2015);
- **low accessibility of education and training** due to its costs, and/or distance (particularly in rural areas and/or when no public transport is available), time schedules conflicting with working hours and/or family responsibilities; etc. (European Commission, 2015b). It is acknowledged that education and training facilities should be within easy reach in the early years of education, in order to avoid the necessity of commuting, which increases the risk of early school leaving;
- **lack of coordination between policy areas and stakeholders that are relevant for investment in human capital, particularly in the case of adult education/training** (European Commission, 2015b). Especially in the case of disadvantaged groups, to be effective education/training policies need to be integrated with social policies, employment policies, and economic development policies. In order to reduce skill mismatch education and training programmes need to address the changing labour market and economic conditions and the skill needs of the productive sector (UNESCO, 2016).
These challenges ask for strong investments in education/training, both in terms of educational and training infrastructures and facilities, and in terms of new education and training methods, addressing the diversified needs of a heterogeneous population. Both remedial measures targeted at low-skilled adults, and preventive measures targeted at children and young people from a disadvantaged background are necessary, since low educational attainment and weak information processing skills are associated with greater economic and social vulnerability (OECD, 2015).

**Stronger investments in higher and tertiary education, as well as in lifelong learning** are needed to improve the capacity to adapt to the challenges resulting from technological change and globalisation and reduce skill mismatches.

**Early childhood education** is also recognised as particularly important for socio-economic growth. Investing in early childhood education not only helps to contrast demographic ageing by supporting the employment of women, but is also crucial to tackle poverty and social exclusion. According to recent socioeconomic research (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2002; Sianesi & Reenen, 2003; Eurydice, 2009), social investment in individual capacities during the early years is particularly beneficial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and providing large social returns

**The importance of investing in skills has been increasingly recognised at the EU-level as well as amongst Member States**, though the relative competences of the EU and Member States have to be respected.

The **Europe 2020 Strategy** includes education targets among its five key targets, with the aim of reducing the rate of early school leavers to below 10%; and reaching at least 40% of people aged 30–34 who have completed higher education. These two targets are also included among the 11 benchmarks defined in the **Strategic Framework for Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020)** (European Council, 2009) which aims to foster co-operation in education and training, providing common strategic objectives for the EU and Member States. The ET 2020 covers the areas of lifelong learning and mobility; quality and efficiency of education and training; equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; and creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of education and training. The ET 2020 sets EU wide benchmarks including an additional five benchmarks besides the EU 2020 education targets:

- An average of at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning.
- The share of low-achieving 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science should be lower than 15%.

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5 In this respect, although some progress has been made since 2002, the provision of childcare facilities at European level in 2014 was still not in line with the Barcelona objectives, and the situation appeared to have been deteriorated in some Member States since the crisis, due to austerity measures and budget cuts. According to Eurostat data for 2014, only nine Member States have met the Barcelona Targets for children up to the age of three (BE, DK, F, LU, NL, PT, SL, ES and SE) and nine Member States reached the target for children from age three to mandatory school age (BE, DK, EE, F, IT, MT, SL, ES and SE). See Eurostat 2016, Formal childcare by age group and duration – % over the population of each age group, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tps00185&language=en

6 In June 2010, the European Commission presented a 10-year strategy for vocational education and training (COM(2010) 296 final) and the priorities for the Copenhagen process for 2011 to 2020 were set in December 2010 in Bruges (Belgium).
• At least 95% of children between the age of four years and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.

• An EU average of at least 20% of higher education graduates and of at least 6% of 18 to 34 year olds with an initial vocational qualification should have had some time studying or training abroad (6).

• The share of employed graduates (20 to 34 year olds) having left education and training no more than three years before the reference year should be at least 82%.

A number of initiatives have also been implemented to enhance the transparency, recognition and quality of competences and qualifications, facilitating the mobility of learners and workers. These include the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Europass, the European Credit System for VET (ECVET), and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET (EQAVET). The EQF aims to help employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU’s education and training systems. The EQF is based on an approach which takes into account learning outcomes rather than the resources which are put into learning.

Improving people’s skills, competences and knowledge is at the top of the European policy agenda, as manifested by the ‘The New skills agenda for Europe’ (European Commission, 2016a) and the 2016 Council Recommendation on ’Upskilling pathways: New opportunities for adults’ (European Council, 2016). These issues are also underlined in several Country Specific Recommendations issued since 2015 within the framework of the European semester.

The 2016 Council Recommendation (and its proposal for a Skills Guarantee) aims to reach those people who are lacking basic skills in order to support their sustainable employment or re-integration into the labour market.

The New skills agenda for Europe (European Commission, 2016a) addresses these issues in a broader context, underlying the effects of low skilling on structural unemployment and on shortages of skilled labour. Upgrading skills, particularly of low-qualified and disadvantaged groups, is one of the main objectives of the Agenda. The Agenda has played a pivotal role in shifting focus towards skills development, and is focused around three key work strands:

a. improving the quality and relevance of skills formation;

b. making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable;

c. improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices.

A joint agenda for the EU, Member States and stakeholders is promoted in a shared vision and commitment regarding the importance of skills, which formed a fundamental part of the Commission Work Programme 2016.

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7 Education and training CSRs have been addressed to Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Finland, Malta, the UK, Belgium, France, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Slovenia.
Many of these issues have been longstanding, although their form has evolved over time. It is not surprising, therefore that they have formed a major element in Cohesion policy going back over many programming periods. The ESF, in particular, is designed to address them, by supporting projects to decrease school drop-out rates, improve educational outcomes (through, for example, redesigned curricula) and provide skills training which is relevant for the modern employment market. In the 2007-2013 period, ESF funding was used strategically to complement the Lisbon agenda on jobs and growth and the European Employment strategy, and to overcome barriers to work through the provision of dedicated support and training for socially disadvantaged groups (European Commission, 2008). ESF interventions also support “softer” measures such as: the development of new school curricula; the training of teachers; the building of closer relations between the education and training system and enterprises; the development of new teaching methods and tools, the provision of tailored training and access to higher and tertiary education for disadvantaged groups (e.g. offering language skills), promoting role models and providing catch-up teaching opportunities and of lifelong learning opportunities. The Erasmus+ has provided additional support through the financing of education and training infrastructures (upgrading and new infrastructures) (European Commission, 2016). These can support access to education and the reduction of educational segregation, especially in areas with a more disadvantaged pupil population. It also supports transportation (bussing) and road infrastructure which could facilitate access to education and training, the adoption of new technologies to improve learning (such as ICT applications for e-learning), the creation and improvement of advice centres for students, student accommodation facilities, the accessibility of existing structures for people with reduced mobility, the creation of Centres of Excellence involving VET institutions, technology providers and companies. ERDF intervention may also support investments in early child care and childhood education facilities along the lines proposed in the 2013 Commission Communication on investing in children (European Commission, 2013a).

The EU’s programme for education, training, youth and sport, (‘Erasmus+’), adopted in December 2013 for the period 2014–20, also provides opportunities for vocational students, trainees and apprentices to undertake placements abroad, and provides opportunities for staff to undertake professional development activities. Erasmus+ activities in the area of adult learning offer opportunities for the exchange of staff, cooperation between institutions and organisations and with business, and support the platform for adult learning in Europe.

### 3.2.2 Culture

First, it should be clear that in talking of ‘culture’ in the current context of economic and social development, there is usually reference to the ‘cultural and creative industries’, where following a definition established in a study by KEA European Affairs (2006), there is a distinction between three different areas:

- **Core arts areas** - performing arts, visual arts, cultural and architectural heritage and literature;
- **Cultural industries** - film, DVD and video, television and radio, video games, new media, music, books and the press;
- **Creative industries** - those industries which use culture as an input but whose outputs are mainly functional, including architecture, advertising, design and fashion.

In terms of employment, the culture sector in Europe is significant, accounting for 6.5 million jobs (nearly 3% of all people employed) in 2015 (Eurostat, 2017d). It is an area of continuing
growth, with a recorded 7% increase in employment numbers over the period 2011 to 2015. By December 2017, the number of jobs in the cultural and creative industries sector in Europe had increased further – to 8.4 million people (3.7% of total employment). The patterns of employment are also of interest. The culture sector is marked by high-levels of self-employment (15% of all those employed), higher than average levels of young people (European Commission, 2015) and a higher proportion of employees with tertiary education (approximately double the EU average) (Eurostat, 2017).

The cultural and creative sectors generate an estimated 4.2% of EU GDP and are believed to be the fastest growing sector of the economy (European Commission, 2012). According to the report of the European Creative Industries Summit (European Creative Business Network 2015), they make up nearly 4.5% of the European economy and include nearly 1.4 million small and medium-sized businesses. Furthermore, the cultural and creative sectors have shown great resilience during the crisis, continuing to grow as the economy overall struggled, and stimulating creativity and innovation spillovers in other sectors. However, cultural and creative industries are faced with specific obstacles, including limited recognition of the sector’s dynamic contribution to the European economy and a resulting difficulty in gaining access to traditional sources of finance (European Commission, 2012).

Already in 2010, the study on the contribution of culture to local and regional development, with evidence from the Structural Funds (CSES and Ericarts 2010) pointed to the cultural and creative industries as a significant source of growth and dynamism in the European economy with fast growth (especially in many of Europe’s major cities) and the potential to generate creativity, innovation and enterprise across a wide range of activities.

The study pointed to the scope for culture in the guidelines for the 2007-13 programming period (as explained above). Culture could contribute to making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work. Through cultural activities and facilities, there is an important place for culture in the development of the physical environment of town and cities and, in particular, the rehabilitation of old industrial cities. Culture was also seen to be important in the attraction and retention of people with high skill levels and there was some recognition of the significance of natural and cultural assets and their interaction in tourism, especially in rural areas. Overall however, culture was mainly seen as contributing to ‘improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities’, one of the priorities of the ERDF, and this principally through the delivery of sustainable, high-quality tourism. There was no reference to culture’s contribution to ‘encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy’, nor to ‘creating more and better jobs’, the other two priorities of the ERDF and there was no reference to culture at all in the guidelines for the European Social Fund. In general, the study concluded, the expectations of culture in the Structural Funds framework were rather modest.

In contrast, examination of what had happened on the ground in the 2007-13 period and previously showed a more complex picture. Between 2007 and 2013, EU expenditure on culture under Cohesion policy was planned to be more than € 6 billion, representing 1.7% of the total Structural Fund budget, but the study commented that additional programmes and projects directed to other objectives, but with cultural elements, could have meant that figure represented only about half of the total amount that culture-related projects were receiving in that period. In any event, allocations to culture represented considerably less than the share of the cultural and creative industries in national economies, through which culture makes a substantial direct contribution, in terms of income generated and people employed.
At the same time, it also makes a major contribution to social wellbeing and to the development and maintenance of social capital.

Through specific case study examples, the study goes on to show how culture is capable of making substantial contributions to the other main objectives of the ERDF and the ESF, in particular innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy and by creating more and better jobs. Cases of a dedicated business park and incubator facilities for the creative sector (oversubscribed in both cases), show examples of support for start-ups and innovative businesses. Data are available on the number of businesses and employment created and increases in value-added, productivity and profitability. Other examples show culture can be a powerful tool of marketing in ways characteristic of the knowledge economy and how cultural content can provide the basis for new digital services. In addition, the study showed that culture-based activities could be an important instrument in social policy, even though this had not been anticipated by the ESF. Social impacts identified included direct increases in employment and training and improvements in skills and competencies, but also special contributions to the promotion of social inclusion and the building of social advances, notably through the use of acting, music and dance to engage with excluded groups and to develop social skills.

More recent work, beginning with the Commission’s Green Paper (European Commission 2010a), has also referred to the spill-over effects of the cultural and creative industries, particularly because of their role in marketing and communication. Ideas generated in the cultural and creative sector generate changes in a wide range of other activities, because of their influence on fashion and consumer choices. They are thus characterised as one of the significant drivers of change in a modern economy and a major contributor to economic dynamism.

The more recent findings of the current study are reported in section 3.4 below and further analysed in section 3.5. However, as well as needing to clarify further the potential contribution of the sector in terms of the nature of the activities that it can pursue and the substantive contributions it can make to economic and social development, it is also worth pointing to the organisational capacity of the sector. This has been strengthened over the last decade or so, partially by the increasing attention paid to the sector by public authorities, especially at a local level, and by research into its activities by academic and public researchers, but also by the formation of representative bodies for the industry across the EU (often incorporating public authority organisations). At a European level a number of these organisations are brought together in the European Creative Business Network, while Culture Action Europe brings together a wider group of individuals and organisations promoting culture as a dynamic force in Europe. These are precisely the type of organisation or network that can formulate convincing proposals for the use of the ESIF for culture-based activities.
3.2.3 Sport

The meaning of ‘sport and physical activity’ in the current context, makes use of the EU’s definition of sport, which is in turn derived from one originally developed by the Council of Europe. It encompasses:

‘all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.’\(^8\)

In addition, sport policy usually includes ‘physical activity’, which in the EU Physical Activity Guidelines (EU Working Group “Sport and Health”, 2008) is defined as:

‘any bodily movement associated with muscular contraction that increases energy expenditure above resting levels’.

This description includes all types of physical activity, such as “leisure-time physical activity (including most sport activities and dancing), occupational physical activity, physical activity at or near the home and physical activity connected with transport”. (EU Working Group “Sport and Health”, 2008)

In addition, there is also a definition of sport in economic terms, known as the ‘Vilnius definition of sport’ (European Commission, 2013b). This is derived from Eurostat concepts for statistical purposes and lists a number of economic activities related to sport in order to try and understand its broader impact on the economy. According to Eurostat, estimations of sports impact on the economy are nonetheless conservative, since it can be hard to identify all economic activities associated with sport.

Sport has become an important economic sector in the EU, with a share in the national economies which is comparable to agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined. Moreover, its share is expected to rise in the future. Overall the sports sector accounts for 1.76% of the EU global GDP, while the total employment generated by sports activities is 4.5 million-equivalent to 2.12% of the total EU employment (SportsEconAustria et al., 2012).

The 2012 Study on the Contribution of Sport to Economic Growth and Employment in the EU used a methodology similar to the SSAs for each of the Member States (SportsEconAustria et al., 2012). This allowed the consortium behind the study to undertake input-output analysis that came up with an estimate of the overall contribution of sport to the economy.\(^9\)

It was found that the share of sport-related gross value-added in total EU gross value-added is 1.13%, using the narrow (Vilnius) definition, and 1.76% using the broad definition. The share of what is generally known as the organised sport sector (sport clubs, public sport venues, sport event organisers) is reflected in this statistical definition. The share of gross value added according to the statistical definition is 0.28%. Therefore, the real share of sport in terms of production and income is about six times as high as reported in official statistics. The direct effects of sport, combined with its multiplier (indirect and induced) effects, added up to 2.98% (€ 294.36 billion) of overall gross value-added in the EU. Furthermore, sport

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overall is labour-intensive. Growing the sport-related economy thus leads to a more than proportional growth of employment.

In the EU guidance for drawing up the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes, there is little or no reference to sport. In spite of that, sport and physical activity have had a substantial presence in actions implemented on the ground.

A ‘Study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development through the Structural Funds’ (CSES and B&S 2016) set out to examine the role of sport in modern economies and society and specifically how sport and physical activity can be a powerful means of achieving the objectives of EU Cohesion policy.

First of all, sport can be the basis for significant business activity in its own right. Many sports events are operated on a commercial basis, as is the media coverage the events generate. Furthermore, since sport and physical activity is often relatively labour-intensive, both directly and in terms of the support and maintenance work that is needed, it is a growth area in terms of employment. It also has a major role in terms of developing skills. Again this can be sporting skills, but also other social and economic skills associated with collaborative team activity, the need to communicate effectively, to develop discipline and team playing etc.

Concrete examples of such developments supported by the ESIF in the current and previous programming periods are provided by the study. However, as well as these important contributions, the study also points to sport as an area of considerable innovation, exploiting sport science, advanced training facilities and sophisticated performance monitoring in a wide range of other activities from medical science to ICT applications. In addition, sport equipment can often involve the development and exploitation of innovative materials and technologies and lead to new business processes. These developments have impacts not only on equipment manufacturers, but also on the textile industry, again on ICT applications and on marketing activities. In some regions there have been direct attempts to build sport-based competence clusters as a focus for regional development and sport is also recognised for the contributions that it can make to resolving societal challenges relating to health problems, an ageing population and environmental issues.

Frequently developments form part of a broader economic strategy, especially when this relates to the tourism sector or to the cultural and creative industries. Sport activities, the study points out, can help develop the tourist offer, lead to more stable employment and better paid jobs or be important in extending the tourism season. In some cases sport is an essential component of building the experience offer.

Illustrative examples are provided of many of these processes and these will be supplemented with further examples in section 3.4 below.

Again it is useful to note the development of networks and groups of organisations with an active interest in promoting sport-based development and the participation of sport and physical activity in the ESIF. In addition to the longstanding work of the European Olympic Committee, in this respect, ClusSport is a grouping of European regions with an active interest in sport as part of their smart specialisation strategy. The European Platform for Sport innovation (EPSI) highlights innovation arising from the sport sector, while the Sport
Action Network, with some support from the European Commission brings together individuals and organisations that are specifically interested in promoting sport and physical activity with the ESIF, while EU Sport Link has a wider interest in sport across the EU.

3.2.4 Youth

‘Youth’ is easier to define in many respects than the other target areas, since it refers to all people under a certain age. However, there are slight variations in the upper age limit. Eurostat defines youth as up to 28 years old, but for ERAMUS+ it may go up to 30. For the purposes of this study the ERAMUS+ definition has been used.

Young people represent an important source of skills and creativity and are an important part of revitalising the European economy. The young tend to be more highly educated than older generations, with 80% of 15-19 year olds in Europe still in full time education. Nonetheless, there is a fear that the economic crisis of 2008 left many young people behind, leading to elevated levels of youth unemployment (or precarious employment) across Europe. Significant differences appear between Member States with regard to people aged 20-24. In some countries, up to 50% of young people are still exclusively in education. In others, young people begin to combine employment and education at this age (for example, Denmark and the Netherlands). Other countries, such as the UK, Austria and Malta, have a significant proportion of people in this age bracket who are in full-time employment (approximately 40%). These differences have been linked to the structure of the education system in different countries and the extent to which they encourage mobility between education and industry (for example, the Netherlands and Denmark both include traineeships as part of tertiary study programmes).

The group of most concern to European policymakers are young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). In 2013, NEETs made up 13% of people aged 15-24 and 30% of people aged 25-29 in the EU (Eurostat, 2015). The lowest proportions of people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training were recorded in the Netherlands and Luxembourg (both 5%) and the highest were recorded in Italy, Bulgaria (both 22%) and Greece (21%). In Cyprus, Croatia and Greece, a significant increase in the rates of persons not in employment, education or training (nine percentage points) was registered between 2008 and 2013 (Eurostat, 2015).

The youth area has not been the subject of a study considering the extent to which it has benefitted from support under the Structural Funds in the same way as culture and sport.

To an important extent the agenda in relation to youth changed considerably after the financial crisis beginning in 2007, since it was the unemployment rate for young people especially that increased dramatically as a result of the crisis. Given that significant elements in youth policy are the responsibility of the Member States, a large part of the action under the European Youth Strategy (European Commission 2009), in response to youth unemployment and related issues, consists of co-ordination at a European level of Member State actions. However, part of this co-ordination includes the use of the ESIF to support the Strategy, where possible.

As already pointed out, one key element of ESIF support to youth in the 2014-20 period is the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which is integrated into ESF programming. This initiative specifically set out to combat youth unemployment following the Eurozone crisis, which reached very high levels, especially in Southern Europe. The budget for the YEI totalled € 6.4 billion (European Commission, 2015a) and this was increased to a total of €8.8 billion
in 2017\textsuperscript{10}. Particular attention is paid to young people at risk of social exclusion and those from marginalised communities, and more generally young people 'not in employment, education or training (NEET)' and action is focused on those European regions where the youth unemployment rate exceeded 25% in 2012.

An important element in the strategy to address youth unemployment is the Youth Guarantee whereby all Member States put in place a national plan to ensure that young people up to 25 receive either a good offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed. The Youth Guarantee is referred to in several of the national ESIF Partnership Agreements.

It should also be appreciated that youth activities under the ESIF primarily consist of actions where young people are the target beneficiaries. In this respect, youth is different from the other areas of interest for this study, where the areas under consideration are the means by which actions are delivered rather than the targets as such. A number of OPs across Europe do include elements targeting young people, reflecting ESF investment priorities. In a number of other cases, young people figure among those targeted, sometimes with additional support provided.

### 3.3 Findings on funding

This section provides an analysis of the current state of play with respect to the allocation of funds as well as the absorption of funding. It focuses on analysing spending and absorption in the field of education and, as far as possible in culture, sport and youth. However as will be explained, for several reasons it is challenging to draw robust conclusions about spending in areas that are crosscutting. Calculations on spending and absorption can be done either by using DG REGIO top-down data or examining national/regional level data (e.g. OP or monitoring data). This study has explored spending on relevant areas using both primary and secondary data collection.

The primary data collection included an exploration of budgeted funds and actual spending for the 2007-2013 programming period and the current 2014-2020 period respectively. The secondary data were derived from a review of existing literature, especially evaluations.

The initial purpose of the primary data analysis was to explore the extent to which the study could with certainty assess spending relevant to the EP CULT Committee remits (either as individual or multidisciplinary themes). Moreover, the data analysis was intended to provide a point of comparison to the other quantitative and qualitative analysis at national and thematic levels (including existing evaluations).

The initial step was to assess the extent to which these funds have been spent on projects of relevance to the CULT Committee remit using the monitoring data provided by DG REGIO.

There are a number of key implications, which are important to emphasise:

1. The top-down data that are systematically and comprehensively compiled and updated by the EC do only go down to the level of the Operational Programme (and not project level). This is not to say the data are not useful for analysis, but – as argued under point 2 – this makes it near impossible to accurately quantitatively measure spending on the EP CULT Committee remits.

\textsuperscript{10} \url{http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176&langId=en}
2. Although there are individual themes on culture and cultural heritage, education & training, the areas of relevance to the study are also **in practice crosscutting** (e.g. sport projects can be funded under innovation if they contain objectives in line with the research and innovation priority). This makes it extremely difficult to pin down the exact amount of actual spending on the CULT remits using a top down approach – even if data are broken down at the Operational Programme level. A typical example is that of tourism objectives, which may have high relevance to both sport and culture, but without project level data this is not possible to confirm (or count). This is because ESIF monitoring does not break down spending within thematic objectives and/or provide project level data which includes a synopsis of each project). Another challenge is that of the ‘hidden’ nature of an unknown number of relevant projects (see section 2.8).

3. A third methodological issue, which is important to keep in mind when looking at ESIF data, is that there has been **a change from ‘budget lines’ in the 2007-2013 programme period to ‘thematic objectives’ in the current period**. The data analysis is covering the current and previous (2007-2013) programme periods, with a focus on the 2014-2020 period. This means that we need to make comparisons in spending between the two, which constitutes a practical challenge.\(^\text{11}\) Moreover, the current period also supports ‘multi-funds’, that is, Operational Programmes that mix ERDF and ESF funding, and which support more than one Thematic Objective. As a result of these issues, a more precise number in terms of spending on education, youth, culture and sport is likely to be found **using data which allow for analysis at the project level.** As far as the study team is concerned, there are two ways of accessing these. 1) through DG REGIO’s portal, which allows users to search by programme period, theme, country, and by using keyword searches to find individual projects\(^\text{12}\) or 2) by using data published by the Managing Authority in the relevant country/region.

It should also be remembered that there are differences in ESIF allocations according to the type of regions (less developed, transition and more developed regions), which also leads to (and explains) differences in absolute allocations across the countries and regions assessed in the study.

### 3.3.1 Allocations and spending for the 2014-2020 programming period

Using data from DG REGIO on the current programming period, it appears that to date a grand total of €348,400,805,525 has been spent on Cohesion policy in all areas and in all EU countries.

The Table below shows areas of relevance to the Parliament CULT Committee. However, due to the crosscutting (and hidden) nature of the spending in these areas, the numbers should not be considered absolute but rather indicative of relevant spending amounts.

\(^{11}\) Helpfully, there is a ‘key’ table produced by DG REGIO that has allowed the core team to trace which themes are relevant across both periods.

### Table 3.1: ESI Fund 2014-2020 spending on CULT remit areas to date (examples)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget line</th>
<th>Cohesion Fund</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>ESF</th>
<th>YEI</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development and promotion of commercial culture assets</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>235,095,551</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>235,095,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and promotion of commercial cultural services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>252,025,849</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>252,025,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection, development and promotion of public cultural heritage</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,366,311,539</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,366,311,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and promotion of public cultural heritage services</td>
<td></td>
<td>441,977,833</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>441,977,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable integration of young people (aged 15-24)</td>
<td>70,128,615</td>
<td>6,062,335,560</td>
<td>6,472,525,737</td>
<td>12,604,989,912</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Inclusion, e-Accessibility, e-Learning and e-Education services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,250,666,991</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,250,666,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education infrastructure for tertiary education</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,267,820,242</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,267,820,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education infrastructure for vocational education and training</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,149,221,262</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,149,221,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education infrastructure for school education (primary and secondary)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,815,260,358</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,815,260,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure for early childhood education and care (pre-school)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,340,102,620</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,340,102,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle tracks and footpaths</td>
<td>35,942,500</td>
<td>1,497,013,498</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,532,955,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and healthy ageing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21,168,505</td>
<td>539,893,844</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>561,062,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT solutions addressing the healthy active ageing challenge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,005,500,410</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,005,500,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL spend (EUR)</strong></td>
<td><strong>35,942,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>15,712,293,273</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,602,335,560</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,472,525,737</strong></td>
<td><strong>28,822,990,914</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** [DG REGIO](http://www.europa.eu) compiled by CSES (January 2018)
Despite the lack of quantitative certainty, a number of observations can be made:

- With the exception of ‘Active and healthy ageing’ ERDF funding is being used far more extensively as compared to the ESF. This appears to be the case for education and training as well.
- The budget lines that include ‘culture’ and ‘education’ are likely to be fairly robust in terms of relevant spending as these are budget lines which are less crosscutting in nature.
- In contrast, the ‘Cycle tracks and footpaths’, ‘Active and healthy ageing’ and ‘ICT solutions addressing the healthy active ageing challenge’ are likely to include sport and physical activity projects, but equally other types of activity (such as infrastructure to support sport) would also be included here. Therefore, the total amounts spent to date are likely to be lower in reality than what is indicated in the table.

In terms of overall spending to date, DG REGIO’s latest figures show that most funding to date has gone to meeting multiple Thematic Objectives (cross-thematic funding, which covers more than one Thematic Objective), followed by that for the Research and innovation Thematic Objective (see Figure 3.1 below). In terms of spending on Educational and Vocational training (the only directly relevant TO for this study), this area is, to a larger extent, relying on ESF funding compared to ERDF funding. This can be concluded from the two graphs displayed below, which show ERDF spending to date and ERDF and ESF spending to date (all Member States) respectively. It shows a total amount of € 39.2 billion, so far.

**Figure 3.1: ESIF 2014-2020: Fin. Implementation (total costs) by Thematic Objective for EU (ERDF)**

Source: DG REGIO
**Figure 3.2: ESIF 2014-2020: Fin. Implementation (total costs) by Thematic Objective for EU (ERDF and ESF)**

![Diagram showing financial implementation by thematic objective for ESIF 2014-2020](image)

*Source: DG REGIO*

### 3.3.2 Spending for the 2007-2013 programme period

For the **2007-2013 programme period**, a total of €347.4 billion was earmarked for EU cohesion policy over the seven-year period. Out of these funds, 82% was to be focused on the ‘Convergence’ regions (which house 35% of the EU’s population). In the remaining regions, some €55 billion was allocated under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective. Another €8.7 billion were made available for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation under the European Territorial Cooperation objective (DG REGIO, 2008).

In terms of overall absorption rates for 2007-2013, these ranged between 65.64% (Croatia, ESF) and 100% for several countries (ERDF – LX, DK, EL, NL; ESF – EL, PL, MT, DK, LX, LV, IE, PT; CF – PL, CZ, EL and PT). Greece, and Denmark appear to have been the two MS that absorbed 100% of all funds for which they were eligible. The study has not been able to break down 2007-2013 absorption rates to the areas concerned.

In terms of spending figures on education, culture, youth and sport specifically, they are available to a varying extent and should ultimately be considered as assessments as no exact figures exist.

With regards to culture, a very good initial overview can be derived from the ex-post evaluations of the 2007-2013 programme period as this included a work package (WP9) dedicated to culture and tourism. This study provides interesting data on spending in these areas. The study assessed that “the total amount of 2007-2013 ERDF funding allocated to culture and tourism [was] some € 14.4 billion”. But the authors equally conclude “this is likely to be an underestimate of the total ERDF amount allocated to culture and tourism, because SMEs operating in these sectors may have been supported indirectly under other ERDF categories too” (DG REGIO, 2016).
The figure below shows the study’s assessment of ERDF allocations to culture and tourism as a proportion of the total amount of ERDF allocations by Member States. According to this, the highest proportion can be found in cross-border funding. Malta is assessed to be the Member State which spends the highest proportion of available funds, followed by Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Finland. All these countries spend more than 10% of its ERDF funding on culture and/or tourism.

In terms of the lowest proportions spent, Ireland, Latvia, and Bulgaria all spend less than 3%.

**Figure 3.3: ERDF allocations to culture and tourism as a proportion of the total amount of ERDF allocations, by country in 2007-2013 (%)**

Source: Data from the Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) Work Package 9: Culture and Tourism. Original source is a calculated by the aforementioned study authors using data from DG Regio’s ERDF Annual Implementation Report raw data (‘project selection’), 2007-2013.

The ex-post evaluation also reported that 80% of ERDF programmes considered by the study (252 out of 317 OPs) allocated ERDF financial resources to culture and tourism during the 2007-2013 programming period. A total of 165 out of these 252 OPs appeared to have allocated more than €15 million.

As perhaps expected, the study found a close relationship between culture and tourism spending – 201 out of 252 OP allocations related to both culture and tourism, while only 37 OPs reported allocations exclusively in tourism-related priority themes and 14 OPs exclusively in culture-related priorities.

The highest proportions of allocations to culture and tourism within overall ERDF allocations were registered in ‘Touristic small mountain regions’ (19.1% of all ERDF allocations, of which 9% has gone to ‘Hotels and restaurants’); ‘Mediterranean’ regions and ‘Tourist islands’ (respectively 11.4% and 8.7%).
Other key findings from the study in terms of spending included:

- ERDF interventions were found to be concentrated in urban areas, especially in the case of culture (55% of all allocations for culture and 46% for tourism, compared to 41.9% overall). Within this broad pattern, rural areas absorbed a relatively higher share of ERDF for tourism (22.1% compared to 17.5% of total ERDF allocations).

- ERDF allocations specifically targeted at culture for 2007-2013 were assessed to total EUR 6.035 billion, representing 2.3% of all ERDF allocations. The incidence of allocations to culture was highest in the cross-border programmes (7.6% of the overall ERDF funding), as well as in Malta (9.8%), the Netherlands and Belgium (4.0%), Denmark, and Slovenia (3.5%).

- ERDF allocations to tourism in 2007-2013 amounted to € 6.193 billion. In addition, a further € 2.151 billion was allocated to 'hotels and restaurants'. Together these comprised a share of some 3.1% of total ERDF allocations in 2007-2013.

- The share of total ERDF allocations to tourism is higher than average in the cross-border programmes (8.8%) and in Hungary and Italy (3%).

- Convergence Objective regions absorbed 70% of the total allocations to tourism (€ 4.361 billion) and 81% of those for 'hotels and restaurants' (€ 1.731 billion).

Looking beyond culture and tourism, it has proven more difficult to robustly assess spending in the other relevant areas for the 2007-2013 programme period. As this study is much smaller in scope compared to the ex post evaluation on culture and tourism, it has not been able to replicate the (very comprehensive) data analysis carried out by the evaluators contracted by DG REGIO.

We have however made use of the data publicly available from DG REGIO, where data can be broken down through 14 priority themes. These are rather high-level, but as listed below, a number of them are clearly relevant to the areas of education & training, sport and to culture. Each of the 14 themes funded contain number of categories – in total of 86 categories across the 14 themes.
Table 3.2: 2007-2013 Priorities and their relevance to the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority theme</th>
<th>Comment on relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Innovation &amp; RTD</td>
<td>Deemed not relevant in general (although possible hidden projects), because there are no direct link to any of the CULT Committee remit areas. Single projects have been identified related to cultural research, education, sport etc. However these are likely to be relatively few in total when compared to overall spending.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 IT services and infrastructure</td>
<td>Deemed not relevant (although possible hidden projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Other SME and Business support</td>
<td>Deemed not relevant (although possible hidden projects)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Energy</td>
<td>Deemed not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Environment</td>
<td>Deemed not relevant in general (although possible hidden projects), because there are no direct link to any of the CULT Committee remit areas. Single projects have been identified related to cultural organisations, education, sport etc. However these are likely to be relatively few in total when compared to overall spending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 6 Culture, heritage and tourism | Clearly high relevance as demonstrated by the ex-post evaluation. The priority theme funded the following categories:  
1 Cycle tracks  
2 Other assistance to improve tourist services  
3 Protection and preservation of the cultural heritage  
4 Development of cultural infrastructure  
5 Other assistance to improve cultural services |
| 6 Urban territorial dimension | Possibly of some relevance. This priority theme funded four sub-themes of which one included *Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration*. |
| 7 Rail | Deemed not relevant |
| 8 Road | Deemed not relevant |
| 9 Other transport | Deemed not relevant |
| 10 Labour market | Relevant to education and training overall but many of the categories are too wide to assess. The priority theme funded the following categories:  
- Design and dissemination of innovative and more productive ways of organising work  
- Development of special services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors ...  
- Modernisation and strengthening labour market institution  
- Implementing active and preventive measures on the labour market  
- Measures encouraging active ageing and prolonging working lives  
- Measures to improve access to employment and increase sustainable participation and progress of women ... |
| 11 Social inclusion | Clearly relevant to education and training and to youth, but many of the categories are too wide to assess. The priority theme funded the following categories:  
- Specific action to increase migrants’ participation in employment...  
- Pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people ...  
- Education infrastructure  
- Health infrastructure  
- Childcare infrastructure  
- Housing infrastructure  
- Other social infrastructure |
| 12 Human capital | Clearly relevant to education and training. The priority theme funded the following categories:  
- Development of life-long learning systems and strategies in firms; training and services for employees ...  
- Design, introduction and implementing of reforms in education and training systems ...  
- Measures to increase participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle ... |
| 13 Capacity Building | Deemed not relevant |

*Source: Authors’ assessment based on DG REGIO Themes & Categories 2007-2013*
As explained above, the education, training and sport themes are largely crosscutting making it meaningless to try and assess funding, as this cannot be done accurately. This is because although we can identify relevant priority themes, we cannot assess to what extent the categories eligible under each priority theme were dedicated to relevant projects.

Overall for the 2007-2013 programming period, it is more challenging to assess spending on sport and – to a lesser extent – youth because these areas are not reflected in individual priority themes. One exception to this is the human capital priority, of which youth plays a significant part.

But for human capital and culture, heritage, and tourism and to a lesser extent education and training, the picture is somewhat more robust albeit not definite.

With this in mind, the four tables below provide some indication of the proportion of relevant spending for culture, heritage and tourism, labour market spending, social infrastructure and human capital respectively.

**Table 3.3: 2007-2013 Culture, heritage and tourism spending per Member State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Decided OPs - in M.C</th>
<th>% of National SF/CF</th>
<th>Allocated to selected projects - in M.C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>1,996.0</td>
<td>2.97%</td>
<td>1,948.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>1,372.1</td>
<td>4.91%</td>
<td>1,195.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>1,181.0</td>
<td>4.52%</td>
<td>961.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>937.0</td>
<td>11.74%</td>
<td>1,105.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>717.7</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>1,110.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>594.8</td>
<td>3.12%</td>
<td>580.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>582.4</td>
<td>2.88%</td>
<td>938.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>553.6</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>619.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>515.9</td>
<td>2.02%</td>
<td>531.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>421.9</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
<td>414.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>377.2</td>
<td>3.28%</td>
<td>308.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>289.5</td>
<td>2.14%</td>
<td>309.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>184.9</td>
<td>2.73%</td>
<td>185.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>149.1</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
<td>149.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>118.0</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>167.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>113.8</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>233.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>100.1</td>
<td>11.92%</td>
<td>101.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>104.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>95.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>2.48%</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>1.87%</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>3.51%</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>1.93%</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>1.94%</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DG REGIO*
All categories under the **Culture, heritage and tourism** priority listed in the Table above are relevant to the CULT remits; therefore the spending amount is fairly robust. However, these figures differ somewhat from the 2013 ex-post evaluation (WP9) results. This discrepancy can be put down to different methodologies being used. The below data is primary data from DG REGIO; whereas the ex post evaluation used a (large) sample of OPs as their source of data.

**Table 3.4: 2007-2013 Labour market spending per Member State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Decided OPs - in M.€</th>
<th>% of National SF/CF</th>
<th>Allocated to selected projects - in M.€</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>4,694.4</td>
<td>13.56%</td>
<td>3,423.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>2,906.1</td>
<td>4.33%</td>
<td>2,537.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>2,227.7</td>
<td>7.97%</td>
<td>2,419.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>2,055.9</td>
<td>10.17%</td>
<td>2,764.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>1,984.1</td>
<td>14.65%</td>
<td>1,291.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>1,964.7</td>
<td>7.71%</td>
<td>1,380.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1,581.4</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>1,885.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>971.3</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>885.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>882.4</td>
<td>3.54%</td>
<td>1,179.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>843.1</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
<td>705.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>659.9</td>
<td>3.08%</td>
<td>523.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>612.4</td>
<td>5.33%</td>
<td>938.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>518.2</td>
<td>31.87%</td>
<td>236.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>433.0</td>
<td>21.02%</td>
<td>497.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>385.3</td>
<td>5.78%</td>
<td>361.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>286.8</td>
<td>17.97%</td>
<td>123.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>246.0</td>
<td>14.82%</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>236.0</td>
<td>5.21%</td>
<td>246.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>216.1</td>
<td>3.19%</td>
<td>199.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>203.7</td>
<td>17.10%</td>
<td>189.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>195.1</td>
<td>25.99%</td>
<td>122.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>192.8</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>186.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>188.9</td>
<td>2.37%</td>
<td>130.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>147.9</td>
<td>4.35%</td>
<td>134.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>104.4</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>7.75%</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>3.63%</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>27.53%</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DG REGIO
Total funding cannot be assessed, as only two out of five categories likely to be relevant to CULT remits\textsuperscript{13}. Therefore, it can be concluded that education and training projects funded under this priority will only make up a small part of the total spending as indicated in the table above.

**Table 3.5: 2007-2013 Social infrastructure spending per Member State**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Decided OPs - in M.C</th>
<th>% of National SF/CF</th>
<th>Allocated projects - in M.C</th>
<th>to selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>2,946.8</td>
<td>13.76 %</td>
<td>2,916.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>2,694.9</td>
<td>4.01 %</td>
<td>2,562.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>2,422.5</td>
<td>9.73 %</td>
<td>2,881.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>1,327.6</td>
<td>4.75 %</td>
<td>1,406.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>1,258.8</td>
<td>4.82 %</td>
<td>1,027.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>1,197.3</td>
<td>10.43 %</td>
<td>1,257.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>1,141.5</td>
<td>5.65 %</td>
<td>1,708.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>1,086.1</td>
<td>3.14 %</td>
<td>832.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>988.0</td>
<td>5.18 %</td>
<td>728.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>845.7</td>
<td>12.48 %</td>
<td>638.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>556.6</td>
<td>12.29 %</td>
<td>518.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>517.9</td>
<td>15.22 %</td>
<td>564.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>472.7</td>
<td>1.86 %</td>
<td>419.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>450.8</td>
<td>5.65 %</td>
<td>472.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>299.5</td>
<td>2.21 %</td>
<td>273.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>284.0</td>
<td>4.26 %</td>
<td>273.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>112.7</td>
<td>2.75 %</td>
<td>155.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>102.3</td>
<td>12.18 %</td>
<td>101.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>0.38 %</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>0.87 %</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1.72 %</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.14 %</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.12 %</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.00 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DG REGIO

\textsuperscript{13} "Development of special services for employment, training and support in connection with restructuring of sectors and ‘Measures encouraging active ageing and prolonging working lives’"
Some social infrastructure funding is relevant to the area of Education and training and to Youth, but this priority also funds other projects. Only two out of five categories that make up the social infrastructure priority are likely to be relevant to CULT remit\textsuperscript{14}. Thus, actual relevant spending on will be considerably lower than indicated in the table.

**Table 3.6: 2007-2013 Human capital spending per Member State**

All categories under this priority are relevant to the CULT remits (E&T) therefore the spending amount is fairly robust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Decided OPs - in M.C.</th>
<th>% of National SF/CF</th>
<th>Allocated to selected projects - in M.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>4,573.0</td>
<td>21.36%</td>
<td>4,449.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>3,772.1</td>
<td>5.61%</td>
<td>4,307.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>3,473.4</td>
<td>13.63%</td>
<td>3,104.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>2,725.8</td>
<td>9.75%</td>
<td>2,653.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>1,810.6</td>
<td>6.93%</td>
<td>1,740.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>1,747.4</td>
<td>7.02%</td>
<td>1,266.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>1,662.2</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>1,178.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1,608.6</td>
<td>16.27%</td>
<td>1,504.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>1,577.4</td>
<td>8.28%</td>
<td>1,305.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>1,502.3</td>
<td>7.43%</td>
<td>1,657.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>1,450.9</td>
<td>10.71%</td>
<td>968.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>440.5</td>
<td>3.84%</td>
<td>566.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>438.8</td>
<td>6.58%</td>
<td>412.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>429.9</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>370.7</td>
<td>5.47%</td>
<td>369.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>252.9</td>
<td>12.27%</td>
<td>237.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>228.5</td>
<td>5.57%</td>
<td>225.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>222.3</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>189.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>166.7</td>
<td>13.99%</td>
<td>129.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>158.7</td>
<td>21.14%</td>
<td>256.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>140.6</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>167.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>140.4</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>145.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FI</td>
<td>134.5</td>
<td>8.43%</td>
<td>254.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>121.9</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>108.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>121.8</td>
<td>3.58%</td>
<td>109.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>6.36%</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>8.14%</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>5.71%</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11.37%</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DG REGIO

All categories under the human capital priority are relevant to the CULT remits (education and training and youth) therefore the spending amount is fairly robust.

\textsuperscript{14} Childcare infrastructure and education infrastructure.
The top spenders as a proportion of total SF/CF budgets include Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal and Ireland which all spend between 21.1% and 27.6% on human capital.

To conclude the analysis on funding, changes in the structure between the 2007-2013 programming period and the current one makes it challenging to draw out clear trends in terms of funding on education & training, culture, sport and youth. For a real understanding of the extent of activities funded – and their impact – analyses should be undertaken at national or even regional level.

However, the top-down data provided by DG REGIO, and the analyses of OPs undertaken by the researchers that carried out the ex-post evaluation do confirm that there are great variations in CULT spending across Member States (although the availability of national funding and the relative size of ESIF contributions should also be borne in mind), both in terms of absolute spending and relative spending of the ESIF funding available.

3.4 Findings at the national level

The problems in analysing the extent of the interventions in which the study is interested from data collected centrally mean that the best way of finding out what is actually happening with the four areas is by examining the Operational Programmes and specific projects that are undertaken on the ground in the Member States. This section of the report provides information on the findings of the research team in eight Member States. However, even in these countries it has not been possible to examine all of the projects that have been supported. The analysis derived from the information available is therefore, necessarily partial, but it does have the merit of being based on real experiences with the implementation of the ESIF. The following sections provide the information that it has been possible to gather in relation to each of the Member States covered.

3.4.1 Denmark

Denmark was allocated € 1.5 billion from the ESIF for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Denmark’s national contribution for this period totals € 717 million.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 193 million and € 198 million respectively. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF) is actually the largest fund - € 268 million for the current programming period, though this is mainly invested in areas outside of the scope of the study. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund is much smaller, with an overall investment of € 59 million for the 2014-2020 period.

Denmark currently has 4 national ESIF-funded Operational Programmes and 9 Interreg and similar programmes.

Denmark’s approach to the ESIF, in the current period, is heavily influenced by the wish to address a key issue identified in the Danish Partnership Agreement: the low growth in output per inhabitant and in productivity. The low growth in productivity goes back before the financial crisis to the mid-nineties, but addressing the problem of low growth in output per inhabitant is not only a matter of increasing productivity, though that continues to be a major objective; it is also necessary to increase the amount of work performed. Denmark already has a relatively high participation rate, though more can be done to involve socially excluded groups, but it also has the lowest amount of time that people are in work in the OECD. This
however, is regarded as an important contributory factor to Denmark’s high level of general welfare and wellbeing.

In line with the European Semester-analysis in 2013, the Partnership Agreement acknowledges that an increased quality and effectiveness in the education and training system and in human capital was necessary in order to have better prospects for the middle and long term.

In addition, like other EU countries, Denmark suffers from a mismatch in labour market skills and competences, with over-supply in declining areas, along with shortages of labour in growing and high value industries. These shortages are especially in the form of engineers and skills for the biotech-pharma industries and the ICT sector. In line with the European Semester-analysis in 2013, the Partnership Agreement acknowledges that higher quality and effectiveness in the education system is needed in order to support innovation and the building of human capital. In addition, more young people need to choose higher education that is directed towards private sector activity.

Another significant perspective set out in the Partnership Agreement is the importance of knowledge, which is key for the productivity and innovation of enterprises. Enterprises that invest in research and development are on average 15% more productive than those which do not. Productivity is also higher in enterprises that work with knowledge institutions.

In order to address these issues through the ESIF, the Danish government decided to place considerable emphasis on strengthening education and training. In fact, 50% of the Cohesion Policy funding available under the growth and jobs objective is dedicated to the ESF.

At the same time, Danish institutional arrangements, especially in the areas of interest in the study, tend to be relatively decentralised and, although there is a single ERDF Operational Programme and a single ESF Operational Programme, there is also a strong regional approach in that Regional Growth Fora – stakeholder representative bodies at a regional level – have responsibility for defining regional strategies, within the overall national framework, and for implementing these regional strategies.

There are therefore regional variations in the picture presented but overall, the intention was to devote 36.5% of the ESF budget to professional education and training or higher education, plus a further 20.07% to inclusion via education and employment, especially through education for young people with special challenges.

At the same time, the other large element in the ESF planned expenditure was ‘Entrepreneurship and job creation’, accounting for 38% of the budget, but this was mainly intended to be expended on soft forms of training and competence development in the form of advice for entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship courses and growth orientated competence development.

Some 42% (€85,488,278) of the Danish ERDF OP is dedicated to Priority Axis ‘Strengthened innovation in SMES. Innovation and knowledge sharing’ and a further 33% (€ 68,002,039) on Priority Axis ‘More growth enterprises. Development and new growth positions’.

The EARDF budget for Denmark at € 629,400,690 (at the time of the Partnership Agreement) is greater than the ERDF and ESF budgets combined. However, most of this is devoted to areas beyond the scope of the study, with only € 16,537,311 (2.6%) devoted to
‘Strengthening research, technological development and innovation’ and € 36,443,408 (5.8%) to ‘Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination’.

Denmark publishes relatively detailed information about the allocation of ERDF and ESF funds to projects. This information includes the name of the project and a description of it, total budget and EU funding, the project leaders and other partners. The information is published on the website of the Danish Business Authority (Erhvervsstyrelsen). The data used in this report were downloaded at the end of January 2018. Details of expenditure commitments of € 84,980,256 for the ERDF and €81,383,069 for the ESF are provided (excluding technical assistance). Targets set out in the Partnership Agreement envisaged spending of just over € 100,000 for each fund by the end of 2017. From this information, with keyword searches, it is possible to identify in broad terms the nature of projects being supported. The figures referred to below are largely derived from this source.

The data available from this source show that commitments on which there was information at the end of 2017 amounted to around 38% of the total available for the ESF Programme over the whole period and around 41% of ERDF Programme.

It is clear that the aggregate figures relate primarily to expenditure on education and training and to a certain extent youth. For the other two areas, it is necessary to examine the information available on specific projects and to generalise.

Within the ESF, commitments on Professional education and training or higher education amounted to just short of 30% of total ESF commitments. Youth education, for young people with special needs, accounts for another 6%.

In addition a further 51% of the commitments were for Entrepreneurship and job creation, most of which involves courses, competence development and other ‘soft’ training in the form of business advice.

Arguably, therefore, only the priorities ‘Increased mobility across borders’ and ‘Inclusion and social enterprises’ do not explicitly involve some form of training, though even here some of the experience gained has similar effects. But, counting these areas as not involving education and training, only around 13% of the committed ESF budget does not contribute to education and training, to some extent.

Furthermore, examination of the detailed description of ERDF projects shows that 40% of commitments by value refer to training or the development of skills and competences and a further 34% refer to the provision of advice. Other terms such as ‘potential development’ are also used.

Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that a large majority of ERDF support involves the development of skills and competences in one way or another and that taken together with the ESF expenditure, human resource development is present in most of the projects supported by ESIF funds in Denmark.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to get a similarly clear picture for culture. Denmark has a legacy of support for culture and the creative sector, especially as part of promoting the experience economy. South Denmark, in particular, has promoted this sector over many years. In the current period, a project on ‘Creativity and Entrepreneurship’, with a budget of €4,773,839 and an EU contribution of € 2,148, 227 is being supported and is contributing currently to the regional smart specialisation strategy.
Otherwise a strong theme in Danish ESIF support is the promotion of design. Projects committed worth € 21,670,984 in EU contributions and € 44,812,484 overall have some design element in them. There are also a number of contributions to the development of a food culture, as the marketing side of foodstuff clusters.

In the past, sport and physical activity too have been supported in Denmark under the Structural Funds, with projects including sport contributions to experience economy developments, the development of spas and fitness centres, coastal developments such as sailing and the organisation of sport festivals. However, the number of projects so far approved in the current period is rather restricted. One relatively small project with an EU contribution of € 62,642 on the island of Bornholm, is entitled ‘Outdoor Signature Experience’ and is aiming to add to outdoor tourism by engaging a range of businesses and other stakeholders. Other projects, such as the Public-Private Innovation pool project in South Denmark, which helps to move innovations from early stages to market launch can help enterprises in the experience economy or those involved in Health and welfare innovation or Sustainable energy, some of which may concern sport enterprises.

There are also a relatively large number of projects that are promoting developments in relation to health and welfare. It is possible that some of these projects have made links with sport scientists of others in the area of sport and physical activity that are working on health and welfare issues.

Overall, it appears that support for sport and physical activity has declined from the already relatively low levels in the preceding programming period.

Denmark is following through its stated intention of engaging with young people, both those who are suffering from disadvantages and those who can benefit from general education and training provision in gaining the skills and competences necessary for an active role as part of the labour force. Taking all the ESF measures, which are partially targeted at young people or which aim to involve them, the commitment figures show a total of € 43,231,921 and an EU contribution of € 20,791,866 – clearly a more substantial contribution than when just taking stated priorities into account. These include projects such as ‘the Future’s Maritime Crafts People’, with a sectoral element, but also ‘Better Professional Education’ that encourages young people to develop business skills.

Among INTERREG programmes, the Germany-Denmark INTERREG V-A Programme is worth mentioning, since it promotes cross-border innovation, sustainable development, and the development of the labour market, employment and training. The programme is designed to promote tourism and more sustainable use of resources and energy in enterprises, but more generally aims to promote product, process and social innovation in key sectors: the environment and clean tech, health, the maritime industry, food industry and mobility and logistics as well as tourism.

Smart specialisation strategies in Denmark are determined largely at a regional level by Growth Fora that bring together the main stakeholders. They usually identify four sectors on which to focus, which in the Capital region, covering Copenhagen and North Zealand has the Cultural & creative industries and Public health & security as two of its priorities. South Denmark has built on earlier work by including the experience economy. North Jutland has both Tourism and the experience economy and the Cultural & creative industries among its priorities. Central Jutland has the Creative sector and ICT & Tourism as part of its priorities, while Zealand (covering most of the island, except for the capital region) is the region with
the least focus on the areas of interest, though Health innovation is one of its priorities, an area where sport and physical activity can make a contribution.

Denmark’s approach to building innovative enterprises is also particularly effective. Over many years, the country has been a leader in cluster development and this approach to promoting growth and innovation is evident in support provided for the creative sector where a number of projects are promoting design clusters in different regions. The strength of this advanced form of economic development is in the multiple activities that are involved in the development of the clusters, including competence development in enterprises, encouraging networking between enterprises and with knowledge institutions, assisting with the development of research projects and support for marketing and internationalisation. This multi-faceted aspect of the approach is also evident in the support given to clusters in the food sector and in the health-welfare sector. One of the consequences of this is that it is not always possible to give a definitive sectoral allocation. Some of the projects supporting food clusters are directed to developments in food production, but there are also elements of the work that concentrate on the marketing side, which include the promotion of the sector as part of the experience economy, with implications for tourism, but also in the form of encouraging a more conscious food culture, with elements that relate to the cultural and creative industries.

3.4.2 France

France was allocated €26.9 billion from the ESIF for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of €454 billion. France’s national contribution for this period totals €8.8 billion.

The most significant of the ESIFs in France is the EARDF, which has invested a total of €11.4 billion for the current programming period. Of this, €4.1 billion is being invested in the competitiveness of SMEs and the agricultural sector, but the rest is largely devoted to environment protection and climate change. The ERDF and ESF invest €8.4 billion and €6.3 billion respectively. The EMFF is much smaller, with an overall investment of €588 million for the 2014-2020 period. The YEI allocated a further €310 million for the period 2014–2015 (European Parliament, 2017). France currently has 89 ESIF-funded programmes, 5 at a national level, 64 at a regional level and 20 Interreg and similar.

Between the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 funding period, there was a transition away from centralised management of the ESIFs towards a more regional approach. This means that the priorities of locally elected regional Presidents have had a much greater influence than in the earlier period, when priorities were mainly decided by the national government. Because of the limited funding available, objectives set for ESIF spending in 2014-2020 were limited to improving economic growth, security and employment. The key priorities were set out in the national Partnership Agreement. These focus on economic development, with money being directed particularly towards training and employment schemes targeted towards NEETS aged 16-25 and older workers. Some funds are managed jointly by the national and regional governments (this is the case, for example, for the YEI, where 70% goes into a national programme and the rest is spent by the regions).

The areas of education and training, culture, sports and youth are primarily supported under the ESF and to some extent under the ERDF. The EAFRD does contain some training aspects, but funding is mainly focused on economic goals and support for innovation.
France has a relatively high unemployment rate (21.7% in 2013), particularly amongst those aged 16-25 (CGET, 2015). There is therefore quite a significant overlap between the areas of youth and education and training. An important focus of spending in 2014-2020 has been on the provision of subsidies for businesses offering short-term youth apprenticeships to provide on the job skills training and improve youth employment.

Direct funding for sport and culture was explicitly ruled out by the national Partnership Agreement. The reason for this decision is not clear; however, feedback from interviews suggests that as sports and culture policy are highly centralised in France, it may have been difficult to incorporate these themes into the decentralised ESIFs. In practice, ESIF funding for sport and culture can mainly be seen in the form of support for the construction of infrastructure such as sports stadiums, libraries and media libraries - or médiathèques. There is also some funding in the shape of subsidies for particular activities undertaken by sports clubs, cultural societies etc.

There is, however, some focus on sport and culture within the smart specialisation strategies, with regard to the intersection between innovation and tourism (CGET, 2015). This can be seen particularly in overseas territories (départements), such as Martinique, Guadeloupe, Mayotte, Guyana and Réunion (CGET, 2015). Tourism in these areas is linked to creative industries, heritage, conservation and digitisation. Furthermore, in the Rhône-Alpes region there is an explicit link between tourism and winter sport (CGET, 2015).

### 3.4.3 Germany

Germany was allocated € 27.9 billion from the ESIF for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Germany’s national contribution for this period totals € 16.8 billion.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 7.0 billion and € 5.1 billion respectively. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), invests € 4.7 billion for the current programming period. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund is € 66.5 million for the 2014-2020 period.

Germany currently has 3 national ESIF-funded Operational Programmes, 44 regional OPs, and 23 Interreg and similar programmes.

The degree to which the four thematic areas contribute to investment priorities in Germany under the ESIF 2014-20 varies by fund. In case of the ERDF, none of the four areas is considered of strategic importance, but many projects falling into the category SME support may have a cultural dimension. In case of the ESF, education and training, and youth, are considered important priorities and as contributing to a successful labour market policy, whereas sport and culture only play a marginal role. The EAFRD and EMFF are allocated only very limited funds in Germany and hence play only a marginal role overall. Overall, the ESIF are implemented through 47 Operational Programmes (OPs) in Germany, mostly at the regional level.

Education and training are largely a regional competence in Germany. Within the ESF, priorities shifted from the previous period when the focus was more on tackling unemployment, whereas now it is on upskilling and integrating marginalised groups into the job market. Lifelong learning plays an increasingly important role reflecting demographic trends in an aging society and there is a measure that operates across all regions that
encourages the adaptation of the workforce, especially of SMEs, to technological change and development.

According to the progress report of 2017 on the Partnership Agreement, the total eligible expenditure on thematic objective 10 ‘(vocational) training and education’ amounted to € 1.74 billion (GEFRA/ifs, 2017).

Cultural policy is largely a regional competence in Germany. Cultural projects are typically linked to SME support or tourism infrastructure. In rural regions, specific support is provided under the ERDF to improve the Internet presence of local cultural offerings. In urban areas, the focus lies on restoration of culturally important structures and funding of the creative sector is seen as supporting urban regeneration. Funding allocated to projects in culture and the creative sector is marginal, however.

Sport only plays a marginal role under ESIF in Germany. The few examples that could be identified tended to support young people, and / or have a tourism dimension, e.g. in the context of promoting hiking or cycling in attractive surroundings, which also implies a sustainability dimension.

The (vocational) training and education of young people and reducing early school-leaving are key priorities for the ESIF in Germany in the 2014-20 period. The training and education of the young generation is mentioned in the Partnership Agreement (European Commission, 2014e), where the integration of young people into the job market and further reduction of youth unemployment as well as improving chances of professional success and social integration are mentioned as key support areas. Action in these areas is also seen as countering the impending shortage of skilled workers in various industries and regions, arising from demographic change in an ageing society. There is thus a strong link to the first thematic area and the ESF’s objective 10 relating to vocational training is of particular relevance. A specific focus is put on marginalised groups such as disabled people or migrants, and young people growing up in households dependent on welfare. Reducing early school leaving and facilitating the transition from training to the first job receive particular attention. A particularly interesting programme at the national level is ‘Berufseinstiegsbegleitung’ (accompanying the transition to the job market) (Bundesregierung Deutschland, 2014) which aims to bring young people into vocational training. Between 2014/15 and 2018/19, around 113,000 young people in 3,000 schools will be supported. Overall, according to the progress report (Bundesregierung Deutschland, 2014), 441,689 out of a total of 708,299 people benefiting from ESF funding up until 31 December 2016 in Germany were under 25 years old.

Another interesting project example combining youth, education and training and sport elements is the ESF project JobFit Interaktiv ‘Sport project Engages Young People’, which supports disadvantaged teenagers during the transition from school to vocation through mentoring and coaching in sports clubs (total budget: € 281,500; ESF contribution: € 103,700). Between 2009 and 2016, 461 participants (out of a total of 2,400) succeeded in finding a traineeship.

In contrast, youth plays only a very marginal role in the ERDF in Germany.

Across the four areas, a couple of projects were identified with a cross-border dimension, either in a local context e.g. in case of the German-Czech border or concerning projects with several countries around Europe participating.
A few smart specialisation strategies at the national and regional levels were also identified with relevant elements. These appear to be particularly effective in helping disadvantaged areas or areas that have undergone economic transformation (e.g. deindustrialisation) when combined with a focus on developing the cultural and creative sector. This has been undertaken successfully, in one instance, in co-operation with the European Capital of Culture programme, as explained below.

Apart from education and training, the three other areas of interest do not feature as explicit priorities in Germany under the ESIFs. Consequently, it is difficult to collect data on the main impacts. Moreover, both the national authorities for the ERDF and the ESF confirmed that there is no central monitoring of the implementation of regional OPs at a national level in Germany. Impact on the job market can be expected to be fairly limited, however, given that much larger sums are spent on this as part of national programmes than through the ESIF. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in case of education and training, the biggest impact is expected to be in reducing early school leaving, which in turn could help secure skilled personnel and competitiveness. In the case of youth, the progress report on the Partnership Agreement for Germany quotes some figures that are indicative of a positive development for young people in Germany (Bundesregierung Deutschland, 2014). These concern the high employment rate (79.1% in 2016 vs a goal of 77%) and the fact that Germany has the lowest youth unemployment rate in the EU, and the reduced rate of early school leavers which is now lower than the benchmark (9.8% vs 10%). No impacts could be discerned for sport and culture.

3.4.4 Ireland

Ireland was allocated € 3.4 billion from the ESIF for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Ireland’s national contribution for this period totals € 2.8 billion.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 411 million and € 476 million respectively. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), is the largest fund - € 2.2 billion for the current programming period, though this is mainly invested in addressing environmental protection and climate change. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) is much smaller, with an overall investment of € 148 million for the 2014-2020 period. The Youth Employment Initiative has € 136 million.

Ireland currently has 3 national ESIF-funded Operational Programmes, 2 regional OPs and 10 Interreg and similar programmes.

As is the case for all Member States, a Partnership Agreement (PA) covering the period 2014-2020 sets out the policy context within which the ESIF are employed in Ireland.

Irish ESIF investments are being implemented through two regional ERDF Operational Programmes and one ESF OP on Employability, Inclusion and Learning.

The priorities have been selected based on the Europe 2020 Strategy, the National Reform Programme, Ireland’s Medium Term Economic Strategy, needs analyses, ex-ante evaluations, and public consultation processes. Priorities focus on promoting jobs and growth with the ESI funding set to complement national investments in line with national and EU priorities.
The following development needs are supported through the ESIF:

1. Employment
2. Availability of Next Generation Broadband
3. Poverty and social inclusion
4. Research and development
5. Climate change and resource efficiency
6. Education

In terms of implementation, Cohesion policy is split between three government departments in Ireland. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform coordinated the overall preparation of the Partnership Agreement, while the Department of Public expenditure and Reform is responsible for EU Cohesion Policy and the ESIF, as well as specific responsibility for the ERDF. The Department of Education & Skills has primary responsibility for the ESF, which is implemented through the Employability, Inclusion and Learning OP.

In our assessment, there is some, but limited mention of the relevant areas in the OPs. Clearly, the ESF OP refers directly to education and training and to lifelong learning. Education and training are generally described as tools for upskilling workers and creating employment opportunities for the population at large, but often in particular young people. Crosscutting areas such as culture and tourism are clearly eligible for support as part of a drive towards growth and employment creation, but not a prominent feature in its own right (e.g. the creative or tourism sectors are not singled out for support). In our assessment, sport is not mentioned as a potential area of investment.

But overall it appears that there are few concrete references to culture, tourism, and sport in the Partnership Agreement and Irish OPs. However it may be worth noting that in the last few years – i.e. after the publication of the current ESIF documents – a number of highly relevant national strategies have been published in the areas of culture, tourism and youth. The content of these strategies point to a potential increasing interest among Irish stakeholders to enhance the role of culture and tourism in particular in the Irish economy. Should this interest persist, it may well spill over into the next ESIF programming period.

The study team has not been able to assess the current programming period due to lack of data. However, relevant projects funded during 2007-2013 have been identified, in particular under the theme Culture and Tourism, but education and training and youth projects were also found. No sport project examples were found in Ireland, except projects supported under Interreg or the Peace Initiative.

In our assessment the most effective interventions have been those funded under Culture and Tourism, as this combination of objectives seems to be particularly relevant to the Irish context. However, the two projects listed under education and training and Youth could equally be put forward as interesting interventions, albeit standalone measures.

Not very many projects have been funded in Ireland that are relevant to the study scope, however if one looks at the budgets involved for the activities that have been funded, it should be noted that the sums invested are fairly substantial.
In terms of culture and tourism, the key objectives of the activities have been to create jobs in the wider tourism industry however at least one infrastructure project has also been supported. Upskilling and job creation also appear to be the main impacts from the education and training projects found.

Ireland also makes reference to its Youth Guarantee in its Partnership Agreement. This also mentions the Pathways to Work initiative which has specific targets for increasing the number of people who are long-term unemployed moving into employment, many of which are young people. The Partnership Agreement contains a whole chapter devoted to youth unemployment, presenting a range of measures from education and training programmes over quotas for young people in employment schemes to improving eligibility conditions of support schemes to facilitate access by young people and introducing new options in the area of youth entrepreneurship and international work experience and training. As in Germany, Ireland also places an emphasis on reducing and supporting early school leavers.

3.4.5 Italy

Italy was allocated € 44.7 billion from the ESIF for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Italy's national contribution for this period totals € 31.5 billion.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 12.6 billion and € 7.5 billion respectively. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), is € 10.5 billion for the current programming period, of which € 4.4 billion is invested in the competitiveness of SMEs and the agricultural sector. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund is smaller, with an overall investment of € 441 million for the 2014-2020 period and the Youth Employment Initiative receives € 467 million.

Italy currently has 15 national ESIF-funded Operational Programmes, including one addressing culture and another Youth Employment. It has 60 regional OPs and 17 Interreg and similar programmes.

The ESIF in Italy appear to have provided a great deal of support to Youth, Education and Training, Sport and Physical Activities and Culture. ESIF-funded initiatives in these four areas addressed key Italian issues such as the low entrepreneurial capacity of Southern Italy, the high percentage of early school leaving in the Southern regions, the high level of youth unemployment in the country, the difficult transition from school to the job market, and the revitalisation of urban infrastructure in the South. Additionally, initiatives within these four areas allowed funding to be used that would have been otherwise returned to the EU institutions: this is a success in itself considering Italy’s very low use of EU funds for the period 2014-2020. Analysis of the developments mentioned above provide a strong case for the role of Youth, Education and Training, Sport and Physical Activities and Culture and the Creative Sector.

Education and Training was by far the most successful area in terms of the effective use of ESIF funding. The Italian Managing Authority in charge of implementing EU-funds for Education and Training, namely the Ministry of Education, University and Research has at its disposal an EU-funded budget of € 1,615 billion (European Commission 2014).

Educational projects co-funded by ESIF have had a considerable impact on: 1) improving school premises and infrastructure, 2) reducing early school leaving, 3) contributing to the enhancement of equal access to lifelong learning, and 4) facilitating the transition from
education to work. This is evident with the “Dritti a Scuola” (Rights to School) project, and the “Alternanza Scuola Lavoro” (Alternating School and Work) project.

The “Alternanza Scuola Lavoro” programme promotes a series of initiatives aiming to strengthen the connection between school and work. The programme is aimed at high school students and funds internships, work experience and professional courses to facilitate students’ access to the job market. In particular, the programme links students with SMEs contributing to local economic development.

Three beneficiaries of this programme (two directors of SMEs and an 18-year-old student) were interviewed. SMEs generally had a good experience in taking part in the programme, even though one respondent highlighted that some teachers did not fully understand the reasons behind SME participation. Both SME respondents thought that the ESIF should support more initiatives like these, as they represent the only partnerships in the South which involve schools and SMEs. The programme was defined as the “only opportunity to create links between the school context and the job market”. Additionally, these initiatives were considered crucial to spur the generational turnover necessary in a great deal of commercial and industrial sectors in Italy. Finally, both SME respondents argue that a greater support from local and regional authorities would be helpful in increasing the effectiveness of the programme.

The programme had the potential to embrace three out of four areas of the CULT committee: youth, education and training and culture. An interviewee worked in museums and as a tour guide both locally in the South of Italy and in London. She received training on curatorial practices, project management, history and art history. Subsequently, she put into practice what she learned by taking tourists on tours of the local cultural heritage sites or by cataloguing artefacts in local museums. The respondent said that the programme helped her experience what it is like to work and provided her with valuable insights into the cultural sector. She now feels she is more prepared to gain work experience.

As shown by the “Alternanza scuola lavoro” programme, education and training constitutes a gateway to the remaining two and potentially three areas. Increased ESIF funding for education can indirectly benefit sports, youth, and culture as well.

Italy has an OP dedicated to culture in the current period – the Culture and Development Operational Programme, which has a budget of € 368,200,000 for the period 2014-2020.

**Table 3.7: Culture and Development Operational Programme – Financial Allocation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Axes</th>
<th>ERDF</th>
<th>National Contribution</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening cultural heritage (TO 6)</td>
<td>270,170,418</td>
<td>90,056,806</td>
<td>360,227,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation of territorial development potential, related to culture (TO 3)</td>
<td>85,510,782</td>
<td>28,503,594</td>
<td>114,014,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>12,518,800</td>
<td>4,172,934</td>
<td>16,691,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>368,200,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>122,733,334</strong></td>
<td><strong>490,933,334</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Culture and Development Operational Programme (2017)

The impact of the ESIF-funded initiatives concerning art and, in particular, the effect of the Operational Programme “Culture and development” has been very positive.
As a result of the restorations financed by the ESIF, 560,000 more tourists are expected to visit Italian heritage sites in the 2014-2020 period, bringing the average total number of yearly visitors to over 4 million. Restoration works have covered a surface of over 277,000 square meters.

Regarding the beneficiaries of ESIF- support, in Sicily over € 8 million has been allocated to the historical town of Caltagirone, to open the National Ceramics Museum in March 2021. Furthermore € 5 million were destined for the revitalisation of the historic Tobacco factory in Catania, which is projected to become a cultural hub of the city. These examples show the impact that ESIF-funded cultural initiatives have on the revitalisation of both urban (Catania) and rural (Caltagirone) areas in Sicily, one of the least developed regions in the country.

The OP “Culture and Development” and the initiatives “Culture creates” appeared to have had a positive impact on Italian SMEs operating in the cultural sectors. The latter programme supports entrepreneurial initiatives in the cultural sector of the six least developed Italian regions: Sicily, Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Basilicata. It provides support in the form of interest-free loans for start-ups in the cultural sector. 118 SMEs received financial support worth over € 18 million; this increased employment in the sector, as 283 new workers were hired (Invitalia 2018). As a result of the programme, private investment in the cultural sector is projected to increase from 6.9% to 7.1% of the regional GDP in these regions.

These examples illustrate the cultural contribution to the main objectives of the ESIF, including regional development, social cohesion, local growth and innovation.

Sport projects co-funded by ESIF have been successful in improving sport infrastructure and contributing to urban regeneration. A great deal of these projects has been carried out in the Mezzogiorno, in line with the purpose of the Cohesion Fund, e.g. the restoration of the multi-sport centre in Priolo Gargallo, Sicily and Lamezia Terme, Calabria. On some occasions, i.e. the restructurings of sport facilities for the 2019 Universiade in Naples, sport projects have allowed citizens to utilise European funds which would have been returned otherwise (Universiade2019.it, ND). This is a success for a country which has been slow to take up the 2014-2020 regional development funds allocated. (The Economist 2017). Investing in the city’s infrastructure will have in turn a direct impact on tourism and will stimulate further economic growth. Interestingly, there seems to be a divergence between high level policies and experiences on the ground with regards to sport. Sport in fact plays a much more prominent role than simply “supporting educational activities” as outlined in the OPs, especially in terms of urban regeneration but also in relation to social cohesion.

Italy has the highest share of NEETs - young people not in education, employment or training - in the EU (40%). The Partnership Agreement (European Commission, 2014b) highlights tackling youth unemployment as an important priority, with funding to improve education and training systems seen as the most important measure contributing to this. There is a specific OP – ‘Youth Employment’ dedicated to tackling this issue.

One of the most successful national measures is the ‘Smart & Start’ programme providing interest-free loans intended to cover up to 70% of the initial investment for innovative and research-driven start-ups. The coverage is increased to 80% when the beneficiaries are young people. Another successful programme is ‘Dritti a Scuola’ (Rights to School) in the Southern region of Apulia and supported by the ESF. The programme supported 200,225 children over the last seven years in skills development, leading to a reduction in early school
leaving from 24.5% in 2009 to 16.9% in 2015. The programme was awarded the European Commission’s 2015 RegioStars Award in the category “Inclusive growth”.

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) also has a major role in Italy and its funding has been utilised at the national level to implement the Youth Employment OP. The Programme promotes the introduction of the Youth Guarantee, which helps youths not in employment, education, or training to re-integrate into education, employment or training within 4 months. This measure was financed with a total of over €1.3 billion, € 500 million of which comes from the ESIF.

The YEI and Youth Guarantee measure appear to have been successful, contributing to lowering the level of youth unemployment in the country at the end of 2017. The youth unemployment rate in December 2017 was 34.7%, 2.5% less than it was in October 2016. The Youth Guarantee programme was characterised by a massive enrolment: currently 1,400,232 young people are part of the initiative. Although the Youth Guarantee Initiative has been successful in starting to tackle youth unemployment, it is unfortunate that it has not been systematically supported by other ESIF programmes and extended to addressing other demographic problems in Italy, such as an ageing population, the brain drain and the need to stimulate the return of young people to Italy.

3.4.6 Poland

Poland was allocated € 86.1 billion from the ESIF for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Poland’s national contribution for this period totals € 18.8 billion.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 40.2 billion and € 12.9 billion respectively. There is also a € 23.2 billion Cohesion Fund contribution, mainly invested in transport and energy infrastructures and the low-carbon economy. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), is € 8.7 billion for the current programming period, of which € 3.9 billion is invested in the competitiveness of SMEs and the agricultural sector. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund is smaller, with an overall investment of € 531 million for the 2014-2020 period and the Youth Employment Initiative receives € 537 million.

Poland currently has 6 national ESIF-funded Operational Programmes. It has 17 regional OPs and 13 Interreg and similar programmes.

The ‘Strategy for Responsible Development up-to 2020 (with perspective until 2030)’, which was adopted by the Prime Minister’s Council on 14th February 2017, provides a strategic framework for economic development. It has three specific objectives, including one entitled ‘Socially sensitive and territorially balanced development’. The Strategy also highlights the importance of ‘Human and social capital’ development and the development of high competences and qualifications that are well-adjusted to the challenges of a changing economy. There is also reference to strengthening the role of culture in economic development and social cohesion.

The Partnership Agreement between Poland and the European Commission, signed in 2014 and amended in 2017, put a strong emphasis on culture and education and, to a more limited extent, tourism (an area partially related to sport). Support for culture is mainly for cultural infrastructure and the renovation of national monuments such as churches or castles and is also linked with the strengthening of Poland’s potential as a tourism destination. A further
objective is support for increasing the participation of Polish citizens in culture, in co-
ordination with the “Creative Europe” actions.

The projects supporting culture were also strongly represented in 2007-2013 EU
programming period, both within the national and the regional Operational Programmes and
are widely perceived as having been very successful.

The key directions within the area of education are linked to the goals of the Europe 2020
strategy, although Poland has a higher share of the population with higher education than
the EU average, as well as a much lower share of persons leaving education early. The
Partnership Agreement mentions continuing support for the development of vocational
schools and their stronger cooperation with the business sector.

Support for young people is coordinated with the Youth Employment Initiative actions, which
in the case of Poland have been extended to people up to the age of 30. The support for
education and training within Thematic Objective 10 will mainly be concentrated on better
relations between the education sector and the labour market, support for groups with special
needs and increasing the quality and innovativeness of the education provided.

Sport as an area of Structural Funds intervention is totally absent from the Partnership
Agreement. It is only mentioned in the context of the Erasmus+ programme. In practice,
however, certain sport-based projects are in fact implemented.

Information on projects is readily available at a national level in Poland, including information
on projects supported. Analysis of this information has shown commitments for projects in
the four areas:

- Education: PLN 14,576.9 million (€ 3,470.6 million)
- Culture: PLN 5,031.6 million (€1,198 million)
- Sport: PLN 1,875.1 million (€ 446.5 million)
- Youth: PLN 6,675.2 million (€ 1,589 million)

In relation to education and training, projects, there is a heavy emphasis on enhancing equal
access to lifelong learning and promoting access to tertiary and equivalent education, but
also promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination.

In addition there are a number of projects aiming to enhance the institutional capacity of
public authorities.

For culture and the creative sector, as already indicated, development or preservation of
cultural facilities and cultural heritage is a major objective along with contributing to urban
development and regeneration, but there is also a lot of direct support to cultural
organisations and linking cultural and creative actions with the development of tourism or
the experience economy.

In the sport-based projects, contributions to Improving the physical environment is a major
theme, but also using sport and physical activities as a means of promotion and marketing.
Using the strengths of sport as a means of social engagement is also important, as is
addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to happiness and well-being.
In Poland, youth is not a specific intervention objective under the ESIF but there are two relevant elements in interventions under the cohesion policy programmes:

- Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (1,616 projects)
- Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education (2,640 projects)

Overall, support for youth in Poland takes place both at the regional and national level and is mainly related to labour market issues, reducing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education. Skills development focuses on digital and STEM skills.

One of the areas of smart specialisation on the national level is the creative industries i.e. specialisation no. 16 entitled “Intelligent creative technologies” (this specialisation directly includes the ‘Culture and creative sector’). At the regional level, each of the Polish regions has adopted its own regional smart specialisation strategy. In the case of 11 regions (out of 16) there are smart specialisation strategies covering the issues of: (i) the development of creative industries (in 3 regions), (ii) the quality of life (4 regions) and (iii) tourism and sport, including medical tourism services (4 regions).

### 3.4.7 Slovakia

Slovakia has been allocated € 15.3 billion from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Slovakia’s national contribution for this period totals € 4.3 billion.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 2.4 billion and € 416 million respectively. There is also a € 842 million Cohesion Fund contribution, mainly invested in transport and energy infrastructures and environmental protection and resource efficiency. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), is € 540 million for the current programming period, of which € 186 million is invested in the competitiveness of SMEs and the agricultural sector. The Youth Employment Initiative receives € 22 million.

Slovakia has 8 national programmes and 10 Interreg and similar programmes.

There are two national programmes of particular interest. One of them is directly related to the areas of education and training, culture, sports and youth: The Operational Programme (OP) of Human Resources, financed by the ESF, ERDF and YEI. The financial allocation from the EU for this OP is € 2.21 billion. The other Fund also related to our areas of interest is the Integrated Regional Programme ERDF that receives a financial allocation of € 1.73 billion.

The OP Human Resources allocates € 550 million to educational and vocational training; the Integrated Regional Programme ERDF allocates € 323 million.

The ERDF supports Thematic Objective 10: investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure with a series of interventions, focused on the provision of facilities in kindergartens, libraries, sport areas for children, vocational schools, etc.

The ESF supports five different Investment priorities for Thematic Objectives 8 (promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility) and 10 with several interventions such as support programmes for employment for people at risk of social...
exclusion; promotion of innovative and alternative forms of education and teaching methods; programmes for prevention of school failure; counselling for students with special needs.

Youth unemployment is identified as an important priority in the Partnership Agreement (European Commission, 2014c), which identifies improving the education and training systems as the most important measure contributing to this. The Slovak Government sets nine priorities in its national strategy for youth 2014-20: education, employment, creativity and entrepreneurship, participation, health and healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, volunteering, youth and the world (global issues), and youth work. A large number of initiatives are focused on sport for youth, including support for sports clubs in schools, improvement of sports infrastructure at universities, and implementation of a system of care for talented young athletes.

The RIS3 of the Slovak Republic identifies six measures related to education and training and the creative sector: the stimulation of knowledge-oriented and creative industry; improving the quality of secondary education; improving the quality of higher education; improving business involvement in education; improving the quality of life-long learning and increasing emphasis on education in fields relevant to the RIS3 priority areas.

3.4.8 Spain

Spain has been allocated € 39.8 billion of the ESIF support for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of € 454 billion. In addition, Spain's national contribution for this period totals € 16.3 billion.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) invest € 20.6 billion and € 7.1 billion respectively. The European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), is € 8.3 billion for the current programming period, of which € 2.7 billion is invested in the competitiveness of SMEs and the agricultural sector. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund has an overall investment of € 1.2 billion for the 2014-2020 period, of which € 590 million is invested in the competitiveness of SMEs and the fishery and aquaculture sector. The Youth Employment Initiative receives € 2.7 billion.

Spain has 8 national Operational Programmes, including one for Youth Employment and another for Social Inclusion and the Social Economy. It has 55 regional OPs, plus 10 Interreg and similar programmes.

Some of the main priorities of the ESIF in Spain are to increase employability, with a specific focus on young people and to improve education and training policies.

Spain has 63 national and regional OPs. The areas of education and training, culture, sport and youth are primarily supported under the ESF.

One of the national OPs very much related to the four areas of interest, is the Operational Programme of Employment, Training and Education. The financial allocation for this OP is € 3,012,724,036. About 50% of this amount is focused on access to employment, improvement of the quality of employment and promotion of the sustainability of employment. About 36% of the resources of the OP are devoted to education, training and professional training. One of the main priorities for the Spanish national policies is to increase

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15 POEFE: Programa Operativo Empleo, Formación y Educación.
the employment rate\textsuperscript{16} up to 74\% in 2020, and to achieve this objective, the \textsl{POEFE} prioritises the education and training areas, and more specifically the improvement of the professional training system and decreasing early school dropout.

In general most of the interventions of the ESF in Spain are addressed to young people, given that Spain has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the EU - 37.9\% in early 2018 (Eurostat, 2018), and this is reflected in the Partnership Agreement. There is an ESF OP dedicated to Youth Employment\textsuperscript{17} which works together with the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and other interventions based on ESF funding targeting young people. Spain’s Partnership Agreement also refers to its Youth Guarantee as a significant element in tackling the issue. The Youth Employment OP and YEI together allocate € 2.7 billion to finance direct interventions for young people.

Promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship among young people is also an important theme and as well as ERDF support in this area, the complementary role of Erasmus+ in promoting mobility of young people for education purposes has also been highlighted. Some positive impact has also been identified under investment priority 10.1 of the ESIF, which is focused on prevention and reduction of early school leaving under the National OP Employment, Training and Education.

In the areas of sport, culture and the creative sector, there are 17 Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation. About 13 regions include the four areas of interest among the priorities of their strategies.

\textbf{3.4.9 Overview of national level developments}

The summaries of the situation at national level presented above and the more detailed country reports presented in the annex paint a picture of considerable variety across the countries considered. This is partially by design, since the Member States examined were selected to be as representative as possible of the differing situations across the EU, but there are additional considerations, notably the differing priorities identified by the national authorities.

The following table provides an overview of some of the key information reported.

\textsuperscript{16} The employment rate in 2013 was 58.6\% (63.4\% men; 53.8\% women). The EU objective 2020 for Spain places the employment rate at 74\%.

\textsuperscript{17} POEJ: Programa Operativo de Empleo Juvenil.
### Table 3.8: Key ESIF features at national level 2014-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member State</th>
<th>ESIF EU Allocation</th>
<th>National Contribution</th>
<th>ERDF OPs (EU)</th>
<th>ESF OPs (EU)</th>
<th>OPs Nos. National/regional/Interreg etc.</th>
<th>Dedicated Programmes</th>
<th>Profile of actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Education &amp; training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>€1.5 bn</td>
<td>€717 mn</td>
<td>€193 mn</td>
<td>€198 mn</td>
<td>4/0/9</td>
<td>Educational and Entrepreneurial Growth</td>
<td>*****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>€26.9 bn</td>
<td>€8.8 bn</td>
<td>€8.4 bn</td>
<td>€6.3 bn</td>
<td>5/64/20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>€27.9 bn</td>
<td>€16.8 bn</td>
<td>€7.0 bn</td>
<td>€5.1 bn</td>
<td>3/44/23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>€3.4 bn</td>
<td>€2.8 bn</td>
<td>€411 mn</td>
<td>€476 mn</td>
<td>3/2/10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>€44.7 bn</td>
<td>€31.5 bn</td>
<td>€12.6 bn</td>
<td>€7.5 bn</td>
<td>15/60/17</td>
<td>Culture Youth Employment</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>€86.1 bn</td>
<td>€18.8 bn</td>
<td>€40.2 bn</td>
<td>€12.9 bn</td>
<td>6/17/13</td>
<td>Culture emphasised in PA</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>€15.3 bn</td>
<td>€4.3 bn</td>
<td>€2.4 bn</td>
<td>€416 mn</td>
<td>8/0/10</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>€39.8 bn</td>
<td>€16.3 bn</td>
<td>€20.6 bn</td>
<td>€7.1 bn</td>
<td>8/55/10</td>
<td>Youth Employment</td>
<td>****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* ***** very high profile
* **** high profile
* *** medium profile
* ** low profile
* * little or no profile

**Source:** CSES and [https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/countries](https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/countries)
It can be seen more clearly in this table that there is a considerable variation in the overall EU ESIF contribution from €86.1 billion in the case of Poland to €1.5 billion for Denmark, but also in the distribution between funds within the ESIF. In a number of cases there are large European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF) elements in the overall funding, though as has been seen in the separate country sections, these funds are mainly dedicated to areas largely outside of the scope of the study, such as preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency. This means that the best indications of budgets that might potentially be used for the areas of interest are given by the budgets for the ERDF OPs and the ESF OPs. Again, there are some big variations here, but also differences in the relative emphasis on these two funds, with Denmark being the only country devoting more to ESF than to ERDF, reflecting the emphasis on education and training in that country.

The differences in the numbers of Operational Programmes at national and regional level largely reflect the size of the country, but also indicate greater variation in the design of programmes in some Member States. There is only one country (Italy), where there is a dedicated OP for culture, though this theme is also stressed in Poland. Sport has the lowest profile. There are dedicated Youth Employment OPs in Italy and Spain and the Youth Employment Initiative is a feature in six of the countries. With education and training, however, it is difficult to capture the differences in emphasis in this way. A good part of the ESF allocation in all Member States will be used for supporting education and training in one form or another and often a good part of the ERDF allocation too. Member States, such as Denmark that want to put a particular emphasis on this theme, can make reference to it in the title of their ESF OP, but they are unlikely to have a separate OP specifically dedicated to education and training, since it is so important within the ESF OP(s) anyway. It is interesting, however, that Slovakia has a Human Resources OP.

An overall assessment is also made of the profile of each of the four areas within the programmes of the Member States considered. It can be seen that education and training have a high profile in all Member States, though this is to be expected from the Thematic Objectives set for the ESIF. It does not mean, however, that this area could not have an even higher profile. Culture varies with a considerable presence in Italy and Poland, but rather less elsewhere, while sport has a low profile in all countries considered. Measures relating to youth are relatively extensive in all Member States, but especially in Italy and Spain.

Further comments on cross-cutting elements of the country analysis are made in the remaining sections of this chapter.

### 3.5 Smart Specialisation

One cross-cutting theme that has emerged as an element of the current ESIF that deserves particular attention is smart specialisation. This is principally because smart specialisation requires the selection of specific sectors as part of a regional innovation strategy and consideration of the developments here gives a good insight into how the four areas of interest are being integrated into processes that are boosting the innovative capacity of regions across the EU.

With smart specialisation regional and national administrations identify activities on which to concentrate investments for knowledge-intensive growth. In a nutshell, the purpose of smart specialisation is to build competitive advantage by developing and matching the strengths of research and innovation to business needs in order to address emerging opportunities and market developments in a coherent manner, while avoiding duplication and fragmentation of efforts. They are embedded in national research and innovation
As already mentioned, the ESIF Common Provisions Regulation sets out an ex-ante conditionality on smart specialisation. Member States that include investment priorities relating to the First Thematic Objective on innovation must put in place national or regional smart specialisation strategies that are based on a sound analysis, in order to concentrate resources on the most promising research and innovation priorities. Such strategies also need to give consideration to how they would stimulate RTD investment and need to be accompanied by a monitoring mechanism. Moreover, their design process should involve national or regional managing authorities and a wide range of stakeholders such as universities and other higher education institutions, industry and social partners. Smart specialisation strategies need to include both ‘upstream actions’ preparing regional innovators to participate in Horizon 2020 through capacity-building, and ‘downstream actions’ exploiting and diffusing research and innovation results into the market.

Smart specialisation strategies have been developed as part of relevant Operational Programmes (mostly for the ERDF) to pursue the first Thematic Objective of the ESIFs in the 2014–20 period: Strengthening research, technological development and innovation. The idea was that such a strategy should be grounded in the real competitive advantages, knowledge endowment and entrepreneurial opportunities of a region and not necessarily on the high-profile ‘modern’ sectors that some regions in the past had unrealistically sought to develop. It is not feasible, for instance, to develop thriving biotechnology specialisation in all regions of Europe. Furthermore, regions were encouraged to develop their smart specialisation strategies on the basis of an open process of discovery, to which a wide range of regional actors would be expected to make a contribution.

Support for this process was provided through a dedicated web site, the smart specialisation platform. On the smart specialisation platform’s website, there is a tool providing information on relevant strategies and projects across Europe, although the information presented depends on the active co-operation of the regions concerned. The site does show, however, that many regional specialisation strategies have been set up and are under implementation. Applying the relevant filters in the tool returns 57 results of regional smart specialisation strategies. The strategies thus identified are discussed below, organised by thematic area, and along with results from some wider research on smart specialisation priorities at European, national and regional levels.

**3.5.1 Education and training**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are a key partner for the Smart Specialisation Platform and provide a link to this study’s thematic area ‘Education and training’. The smart specialisation project “Higher Education for Smart Specialisation (HESS)”\(^{18}\) tries to build innovation capabilities by strengthening the role of higher education institutions in regional partnerships and promotes their integration with research, innovation and regional development, particularly in the use of the ESIFs. The higher education institutions are expected to help analyse how public funds can be used strategically to better implement smart specialisation on a regional level. Two pilot regions were selected in Spain and Romania, and the project will soon be expanded to Bulgaria and Italy.

The RIS3 strategy for Slovakia identifies six measures related to education and training and the creative sector: the stimulation of knowledge oriented and creative industry, improving the quality of secondary education, improving the quality of higher education, improving

business involvement in education, improving the quality of life-long learning and increasing emphasis on education in fields relevant to the RIS3 priority areas.

The Spanish region of Murcia puts education, the development of human resources, and knowledge transfer at the centre of its research and innovation smart specialisation strategy RIS3MUR. This is accompanied with support for knowledge-intensive enterprises, integration of the region into the global economy, and network-building (Región de Murcia, 2014). The Balearic Islands have developed a tourism specialisation strategy emphasising the importance of developing human capabilities to carry out high-added-value work and be competitive in the international tourism sector (GOIB, 2017). The region of Valencia includes in its strategy (Generalitat Valenciana, 2018) measures promoting education of entrepreneurs on leadership, and risk-taking, but also support to PhD students in order to improve the qualification level of local enterprises.

In France, the department Réunion developed a strategy focusing on the digital economy, including e-health, e-tourism and experience-based tourism, and e-learning, and linked this to the healthcare, energy, and environmental sectors. The region Provence-Alpes-Cote d’Azur also includes training of craftsmen and plumbers on new products in its strategy (Région Provence-Alpes-Cote D’Azur, 2014).

3.5.2 Culture and the creative sector

DG EAC published a handbook on how cultural and creative industries (CCIs) contribute to economic transformation through smart specialisation (Working group of EU Member States on Cultural and Creative Industries, 2012). This describes how the ESIFs and other public funds can be used to foster the potential of culture for local, regional and national development. It points to several examples of successful CCI strategies, i.a. in Austria, Finland, the Polish region Silesia, Spain and Sweden.

The handbook also mentions the CREA.RE19 project which has now come to an end and which sought to understand better how cultural and creative industries can be embedded in regional policies for economic and social development. The project involved 12 local and regional authorities from 10 different EU countries. The final report (Creative Regions, 2013) includes examples and recommendations on how to make full use of CCI. Thus, the report recommends integrating CCI into EU policy agendas and links this with the digital economy agenda. It also recommends the collection of statistical data to monitor regional and national performance and to prove the economic value of CCI. CCI could also be integrated in the project appraisal process for relevant EU funding programmes. At a regional and national level, the report recommends the creation of platforms for networking, setting up creative policy labs, and integrating CCI into regional development strategies, explicitly including support for creative sectors in programming. Another element emphasised is support for training and continuous professional development, and involvement of higher education institutions, once again demonstrating the potential for synergy effects between some of the four thematic study areas.

When looking at the potential of culture and the creative sector for social and economic development, the tourism and experience-based industries are often highlighted. The concept of destination management and the aim of generating positive cycles of development through extending the season and diversifying the tourism offer all form part of the strategy developed by the Commission and the Member States since the publication of the

19 http://www.crea-re.eu/
Commission’s Communication “Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe” (European Commission, 2010b).

A Thematic Platform on Digitalisation and Safety for Tourism20 has been set up at a European level following the smart specialisation approach. The main objective of this thematic area is to help to strengthen tourism industries in the EU, especially in tourism digitalisation and tourism safety. This includes networking among businesses, authorities, associations and educational institutions on a local level. Activities are limited to a few EU Member States, however, namely Finland, Italy, Spain and Slovenia.

In a few countries and regions, several regional smart specialisation strategies with an explicit focus on developing the cultural and creative sectors could be identified:

In Catalonia in Spain (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2018), groups of enterprises and stakeholders come together in research and innovation communities as part of a smart specialisation strategy. In the 2015-17 period, at least one such community funded by the ERDF operated in the ‘cultural and experience-based industries’. In Scotland in the UK, creative industries are an important element and in Bulgaria there is a theme of new technologies in the creative and re-creative industries. Equally there are a number of references to the experience economy in Denmark, for example in South Denmark and in North Jutland, and in Catalonia, with its focus on cultural and experience-based industries.

In North Rhine Westphalia in Germany, the Smart Specialisation strategy includes a focus on media and the creative industries, in particular motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities and also programming and broadcasting activities. (Nordrhein Westfalen, 2014)

Media and creative industry also feature in the smart specialisation and innovation strategies of the German states of Berlin, Brandenburg, and Bremen. Berlin’s strategy includes a reference to networking platforms (Berlin Web Week, Berlin Fashion Week, Berlin Art Week), games and edutainment, innovation labs and crowdfunding. In Hamburg, smart specialisation focuses on the creative society, covering architecture, visual arts, performing arts, design, film, literature, music, print media, radio broadcasting, software and games and advertisement.

The creative industry is also one of the areas identified by RIS3 in Slovakia as a prospective area of specialisation. The development trends in this area are the implementation of new technologies allowing the transmission, processing and storage of data; and the use of smart technologies for the intelligent management of smart products consumption.

### 3.5.3 Sport

There is a Thematic Platform Sport21 following the smart specialisation approach. This aims to support EU regions committed to generating a pipeline of business investment projects in the sport sector. This initiative acknowledges the link between sports and tourism, health and transport. This platform is also limited to a few regions, namely in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Netherlands and Spain.

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ClusSport\textsuperscript{22} is an interregional partnership coordinated by the Finnish region of Lapland and with regions in six countries cooperating. The initiative aims to develop the sport clusters at the EU level and is analysing the links between sport and other regional priorities, such as tourism and health, as well as the elements that make for a successful sport-based strategy.

A number of regions have included sport as a theme in their smart specialisation strategy or have significant sport elements in what they are proposing. Once again, this is often linked to tourism.

In Sweden, in the county of Jämtland, a smart specialisation strategy has focused on research and business development in tourism, sport and outdoor activities, building on world class sport events and arenas, internationally leading research environments, cutting edge product development and some of the world’s most reputable brands in the outdoor industry.

There are similar developments, for instance in the Rhône-Alpes region in France, with its focus on sport, safety and infrastructure in the Alps, and in the autonomous province of Bolzano in Italy where outdoor sport activities figure prominently.

Elsewhere sport is a significant element in broader strategies involving tourism or other related sectors. In Spain, the Balearic Islands have an important sport tourism element in their overall smart specialisation strategy based on tourism, while in Cantabria (Spain) there is a tourism focus supported by ICT services applied to a range of topical developments based on strengths in the natural environment, gastronomy, culture history and sport.

In Kainuu in Finland, there is a theme of activity tourism, a combination of sport, exercise, health and tourism, along with the encouragement of health and well-being, based on activity tourism and innovations in nutrition, health and sport & fitness.

In Portugal, there is a theme of coastal tourism, exploiting culture, sport and leisure elements of this theme. Similarly, in the the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship of north east Poland, the water economy and associated sports and tourism is part of the strategy. The Polish region Kuyavia and Pomerania also puts an emphasis on sport in its regional specialisation strategy (Kuyavia and Pomerania, 2018). It recognises the value of professional sport in attracting tourists to the region and emphasises the natural potential for water sports. Various championships are organised in the region, adding to its reputation in sport.

In the Danish region North Jutland, a strategy has been developed aimed, among other things, at improving the recreational potential of the region through the creation of bike routes. In the Spanish region Galicia, the S3 strategy includes a goal to support the development and marketing of new knowledge-intensive products building on spa culture and sports for therapeutic purposes to support active ageing and healthy living and promote of personal autonomy (Xunta de Galicia, 2018).

3.5.4 Youth

As is the case with OPs under the ESIF in general, it is also difficult to identify smart specialisation strategies with an explicit focus on youth. In practice, however, many strategies with a focus on education and training will to a large extent benefit young people, e.g. through vocational training. In the Danish region North Jutland (North Denmark Region, 2018), for example, one goal is to increase the number of young people completing a

\textsuperscript{22} \url{http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sport}
vocational education course by engaging more unskilled people in qualifying courses and getting a larger number of enterprises to employ highly educated persons. The Catalanian strategy mentioned above also mentions the goal of integrating young people into the job market through training and encouraging entrepreneurialism.

As will have become clear from the examples mentioned above, many smart specialisation strategies contain elements of more than one of the thematic areas. A particularly good example of a strategy covering several of the four thematic areas has been identified in Germany: At the regional level, Baden-Württemberg’s innovation strategy includes a reference to the creative sector as a core element of innovation and a way to diversify the regional economy (Baden-Württemberg Ministerium fur Finanzen und Wirtschaft, 2013). As per the Smart Specialisation’s website, this concerns support to arts, entertainment and recreation; creative, arts and entertainment activities; libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities; and sports activities and amusement and recreation activities.

Overall, by far the most of the regional smart specialisation strategies relevant to the four thematic areas were found to be linked to the development of culture and the creative industries, and tourism. Far fewer strategies focused on education as such or had an explicit youth element, although measures improving education were often seen as contributing to strategies with a different thematic focus and many of the strategies required a development of skills and competences as part of the delivery mechanisms. A few strategies with a strong sport element could also be identified.

Another finding is that Smart Specialisation strategies in disadvantaged areas or areas that underwent economic transformation (e.g. deindustrialisation) can be quite effective when combined with a focus on developing the cultural and creative sector.

While it is difficult to make generalisations based on the rather different strategies discussed above, the evidence suggests that smart specialisation strategies have helped some European regions make their social and economic development policies more coherent. While these strategies often focus on one or more niche economic sectors, they adopt a comprehensive approach including measures tackling everything from innovation to research, education and capacity-building. A sufficient number of strategies containing elements of one or more of the four thematic areas could be identified to conclude that these can play a constructive role in sharpening the profile and image of peripheral or otherwise disadvantaged European regions, and thus play a role in future EU structural and cohesion policy. At the same time, it can be seen that cultural and creative or sport specialisations (or more generally the experience economy) are to be found among the innovation leaders across the EU.

3.6 Overall Themes and Typologies of Intervention

The previous sections have looked a diverse range of activities in the four areas of interest for the study, on the basis of partial information about programmes and projects in the current and preceding ESIF programming periods. This section now attempts to bring together the overall lessons on the types of activities that contribute to economic and social development in the four areas and, on the basis of examples encountered in the current and earlier studies, provide a systematic account of the kind of activities that could attract support from the ESIF.

It is clear from the previous discussion that education and training has a much more pervasive presence in the ESIF than the other areas under consideration. Culture and sport
make much more specific contributions and youth are a particular target. The types of action that can be supported in the education and training area are therefore more generic than is the case for the other areas, though it is important to distinguish between the two different ways that education and training contribute to ESIF objectives.

3.6.1 Education and training

Education and training is a major theme for the ESIF, not only because ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’ is a specific Thematic Objective of the ESIF and could be expected to figure largely in the ESF Operational Programmes of all the Member States, but also because education and training permeates so many of the actions taken in pursuit of other Thematic Objectives. Raising skills levels and competences is a persistent theme across all the ESIF, but actions in these areas are a major example of the hidden contribution of the four areas of interest to the ESIF. In terms of monitoring data, they are hidden behind the other objectives to which they contribute. However, there is also another significant factor affecting their profile, which raises a more fundamental issue about the role of education and training. In practice, most discussion of the operation of the ESIF is in terms of the objectives of the Funds and the implementing programmes on the one hand and the effects (results and impacts) on the other. There is relatively little attention paid to the delivery mechanisms or explaining how the results are achieved, in spite of the debate in evaluation theory, about the significance of implementation processes. Yet education and training, especially in their more informal forms, are often processes that are an important part of the delivery mechanisms rather than the explicit objectives of the initiatives concerned. Consequently their significance can be easily overlooked, not least in monitoring systems and in evaluations, where, if anything, in recent years, there has been a movement away from the consideration of outputs and processes in favour of a greater concentration on results and impacts.

Education and training are thus an objective of policy, as the main contribution to the creation of human economic potential, ensuring that there is a workforce in the future that is adaptable and that can respond to changes in the economy. They are also an important part of the process for delivering other objectives. They are an instrument or the means whereby innovation takes place and is delivered, SMEs are able to grow, ICT usage can be developed and even environmental developments can take place, since nearly all of these developments require an improvement of the skills and competences of the participants, which the measures deliver as part of their implementation. This second part of the dual nature of education and training needs to be brought to the fore, if the effectiveness of policy is to be improved.

Neglecting this latter role can have quite negative consequences. A study being conducted by CSES for The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions – Eurofound - (as yet unpublished) on the relationship between the promotion of innovation and the creation of employment and effects on working conditions is finding that, because measures promoting innovation pay little attention to the human dimension of innovation processes, little is known about their employment consequences other than that they are generally assumed to be positive. Perhaps more importantly, there is little consideration of the adaptations necessary in the workforce to deliver innovations successfully. The failure to consider the adaptation mechanisms and notably the development of new skills and competences, or more generally the human dimension of these processes, makes the interventions less encompassing and effective than they should be. This suggests that in designing interventions to promote innovation, but also interventions to support SMEs and to promote access to and use of ICT etc., more explicit attention needs to be devoted to
implementation mechanisms, especially in as far as these affect the people involved in the process.

Another theme that is fairly evident in the ESIF interventions at a national level is the way that the ESIF Regulation provisions are flexible enough to accommodate a range of different circumstances. The most obvious of these relates to the extent to which unemployment is a major issue. In Italy, Spain and Slovakia, where this is the case and where the unemployment of young people is particularly problematic, programmes and measures are designed to address this issue, encouraging start-ups by young entrepreneurs for instance. In Italy, there is provision for helping to build bridges between the formal education system and the world of work. In contrast, in Germany, the orientation of the ESF element in Operational Programmes is towards meeting skills shortages and broadening the skills base, as well as measures to engage with those who are excluded from effective participation in the labour market. Germany too has a good example of a national programme, supported by the ESF, which is aimed at assisting employees of SMEs to adapt their skills to industrial and technological change and to prepare for the future.

The evidence on education and training interventions, then, suggests that the Thematic Objectives and the investment priorities defined in the Regulations have provided an appropriate framework, at least for the formal side of educational provision. In order to capture the inputs of education and training into other areas, however, there is an additional set of indirect effects listed in the following typology of interventions, broadly corresponding to the other areas designated by the ESIF Thematic Objectives.
### Table 3.9: Typology of Education and Training Interventions under the ESIF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorisation of ESIF Interventions relating to Education and Training</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct contributions to current investment priorities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reducing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education</td>
<td>Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promoting access to tertiary and equivalent education</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning</td>
<td>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. Investing in education and training infrastructure for skills and lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training</td>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility, particularly the adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change</td>
<td>The use of education and training to help workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to adapt to change in the economy, to create sustainable and quality employment and support labour mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination</td>
<td>Using education to engage with socially excluded groups, develop community identity and cohesion, while promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions to other ESIF priorities</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Contributing to strengthening research, technological development and innovation</td>
<td>Initiatives to strengthen research and development and the contribution of educational and knowledge institutions to innovation, including building relations with enterprises and other stakeholders, but also in improving the skills and competences of SMEs and other contributors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contributing to enhancing access to, and use of, information and communication technologies (ICT).</td>
<td>The use of education and training to promote access to and use of ICT, including the development of e-learning,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Contributing to enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector and of the fishery and aquaculture sector</td>
<td>Particular measures using education and both formal and informal training to improve the skills of SMEs, the agricultural sector (principally through the EAFRD) and the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Categorisation of ESIF Interventions relating to Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Contributing to supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy and promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.</td>
<td>Using education and training to contribute to the low-carbon economy and tackling climate change, by raising awareness of energy and related issues and equipping people to deal with them, to varying degrees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Contributing to preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency, promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure</td>
<td>Using education and training to contribute to the protection of the environment, including the use of alternative systems of transport, by raising awareness of environmental issues and equipping people to deal with them, to varying degrees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Contributing to European territorial cooperation</td>
<td>Using education and training to contribute to European territorial cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Contributing to enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.</td>
<td>Enhancing the institutional capacity of public organisations, public authorities and stakeholders and promoting efficient public administration, notably in the education sector</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over and beyond the contribution that education and training makes to achieving the Thematic Objectives of the ESIF, it also contributes to other areas of policy, not the least of which are culture and sport. The pervasiveness of the contribution of education and training has been remarked on several times in the report, but it should be pointed out here that this characteristic really makes the area different from other policy objectives. It is something that should have a higher profile and be identified as a Key Enabling Driver of economic and social development, as a human counter-part of Key Enabling Technologies.

### 3.6.2 Culture

The other three areas of interest for the study contribute in different, but still significant ways. In spite of the fact that culture has a different status in the ESIF from education and training and is not identified even as an investment priority, it is nonetheless making important contributions to modern economic and social development. Yet appreciation of its significance still varies considerably. Culture is the object of a dedicated Operational Programme in Italy and has a high profile in Poland. In the latter, there is a concentration on the restoration and development of heritage buildings and sites, as a contributory factor in urban and rural development and the role for culture in making cities and even smaller towns more attractive places to live and work is recognized (this is also a role for culture in France). In addition, the contribution that this makes to a more successful tourism policy is part of the rationale for the investment. In Italy, a similar approach is part of the strategy, but it is also recognized that the cultural and creative sector can give an important creative and motivating impulse to other areas of development, notably ICT. In Denmark, the contribution of the sector to design and marketing is recognised, especially as part of developing clusters in a range of areas and there is even a contribution to the food industry in the form of the development of a food culture, as a relevant element in the marketing of food. In contrast, Germany and Ireland make little provision for culture, and aspects of it are specifically ruled out in the French Partnership Agreement.
Overall, though, it does not appear that the cultural and creative industries are noticeably increasing their presence in actions supported by the ESIF and the current levels of involvement are not commensurate with the sector’s current importance in the economy of the EU. This may be in part because of the processes of concentration in the design of national strategies and Operational Programmes has made the highlighting of particular sectors more difficult. This would seem to be supported by the consideration that the one area where the cultural and creative sectors have had a higher profile than might have been imagined is in relation to smart specialisation strategies, where focusing on sectors that give competitive advantage is actually encouraged. In this area too, the inter-relationships of cultural and creative industries with other sectors is apparent, especially in their involvement in experience economy developments or in contributing to a more balanced tourism strategy. Perhaps it is the case that people on the ground are better able to see how the cultural and creative sector is able to contribute to the development of regional and local economies in ways that are more apparent than at more strategic levels.

In spite of this assessment of the extent of support for culture and related areas, the potential contributions of culture can still be seen to be wide-ranging and multi-faceted. It is useful to distinguish, first of all, between the contributions to economic development and those that have more social effects. Then, within each of these areas, distinctions can be made between the direct effects of cultural and creative activity on the economy and on skills respectively, more indirect or spin-off effects and finally the more strategic role that culture can play. These elements are indicated in the following typology of interventions:
### Table 3.10: Typology of Culture and Creative industry Interventions under the ESIF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorisation of ESIF Interventions based on Culture and Creative Activity</th>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>Strategic effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primarily Economic Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Direct support to cultural organisations</td>
<td>Enhancing the economic activity of cultural organisations, grants and other support to enterprises and organisation providing cultural experiences</td>
<td>Technology centres, incubators based on cultural and creative industries, strengthening research, technological development and innovation. From improving the ICT used in cultural activities and the exploitation of digital cultural assets to the development of innovative cultural and creative competence clusters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Development/preservation of cultural facilities and cultural heritage (sites, monuments etc)</td>
<td>Development of galleries, theatres and other cultural infrastructure and facilities, preservation of cultural heritage</td>
<td>Development of a series of related activities that re-inforce each other, as part of a regional strategy in which culture and related activities have a central place: for example, cultural activities, supported by training and facilities development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Contributing to urban development &amp; regeneration</td>
<td>Contributing to and improving the attractiveness of urban environments, property development and increasing land value, urban regeneration and building social capital &amp; public value</td>
<td>Cultural contributions to a broader tourism or experience economy strategy, but also working with other sectors, from textiles and publishing &amp; printing to construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Measures reducing environmental impact</td>
<td>Increasing the energy efficiency of cultural businesses and facilities, promoting resource efficiency and a shift towards a low-carbon economy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promotion &amp; encouraging inward investment</td>
<td>Culture acting as a focal point for business and attracting inward investment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment and related indirect economic effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Creating employment in cultural and creative activity</td>
<td>Direct employment in cultural and creative activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Impacts on related employment</td>
<td>Employment in related activities, such as media coverage, advertising, marketing, catering etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Indirect impacts on employment</td>
<td>Spin-off effects, such as multiplier effects in industries such as construction and those from attracting mobile skilled and professional labour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Business growth &amp; other economic impacts</td>
<td>Non-employment effects of increased economic activity, including impacts on suppliers of equipment etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Using culture and creative activities as a means of promotion and marketing</td>
<td>Use of cultural activities and skills as part of promotional and marketing activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Encouraging developments in technology and other innovation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Systematic development of a broader cultural and creative strategy</td>
<td>Development of a series of related activities that re-inforce each other, as part of a regional strategy in which culture and related activities have a central place: for example, cultural activities, supported by training and facilities development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Linking cultural and creative actions with the development of tourism or the experience economy</td>
<td>Cultural contributions to a broader tourism or experience economy strategy, but also working with other sectors, from textiles and publishing &amp; printing to construction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primarily Social Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Improving cultural and creative skills &amp; competences</td>
<td>Improving cultural and creative skills &amp; competences, including the training of performers and administrators, by investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Categorisation of ESIF Interventions based on Culture and Creative Activity

| 15. Using culture to develop broader skills for employment | Developing motivation, ability to work in a team, commitment, communication etc. and supporting labour mobility. |
| 16. Social engagement | Using culture to engage with socially excluded groups, develop community identity and cohesion, while promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination. |

Social effects

| 17. Improving governance and administrative capacity | Enhancing the institutional capacity of cultural organisations, public authorities and stakeholders and promoting efficient public administration. |
| 18. Addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to happiness & well-being | Helping to highlight and address societal challenges, such as poverty, discrimination and health issues and the effects of aging, but also contributing to mental health and general well-being - including awareness raising. |

It can be seen that a number of the potential contributions of culture and related areas arise from human contributions based on the disciplines and mind-sets that are typical of cultural activity. The sector has great strengths in helping understanding to develop, assisting communication, giving inspiration and encouraging creativity and in just making life more pleasant. It also has great powers to motivate people and give them a sense of purpose and fulfilment. It could be that in order for the cultural and creative sector to be better recognised, it is necessary to give a higher profile to these human contributions to growth and development, including their critical contribution to innovation processes. The sector may be suffering from the domination of an overly technological perception of economic development processes at the heart of the conception of the ESIF.

### 3.6.3 Sport

The area of sport is even less well-represented in the ESIF than culture and the creative sector, in spite of its growing role in modern economies and, especially its role in helping to address important societal challenges.

In earlier programming periods, sport was the basis for a wide range of activities supported by the Structural Funds. The contribution of sport buildings and facilities was recognised, in a way similar to that of cultural buildings and facilities, in helping to provide a focus and character for urban centres and public spaces. They have frequently been an important part of local identity and have helped to attract inward investment and act as a vehicle for substantial redevelopment of derelict industrial sites. In addition, sport has been recognised as having special qualities in terms of its ability to engage with marginalised or excluded groups and to begin to develop basic social and communication skills and provide paths to employment. Sport itself and the creation and maintenance of facilities, together with associated activities such as media coverage are all relatively employment intense. However, it is the growing significance of sport technology and performance measurement and the contribution of sport and sport science to tackling health issues that has become the focus of a number of sport-based clusters in recent years, as well as the contributions sport makes to diversified tourism and the experience economy.

The following table provides an overview of the potential activities of sport-based contributions to economic and social development. The same general distinctions between different aspects of interventions that were used for culture are also used for sport.
Table 3.11: Typology of ESIF Interventions based on Sport & Physical Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorisation of ESIF Interventions based on Sport &amp; Physical Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct effects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Direct support to sport SMEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improvement of the physical environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Promoting sustainable transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other measures reducing environmental impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promotion &amp; encouraging inward investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment and related indirect economic effects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Creating employment in sport and physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Impacts on related employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Indirect impacts on employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Business growth &amp; other economic impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Using sport and physical activities as a means of promotion and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic effects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Encouraging developments in sport technology and other innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Systematic development of a broader sport-based strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Linking sport actions with the development of tourism or the experience economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills development</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Improving sport skills &amp; competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Using sport to develop broader skills for employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Social engagement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Categorisation of ESIF Interventions based on Sport & Physical Activity

| Social effects                                                                 | Enhancing the institutional capacity of sport organisations, public authorities and stakeholders and promoting efficient public administration. |
| 17. Improving governance and administrative capacity                          | Helping to highlight and address societal challenges, such as health issues, poor diet and the effects of aging, but also general well-being - including awareness raising. |
| 18. Addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to happiness & well-being |

Again the presence of sport-based activity in the ESIF, with the possible exception of its role in smart specialisation, does not appear to reflect its size in the economy currently and still less its potential.

Again too, it is the human dimension of sport and physical activity that seems to be a striking characteristic. As with culture, it has strong powers to engage with a wide range of people and to motivate and strengthen them. It can also be inspiring and imaginative and contribute new approaches to problem solving. Perhaps in contrast to culture it also has a strong technological side, offering a lot of scope for ICT and performance measurement technologies and also making contributions to medical science, not least through injury treatment and in assisting with mental disorders. It is an important contributor of content for the media and generates lots of human interest. It can also offer common meeting points for people of different cultures around the world.

3.6.4 Youth

Finally, the provision for young people in the ESIF has been seen to be more extensive than initially thought. The initial focus was on the Youth Employment initiative with the ESF, although the YEI as such is out of the scope of the study. However, it has been seen that there is other specific provision for young people in all the countries considered, either to address problems of youth unemployment or to seek to attract young people who have not profited as much as they might have from the education system, as part of the solution to skill shortages, as in the case of Denmark and Germany.

Behind this specific provision which has been found to be fairly extensive, there is also the particular and active involvement of young people in education and training, culture and sport. These areas are not exclusively the preserve of young people of course, but young people are large, if not the main consumers of services in these areas and also contribute themselves to their provision. Again, we therefore see a significant degree of integration between the four areas. Nonetheless, it is again useful to summarise the areas where youth-based action can be significant in the ESIF. In this case, the actions can be seen to be a mixture between contributions to current investment priorities and those to more general objectives.
Table 3.12: Typology of ESIF Interventions based on Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorisation of ESIF Interventions based on Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct contributions to current investment priorities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reducing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Promoting access to tertiary and equivalent education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Employment and related economic effects</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employment creation specifically aimed at young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Impacts on related employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Indirect impacts on employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Business growth &amp; other economic impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cross-border youth actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Direct support to Young farmers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Primarily Social Effects</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Schools renovated (capacity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Support to migrants, foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma) – youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social engagement (youth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Direct support to youth organisations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strategic effects</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improving skills &amp; competences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Education and training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The areas initially listed, as with education and training, reflect the areas of intervention under the current ESIF, especially those with a direct effect. The other areas are those where there is a special youth dimension, such as the need for schools and other infrastructure to cater for them, but also a series of actions intended to generate employment for young people.

Overall, provision for young people under the ESIF is a matter of having arrangements that address the specific characteristics, needs and opportunities of young people. This points to the need for provision in the design of ESIF actions, for a degree of flexibility and specific provision, not only for young people, but also for other groups with identified particular requirements. This is an important element to take into account in policy design.

More generally, it should be noted, the list of intervention types proposed for sport, and indeed for the other three areas, can be thought of as a sort of check-list to be used by those developing proposals for interventions based on the respective areas, of impacts that their intended actions might be expected to generate. They can thus be used to strengthen proposals, by highlighting as many of the contributions as possible to the overall economic and social impacts that the ESIF are designed to generate.

3.7 The special characteristics of the four areas separately and together

It has been seen that there are major differences between the four areas under consideration. Education and training and the provision of support for young people have a different status from culture and sport, which have a very different position in terms of the objectives of the ESIF and take up a much smaller part of the expenditure. However, there are a number of common elements across the four areas, which it is useful to bring out. The following therefore lists the main characteristics of interventions based on the four areas:

- Education and training is an area that contributes massively to the achievement of the aims of the ESIF, not only through formal educational and training processes that add to the human and social potential of Europe - the basis for future prosperity, but also through less formal processes that help to deliver other objectives. Innovation, for example, requires new skills and competences, as well as new technology or techniques, to be brought to market.

- Education and training, therefore, represent both an objective and a delivery mechanism.

- Education and training develop knowledge, the basis of a modern economy and society.

- Education, culture and sport develop key human values, especially in younger people.

- Education, culture and sport also develop key skills and capacities, again, especially in younger people. Their disciplines and mind-sets promote critical thinking and analysis, but also understanding and inspiration, powers of communication, imagination and creativity. All three areas provide motivation, discipline and direction and they are able to engage in different ways with a wide range of different social groups.

- Culture and sport are particularly powerful as vehicles for engaging with disaffected individuals and communities.

- All these areas, but especially education and training, are pervasive across all processes of economic and social development. They are Key Enablers of economic and social development.

- They are central to the human contribution to growth and development.
• In practice, they often reinforce each other.
• The infrastructure of education, culture and sport helps to define the character and feel of many cities. It makes them attractive places in which to work and live.
• Education, culture and sport, each are labour-intensive and generate high quality jobs that will become increasingly important as technology replaces humans in other activities. They are areas in which young people wish to work.
• All of them provide important content for modern communications systems.
• Culture and sport can make significant contributions to research, especially in the ICT and health area, and of course, higher education facilities are key elements in innovation systems.
• Culture and sport activities and events can have strong direct impacts on local economies, but also provide powerful occasions for marketing and promotion.
• All the sectors considered have strong links with other economic activities, from tourism and the experience economy, to health, textiles and construction.
• Culture, sport and education are good at motivating people and at promoting well-being and social cohesion.
• Culture and sport are especially good at helping to engage with excluded social groups and developing basic but transferable skills and enhancing employability.

These characteristics will inform the discussion of the conclusions of the report and the recommendations.

### 3.8 Synergies and coordination between the ESIF and other funding programmes

The following section addresses how ESIF interacts with other EU policies and programmes. The section not only looks at how these programmes complement each other at a policy level, but also how the different objectives overlap with one another at an operational level. After detailing the nature of each programme and what it aims to achieve, this section then looks directly at how ESIF interacts with Erasmus+, the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC), Creative Europe and the European Heritage Label (EHL).

Beyond the ESIF programmes at the core of this study, it can be noted that the creative industry more generally has increasingly been of interest for other parts of the European Commission, including DG RTD, which sees a role for research in understanding the importance of cultural heritage in society (European Commission, 2018a).

It should be noted that there are no monitoring systems or databases that can easily provide comparisons between the objectives of different funding instruments and results at a project level. As such, there is no easy approach to systematically assessing the interactions between the ESIF and other programmes. In addition, the magnitude and scale of some of these programmes make it difficult to measure how the programmes overlap or to what extent they deal with CULT thematic areas.

‘Interactions’ between funding programmes can take place at many levels, including the policy level (shared objectives and thematic areas), programme level (shared types of activity, project objectives and results, etc) or through target groups (beneficiaries that may
participate in more than one programme). Having said this, the table below has been developed to provide an overview of potential interaction between ESIF and the other funds.

**Table 3.13: Potential interaction between ESIF and the other funds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU programme</th>
<th>Main aims</th>
<th>Culture, sport, youth, E&amp;T similarities</th>
<th>ESIF differences</th>
<th>Complementarity assessment</th>
<th>Co-funding?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erasmus+</strong></td>
<td>Programme to support specific target areas in order to promote growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion.</td>
<td>E&amp;T (high) Sport (High) Youth (high) Culture (medium)</td>
<td>Implemented at MS level; similar aims and focus on similar focus areas</td>
<td>High, complementarity in terms of policy area (culture, sport, youth, E&amp;T) and aims (boost employability and training)</td>
<td>Little evidence of co-funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Europe</strong></td>
<td>Boosts the cultural, creative and audio-visual sectors through funding and a financial instrument.</td>
<td>Culture (high) E&amp;T (medium) Youth (medium) Sport (low);</td>
<td>Focus on culture for social benefits</td>
<td>Implemented at national level; Generally different priorities: creative industries focus.</td>
<td>Low, different types of instruments; focus on bilateral projects promoting cultural cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Capital of Cultures</strong></td>
<td>Highlight the richness and diversity of EU cultures by placing cities at the heart of culture.</td>
<td>Culture (high) Youth (medium) E&amp;T (low) Sport (low)</td>
<td>Focus on cultural events for economic and social benefits</td>
<td>Implemented at national level; Targets a different city each year. Cities have many years to prepare and receive funding.</td>
<td>Medium/high, projects may apply to other EU funding, such as ESF training; projects reinforce and add value to investments made in cultural heritage and infrastructure created through ESF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Heritage Label</strong></td>
<td>Giving symbolic value to EU heritage (e.g. monuments) to highlight common EU heritage.</td>
<td>Culture (High) E&amp;T (low) Sport (low) Youth (low)</td>
<td>Focus on common culture to boost tourism and for economic benefits</td>
<td>No funding attached to this instrument; implemented at national level</td>
<td>Medium, the EHL does not provide funding so MS can use ESF funds to restore sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ assessment using programme documentation

The table above gives an assessment of how other EU programmes of interest complement or are similar to the ESIF. The main programmes concerned were briefly explained at the end of chapter 2.

Erasmus+ is the programme that has most overlaps with actions supported under the ESIF, notably because of similar thematic areas, aims and targets. As has been seen, the ESIF Common Provisions Regulation makes specific reference to coordination with the Erasmus+ programme and requests EU Member States to use ESI Funds to mainstream tools and methods developed and tested successfully under Erasmus+ in order to maximise the social
and economic impact of investment in people, or give impetus to youth initiatives and citizen actions\textsuperscript{23}.

Other programmes, such as the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) and the European Heritage Label (EHL), give a boost to local and regional development by their designations. In these instances co-funding can take place, since Member States can apply for other types of funding to improve the development of infrastructure related to symbolic cultural heritage. This is particularly the case with the EHL, which does not provide any funding along with the label.

The Creative Europe programme is assessed as having the least correlation with ESIF, mainly because the two sides have different priorities: Creative Europe focuses on bilateral projects and cultural cooperation. ERDF looks at innovation and local/regional development, while the Creative Europe programme is also more top-down in its nature, and is implemented directly by the EC and not at Member State level.

However, all the following EU programmes are to some extent relevant to ESIF and to the areas of interest. All programmes fit within the realm of education and training, culture and/or sport, (in the case of Erasmus+). They all seek to promote a common cultural heritage and to aim for economic and social development, which is in line with ESIF initiatives.

**Erasmus+**

The Erasmus+ programme supports education, training, youth and sport. Its aim is to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, and fulfil the aims of ET2020, the EU’s strategic framework for education and training. It also aims to promote the sustainable development of its partners within higher education by contributing to the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy. Erasmus+ covers the following issues\textsuperscript{24}:

- Reducing unemployment, especially among young people;
- Promoting adult learning, especially new skills and skills required by the labour market;
- Encouraging young people to take part in European democracy;
- Supporting innovation, cooperation and reform;
- Reducing early school leaving;
- Promoting cooperation and mobility with the EU’s partner countries.

Project overviews are available online and are divided into three Key Actions pertaining to education & training and youth, plus the Jean Monnet activities and sport activities:

1. Mobility;
2. Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practice;

Across these five fields, projects are broken down into how much funding they receive and what their main objectives are. The magnitude of data and the number of projects undertaken under Erasmus+ in the current period means it is difficult to provide exact figures on funding.

\textsuperscript{23} \url{http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/regulations/}
\textsuperscript{24} \url{https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en}
or calculate the proportion of projects funded for each area relevant to our study. In addition, funding data are often not complete, rendering the task of calculating total figures difficult.

The area that is most supported is youth. Similarly to the ESIF, youth is a horizontal theme in Erasmus+, implemented through training or sport aimed at young people. Over 65,500 projects have been funded under Key Action1: Mobility of individuals. This action covers the fields of education, vocational training, schools, adult education and youth. Target groups and activities for this Action vary by field, but the objective of these projects is to provide opportunities for individuals to improve skills, enhance employability and cultural awareness. Among these, 2,618 projects related to higher education students and staff mobility between programme countries and partner countries and another 9,383 projects were funded for higher education student and staff mobility. Key Action 1 represents the largest action under Erasmus+, with 63% of the budget supporting the focus on increasing mobility and skills.

Under Key Action 2, approximately 9,860 projects have been funded, mainly to enable organisations to work together in order to improve their provision for learners and share innovative practices. Under this action, organisations can apply for funding to work in partnership with organisations based in other participating countries. The projects vary but cover one or more of the thematic areas in education, vocational training, schools, adult education and youth. For instance, a project to increase knowledge about European aquaculture received €90,180 in funding and targeted youth to witness best practice in the industry in order to develop a workforce knowledgeable about these techniques (European Commission, 2018b).

Key Action 3 funded 1,434 projects supporting policy reform. Any activity to support and/or facilitate the modernisation of education and training systems falls under this category. Strategic activities are funded when they support policy reform under education, training and youth. The project that is receiving most funding under Key Action 3 is ‘A new way for new talents in teaching’, which received €2.5 million. The projects’ main objective is to find new ways of teaching to allow professionals without prior teaching experience to become pedagogical practitioners in a selection of participant-countries (European Commission, 2018c).

Projects under the Jean Monnet Action provide support to academic institutions to promote excellence in European integration studies in higher education. In order to enhance EU policy in higher education, dialogues are promoted between academia and policy-makers. Projects under Jean Monnet cover education only. The outcomes anticipated in these projects are enhanced employability or improved career prospects for youth; support for young researchers and more active European citizenship by increasing participation in the EU, among others (European Commission, 2018d). To date, 980 projects have been funded.

Sport-related activities aim to promote and protect Europe’s cultural diversity and tradition in sports and games. Encouraging young people to participate in traditional sports and games is seen as a means to promote solidarity, diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness. In terms of these projects’ specific objectives, many projects led to the publication of reports and reviews, the organisation of competitions (counting on the participation of a network of young Europeans), but most importantly they aimed to preserve participation in sport in order to promote a European heritage. To date, 400 projects have been funded.

In terms of implementation procedures, these largely depend on the category of funding (e.g. the 3 Key actions and the other activities), although implementation largely takes place at Member State level. Decentralised activities are run by each Member State’s National Agency
and centralised activities are run by the European Commission’s Executive Agency based in Brussels. For example, under Key Action 1, individual Member States deal with mobility activities for students, teachers, and adults, whereas activities undertaken by the Commission include joint master degrees or Erasmus+ master loan schemes. Under Key Action 2, decentralised activities involve strategic partnerships and centralised activities involve capacity building or knowledge alliances. Key Action 3 activities under individual Member States include structured dialogues, and the EC deals with cooperation with international organisations. All Jean Monnet and sport activities are run centrally by the Executive Agency.

Overall, the programme has an envelope of € 14.774 billion under Heading 1 and of €1,680 billion under Heading 4 of the EU budget for the period (2014-2020) (European Commission, 2017d). Over the 2014-2020 period, two-thirds of the budget is to be dedicated to learning opportunities abroad for individuals, while one-third is to be provided for partnerships and reforms in the youth and educations sectors.

The current period (2014-2020) aims to include new funding for actions in the field of sport. Publicly available data reveal that up until 2017, approximately 400 projects have been funded under Erasmus+ in the sports strand. As such, it is still short of achieving the 1,200 project target for 2020. A large number of projects under this category address social inclusion or promote sport as a means to tackle violence, extremism, racism and/or discrimination. For instance, CORPLAY was an initiative to develop a sport grassroots approach to addressing intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination that may lead to extremism, while promoting youth participation in sport (European Commission, 2018e). A number of other projects focus on promoting health, anti-doping initiatives and the environment.

In 2017, but more specifically in the 2018 Programme Guide, new objectives were set, which emphasised more efforts to encourage projects supporting social inclusion, (particularly migrants and refugees) and the prevention of radicalisation (European Commission, 2017d). While the majority of projects under Erasmus+ focus on mobility, developing skills and ‘internationalising’ higher education institutions, recent projects confirm a shift towards tackling underlying societal issues, some of which were not explicitly mentioned in the initial targets set for Erasmus+ back in 2014. Projects across education, cooperation and sport in many instances address environmental issues, sustainability and/or fostering inclusivity, while tackling radicalisation and discrimination. In Sports, a shift has been seen: Erasmus+ has helped address match-fixing and doping in sports. Consequently, there has been a tendency in recent years for projects to some closer to activities supported by the ESIF and especially the ESF. This may provide greater scope in the future for the ESIF to pick up ideas that have been piloted by Erasmus+ and assist their more extensive application. However, since the trend towards actions that may fall into this category is relatively recent, there has not yet been time for the ESIF multiplication process to become evident.

The other main changes in 2018 include providing additional opportunities for higher education students to carry out traineeships to gain digital skills and boosting long-term mobility for Vocational Educational and Training (VET) (European Commission, 2017d).

**Creative Europe**

Creative Europe is a programme to support the cultural, creative and audio-visual sectors. It runs from 2014 to 2020 and offers funding for the development of European films, TV
programmes and games, the distribution and promotion of European films, festivals and cinema networks; training for cultural and creative professionals/artists; literary translations and cross-border cooperation. Its main aims are to:

- Help the cultural and creative sectors seize the opportunities of the digital age and globalisation;
- Enable the sectors to reach their economic potential, contributing to sustainable growth, jobs, and social cohesion;
- Give Europe’s culture and media sectors access to new international opportunities, markets, and audiences.

Creative Europe is divided in three strands: culture (for cultural and creative sectors), media (for the audio-visual sector) and an innovative cross-sectoral strand (for all the cultural and creative sectors which includes a financial instrument). The following table explains the targets that Creative Europe set itself for the current period:

**Table 3.14: Creative Europe**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Europe sub-programme</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Culture sub-programme**    | Transnational Cooperation projects | • Support up to 250,000 artists and cultural professionals to work together across border  
• Cultural workers offered opportunities to gain skills and knowledge |
| Networks and platforms | • Strengthen networks to support the capacity of cultural players to operate transnationally  
• New platforms to showcase emerging talent and stimulate EU-wide programming of culture and artistic activities |
| Literature | • Grants for translation of more than 4,500 literary works  
• Discover and enjoy more literature from other EU countries in one’s own language |
| **Media sub-programme**      | Training and development support | • Thousands of audio-visual professionals to attend training activities  
• Support the development of films, animation, documentaries, etc.  
• Support video game development |
| Distribution | • Funding to support the circulation of more than 800 European films across borders  
• Support for cinema networks to enable 2,000 cinemas to devote half their screens to EU movies |
| Audience development and festivals | • Support provided to more than 80 European film festivals per year to promote EU films  
• Funding from cross-border cooperation between film literacy initiatives  
• Screening of events to raise interest in EU cinema |
| **Cross-sectoral strand**    | | • € 121 million for a Guarantee Fund to facilitate loans to cultural and creative enterprises and organisations  
• Support for piloting projects bridging different cultural and creative sectors |

*Source: European Commission, 2018, Creative Europe: Supporting Europe’s Cultural and Creative Sectors*
Overall, main objectives are to provide funding for:

- 250,000 artists and cultural professionals, 2,000 cinemas, 800 films, 4,500 book translations;
- A financial guarantee facility of up to € 750 million for small businesses active in the sector will also be established in 2016.

The Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCS GF) is the main novel feature of Creative Europe in the current period. It facilitates access to funding for cultural and creative SMEs with the aim of improving the capacity of financial intermediaries to assess risks associated with creative projects and thus open the way for additional funding. Based on the annual work programmes 2016-2018, Creative Europe expects that over the period 2016-2020, 6,000 to 10,000 CCS SMEs will receive financing for a total value ranging from € 500 to 600 million. Three Guarantee Agreements were signed in the first year and in 2018, the Commission plans to top up the budget of the Facility by 50% with funds from the European Fund for Strategic Investment.

For Creative Europe overall, € 1.46 billion has been made available to support European projects. For the current period, 56% of the budget is for the media strand, 31% for culture and 13% for the cross-sectional strand. This reflects previous spending patterns for each of the sectors in question (European Commission, 2011c). To date, 2527 projects have been funded through Creative Europe in fields relating to culture and media. While all projects differ from one another, many seek to encourage co-operation between institutions and work with the art or digital sectors. Similarly to Erasmus+ and ECoC programmes, projects cover topics such as integration and social cohesion and promote cross-border cooperation.

The 2018 Annual Programme reveals that from 2014 to 2016, just over half of the budget (56.15%) financed performing arts, including music, theatre and dance. This confirms the demand for and the relevance of EU support for contemporary creations. For the same reasons, 15.5% of funding went towards heritage; 7.52% to the visual arts and 6.88% to books and reading (European Commission, 2017e). In the media sector, the annual programme highlights the importance of embracing innovation. An Open Method of Coordination process on a film initiative was launched in 2017 and it has the potential to provide an overview of national funding policies with the aim not only of exploiting complementarity across EU Member States, but also of exploiting overlapping EU-level funding.

The programme complements other EU instruments in terms of areas of interest (culture and cooperation), although no other EU programme promotes transnational mobility of artists and cultural professionals, nor the circulation of work. MEDIA, a sub-programme of Creative Europe, targets beneficiaries in the audio-visual sector and the Lifelong Learning programme promotes language learning.

An illustrative example of an effective interaction, where Creative Europe has been able to build on actions funded by the ESF is the Polish National Opera in Warsaw. The opera received ESF investments over successive programming periods which led to an improvement of various operational functionalities of the opera such that it was able to join a group entitled

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27 http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/about-creative-europe-desk-uk
'Opera vision', which was launched under Creative Europe, extending its interaction with the international opera circuit.

However, more potential clearly exists for interaction between the Creative Europe programme and the ESIF, particularly where the cultural and creative industries form part of smart specialisation strategies.

**European Capitals of Culture**

The concept of a European Capital of Culture (ECoC) was launched in 1985, putting cities at the heart of cultural life across Europe. The overall aim of the action is to highlight the richness and the diversity of European cultures and the features they share, and to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens. Its specific objectives, as regards the ‘European Dimension’ are to (European Commission, 2018f):

- Foster co-operation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector; Highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
- Bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

In terms of its ‘City and Citizens’ action, the objectives are to:

- Foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad;
- Be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

The European Capitals of Culture programme designates two European capitals of culture each year. Starting in 2021, a third city will be chosen every third year. Upon winning the position, the two EU capitals of culture are eligible to receive € 1.5 million in funding. Cultural projects may separately apply for other EU funding through the Creative Europe programme and also through the ESIF. They may for instance apply for ESF funding for training or ERDF funding for infrastructure and business development.

So far, ECoC has certainly helped to create economic growth, build a sense of community and regenerate cities (European Commission, 2018f). In order to improve the quality of life in these different cities and strengthen their sense of community, citizens can partake in the year-long activities and play a key role in their city’s development and cultural expression.

An ECoC provides social and economic benefits by improving infrastructure, increasing international profile and by increasing tourism and strengthening cultural and creative industries. It also reinforces and adds value to investments made in cultural heritage and infrastructure created thanks to European Structural Funds.

The 2018 ECoCs are Leeuwarden-Friesland in the Netherlands and Valetta in Malta. In the Netherlands, the majority of projects undertaken focus very much on arts and culture and since Leeuwarden has a significant Jewish community, a number of projects reflect that, but some events merge Yiddish music with Arabic sounds, searching to connect people from different cultures that call Leeuwarden their home.

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29 [http://yiddishwaves.nl/](http://yiddishwaves.nl/)
A 2018 monitoring report reveals that Valetta 2018 is seen as a shared project for all communities and stakeholders in Malta. The main projects undertaken include: the renovation of a main street and year-round cultural activities. The project ‘European Eyes on Japan’ is a collaboration linking the two ECoCs in several events, including an opera, a film and a photography event. With Leeuwarden, the cooperation also includes student exchanges and travel of projects in the field of design, engineering, new media, creative arts, applied science and business European Capital of Culture, 2017).

Cities have many years to prepare for their period as a Capital of Culture, initially as a candidate and then preparing after their nomination. During this period, there are examples of cities making use of ESIF funds, both to help develop infrastructure and to broaden the economic and social impacts of the activities surrounding the ECoC. This occurred when the city Essen in Germany was selected as the ECoC for 2010. The objectives of the ESIF projects were to develop innovative infrastructures and support existing and new businesses, through incubation facilities and related initiatives. Up to mid-2008 € 156.7 million from different sources were invested (CSES and Ericarts 2010). In addition to receiving funds through the ERDF, projects were also supported by ESF. These contributed to skills development, marketing and key infrastructural elements.

In another case, the city of Pécs in Hungary planned an allocation of € 36 million between 2006 and 2011 for the ECoC. An additional €140 million was allocated for the development of key infrastructure projects, of which 75% was allocated by the ESF, 20% from state budget and the remaining from the city and count (Ecorys 2011b). In the case of Pécs, the ESF constituted the main source of funding.

In 2016, Wroclaw was a designated ECoC and received funding from the ERDF to support the creation or renovation of cultural institutions, including the new venue of the National Music Forum.

In contrast, in the case of Aarhus in Denmark, which was Capital of Culture in 2017, ESIF funding did not make a major contribution, largely because ESIF funding for Denmark is relatively low and Aarhus already had good cultural infrastructure.

Clearly, therefore, the ESIF can make considerable contributions to the success of Capitals of Culture and also help to provide a lasting legacy. There are often important overlaps and the CoCs provide visible evidence of the potential contribution of the cultural and creative industries to economic and social development, but there are also occasions when this happens without significant ESIF support.

**European Heritage Label**

The European Heritage Label (EHL) aims are twofold (European Commission, 2017f):

- To put the spotlight on common European heritage to strengthen citizens’ sense of belonging to the EU;
- To reinforce dialogue between cultures.
Focusing on the symbolic value of sites for Europe and their educational dimension is what differentiates the EHL from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) heritage initiatives. The EHL recognises sites that have been carefully selected for their symbolic value. These may include monuments, urban sites, cultural landscapes, cultural goods, or archaeological sites among others. Candidates that wish to obtain the label should demonstrate that their site is at least of transnational or pan-European nature, has a role in European history and integration, and a place in developing and promoting the common values upon which the EU is built (European Commission, 2017f).

So far, 38 sites have been designated. However, no funding is attached to obtaining the European Heritage Label. Instead, a large number of selected sites have received funding through national funds. There are nonetheless overlaps with other available EU funds, notably in terms of funding for similar thematic areas (notably culture and cooperation). Many candidate sites also have links to other EU initiatives: one site considered for the year 2017 selection had been restored with funding from the ESF, while other sites had links to the European Capitals of Culture (European Parliament, 2011).

Overall, it can be seen that there is a lot of complementarity between ESIF objectives in relation to the four areas of interest and those of other programmes. However, the most striking overlaps are where programmes promote innovation and creativeness or address social issues, notably under Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.
4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

- Education and training, culture, sport and youth have a greater significance than is generally assumed. They constitute some of the most dynamic parts of the contemporary economy, with scope for growth and substantial job creation, but also add knowledge, imagination and creativeness to many other parts of Europe’s economy and society.

- All four areas have had a significant presence in the ESIF and many contributions have been particularly effective, because of their special characteristics.

- In Member States where unemployment has remained high, especially among the young the aim has been to provide the knowledge and skills to get people back into work, often by building bridges between the world of education and the world of work. In countries where the overall level of unemployment is not high, skills shortages and productivity have been addressed. In Germany, there is an ESF-supported programme to help employees adapt to industrial change and meet future skills needs.

- Education and training can be an objective in its own right but they are also the main instruments for achieving other objectives and this role is under-appreciated.

- In spite of their growing economic significance, culture and sport appear not to have increased their profile in the current period, possibly because of the concentration of actions.

- Common elements across the four areas are important, including their common character as the human dimension of economic and social development.

- The most striking overlaps with other EU programmes are where these programmes promote innovation and creativeness or address social issues, notably under Erasmus+ and Creative Europe.

- There are two possibilities in terms of a response to the situation described in this study. Strengthening of the profile of education and training and of the other areas separately is one possibility. This might take the form of establishing each of the areas as priorities or developing a Thematic Objective. There are several problems with this approach.

- An alternative approach would be to argue for a broader, more strategic approach, proposing as a core theme for the ESIF – the strengthening of human skills and capabilities as Key Enablers of economic and social development. This would include specific reference to the contributions of culture and sport and special provision for encouraging the talents of young people, taking advantage of their enthusiasm and optimism.
4.1 The Main Conclusions

This chapter briefly summarises the situation under the ESIF of the four areas of interest in terms of their legal status, before considering the position and extent of support provided by the ESIF for each area separately. It then comments on the interactions between the four areas and sets out possible approaches for enhancing support in the future. Then, on this basis, a series of recommendations are made.

Introduction

Education and training, culture, sport and youth are areas that constitute some of the most dynamic parts of the contemporary economy, with scope for growth and substantial job creation, but they also add knowledge, imagination and creativeness to many other parts of Europe’s economy and society.

Education and training, culture, sport and youth are also areas of ESIF intervention that are of greater significance than is generally assumed. Interventions based on these areas in the current and previous programming periods have been more extensive than is often realised, but a large part of their contribution is hidden and is classified under other programme headings.

It should be clear, however, that although education and training represents a major activity for the ESIF, the other three areas have a different status, as a result of the legal framework determined by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Regulations governing the shape and form of the ESIF in each programming period. In particular, culture and sport, as such, cannot be supported by the ESIF. This is the purpose of other EU programmes, notably Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, within the limits of EU competences in these areas. Culture and sport can only be supported under the ESIF in as far as they contribute to the achievement of the economic and social objectives of the ESIF. Treaty provisions mean that this situation is unlikely to change.

Consequently, detailed examination set out in chapter 2 of this study shows that, in contrast to the situation for education and training, and to a certain extent youth, the scope for support for culture and sport in the legislation governing the current and previous periods is rather limited.

Nonetheless, it is clear that over several programming periods, all four areas have had a significant presence in the ESIF and their predecessors and that some of the contributions of education and training, culture, sport and youth have been particularly effective, because of their special characteristics.

However, there is a major problem in assessing the real contribution of the four areas, which is that a large part of it is hidden, especially in the data on ESIF activities. This is because all four areas make significant contributions to the achievement of other objectives and priorities. Even the contribution of education and training, which is the subject of one of the ESIF’s 11 Thematic Objectives, is under-estimated in the official figures. As has been explained in the study, formal education and training makes substantial contributions to the achievements of other objectives, supporting, for instance, the development of skills and competences in SMEs and thus contributing to their growth, but this appears in the official figures as support to SMEs. Moreover, informal education and training, in the shape of advice, mentoring, seminars and demonstrations is even more pervasive.
It is only by examining ESIF support at a project level that it is possible to see the full extent of the presence of the four areas, but since it is not possible to analyse systematically each of the thousands of projects supported by the ESIF, the real contribution cannot be estimated and only indications of the nature and extent of activities involving the four areas can be made, by pointing to examples and illustrations of what is happening on the ground. The current study has examined the situation in eight Member States, but has also been able to rely on other studies that have examined the extent of the involvement of the areas of interest in projects under the ESIF and its predecessors.

**Education and Training**

There is some variation in the way that education and training have been used in different Member States. In those Member States where unemployment, especially among the young, has remained high, the aim has been to provide the knowledge and skills to get people back into work, often by building bridges between the world of education and the world of work. In countries where the overall level of unemployment is not high, skills shortages have been addressed, or in some cases a determined effort to increase productivity has been made. In Germany, there is an ESF-supported programme to help employees adapt to industrial change and meet future skills needs.

**Education and training can be an objective in their own right.** Adding to social capacity and providing an educated workforce for the future can be an important aim of policy in itself and this is how education and training is formally conceived currently under the ESIF. However, both formal and informal education and training can also be the main instruments for achieving other objectives and this role is under-appreciated, largely because policy design and evaluation concentrate on the relationship between objectives and outcomes and pay less attention to the detail of the mechanisms that deliver the results. Consequently, education and training are much more pervasive throughout the ESIF than describing the area as one of the eleven Thematic Objectives would suggest. They are a key instrument for delivering a large part of all programmes.

**Culture**

Although culture and its development is not an objective of the ESIF, it has a definite place as a vehicle for addressing economic and social development and both culture and tourism feature among investment priorities. Of the eight Member States examined, Italy has an Operational Programme dedicated to culture and Poland also places a considerable stress on culture in programme design. Others have culture-based projects, especially as part of smart specialisation strategies. Culture brings special qualities. It plays an important part in urban development, helping to create a sense of place and making cities attractive places to live and work. It contributes to many growing industries, through an increasing awareness of design, through the influence of images and music in marketing and as content for ICT developments. It is also very good at engaging with a wide range of people, stimulating democratic debate and being effective as a vehicle for social enterprise and for projects with socially excluded groups.

However, some Member States (e.g. Germany, Ireland) make little use of the ESIF to support culture-based projects in the current period, even though they have done so in the past and the share of culture-based activity under the ESIF is probably smaller than its (growing) share in the economy as a whole. Given a greater appreciation of the role of culture
than in earlier periods, this is difficult to explain, except by suggesting that the process of thematic concentration, required by EU ESIF Regulations, has squeezed out activities that might be perceived as more experimental.

**Sport**

Sport has a similar status to culture in the ESIF, but has an even lower profile. Examples can be cited of sport-based projects, especially from the previous programming period, which reflect sport's growing economic significance. Sport too, and its infrastructure, contribute to urban development and a sense of place. Physical activity, especially cycling and walking are a significant part of developing transport systems. Sport is contributing significantly to innovation in areas such as performance measurement, ICT applications, clothing and personal equipment development, preventative medicine and the treatment of injuries. Sport is also very good at engaging with a wide range of people, helping to improve the social and transferable skills of disadvantaged people and providing a pathway into employment. Finally, it makes a major contribution to developing healthy lifestyles and keeping aging populations active.

In spite of a number of successful sport-based projects in the previous programming period, there are relatively few identified in the countries under consideration in the current period, except where they are associated with smart specialisation strategies with an important sport element. Again it appears that thematic concentration may have had a negative effect. Sport too is less represented in the ESIF than the sector's significance in the economy as a whole would indicate.

**Youth**

The issue of youth unemployment was very significant at the beginning of this programming period and there is still a major problem in this area in France, Italy, Slovakia and Spain among the countries examined for the study. Up-skilling young people, helping their transition from education to work or entrepreneurship and preparing them for future labour market conditions are all important themes in the other countries as well. Engaging young disaffected people is an issue to a greater or lesser extent everywhere. Specific priorities have been defined to address these issues, but young people are also major beneficiaries of actions in education and training, culture and sport, where involving them in the right way can help to open up their imagination and creativeness.

In addition to the Youth Employment Initiative, which is outside of the scope of this study, it is clear that there have been a considerable number of programmes and projects that benefit young people, either with young people as a specific target group or because they number significantly among the beneficiaries.

**Interactions between the four areas**

To some extent, however, focusing on each of the four areas separately obscures the way that they interact with each other. There have been many projects over the current and previous programming periods that have made use of culture or sport to help young people improve their skills and competences, often through formal training processes. In some cases all four areas are involved in a project, for example, to promote the development of tourism or the experience economy.
There is also an interaction in the sense that culture and sport have always been major elements in education systems, going back to ancient times. It has been argued in section 3.8 that all four areas are important elements in the **human dimension** of modern economic and social development in contrast to the technological and financial inputs. Education and training in all their forms clearly contribute to the development of human competences and capabilities and enable people to adapt to technological and social change by developing new knowledge and skills. Education and training also help to implement change, by making people more adaptable and this is particularly important for young people. In addition, the cultural and creative industries contribute many elements that are critical for modern economies. They encourage creativity and the development of new ideas, but are also important in articulating these new ideas, communicating and debating them and in encouraging the broader population to learn about and adopt them. Culture also provides the knowledge and the disciplines needed to deliver so many modern economic processes, from the design aspects of goods and services to their effective marketing and promotion and the creation of new experiences. Similarly sport encourages dedication, discipline and commitment, but also the development of communication skills and interaction with others and a broader range of transversal employment and social skills. Sport also contributes to healthy living and the involvement of older people. In addition, culture and sport are both particularly good at engaging with excluded groups and bringing them into the process. Together, then, in addition to the other contributions these areas make, there are a series of people-centred developments where the four areas make critical contributions to economic and social development. It is simply not possible to apply technological and organisation change effectively, without these human elements. **People are necessary to initiate and implement new technology.**

The activities and developments promoted in education and training, culture, sport and in relation to youth are, therefore, an intrinsic part of the operation of modern economies. There is a case for seeing them together as **Key Enablers or human counter-parts of the technological processes driving innovation and economic development** that have tended to be the main focus of attention in policy debates.

This role is likely to become even more important as there is an increasing focus on the Future of Work and the need to respond to the technological and business practice changes that may be very disruptive of current labour market arrangements. Education, culture and sport are all labour-intensive and involve activities that it is difficult to mechanise. They offer an important source of employment for the future. However, many of the current OPs inevitably are focused on the problems being faced by the Member States and regions at the time of drawing up the Partnership Agreements. This tends to underplay the importance of addressing future problems. It is perhaps for this reason that adaptation to economic change has a relatively low profile in the OPs of most Member States examined, in spite of this being one of the key roles for the ESF set out in the TFEU.

### 4.2 Future developments

Clearly, the weight of evidence in this study suggests that there is a major contribution that education and training, culture, sport and youth can make to the future European Structural and Investment Funds, especially if their contributions are given a higher profile. There are, however, two possibilities in terms of modelling the way that the areas of interest can be seen to contribute.
It would be possible to argue for a strengthening of the profile of education and training and of the other areas considered by the study. This might take the form of establishing each of the areas separately as priorities or developing a Thematic Objective that encompasses them for instance by extending education and training to include culture or even promoting culture and creativity as a separate Thematic Objective. The arguments for the effectiveness of all the areas and the critical contribution of education and training, understood in its broadest sense, are well-established and there are many examples, especially relating to culture and sport, that illustrate how programmes and projects based in these areas can be effective.

This approach would highlight the importance of the areas chosen for achieving the aims of the ERDF and ESF especially, as these are set out in the Treaty (TFEU). It would refer to evidence of the effectiveness of culture or sport-based actions, the known contribution of education and training (in a broad sense) to economic growth and perhaps the importance of targeting young people for the future of Europe.

It could also appeal to broader arguments, such as the need for the ESIF to pay greater attention to the service sector, which now makes up the largest part of the European economy. At least the proportion of funds dedicated to the education and training, culture and sport sectors should be more commensurate with the size of these sectors in the contemporary economy.

Reference might be made to the power of certain cultural forms (notably music, performance and dance) and sport as areas that are very effective in engaging with a wide range of social groups, especially young people and with marginalised and excluded communities. This engagement can have many forms and lead in many directions, but among these, there is certainly the promotion of social integration and increasing employment opportunities.

There are strong arguments, therefore, for promoting the case of education and training, culture, sport and youth. However, there are several problems with this approach:

- The first is that, it is difficult to make a case separately for each of the four areas that need to be considered. In order to be effective, it would be necessary to choose between the areas for which the Committee is responsible. In practice, it would not be possible to argue effectively for strengthening of the Thematic Objective relating to education and training and at the same time to propose three other Thematic Objectives relating to each of the other areas, especially if the logic of thematic concentration is maintained.

- Promoting culture or sport would be seen as identifying one strategic sector and it would be necessary to mount an argument justifying the prioritisation of this sector over all the others. It is for this reason that there has been a tendency for sectoral priorities to be dropped from the ESIF frameworks.

- Promoting one or a few sectors as part of the Regulations at a European level would also seem to go against the logic of smart specialisation (which is likely to be a continuing feature of the next ESIF framework), where regions are left to decide which sectors they want to promote.

- Education and training already has a place among Thematic Objectives and it is difficult to say what else could be added to enhance its position, if the traditional approach is maintained.

- It might be possible to envisage a Thematic Objective directed at youth, but this is likely to continue to be associated with actions to assist other disadvantaged groups, and would tend to deliver remedial actions rather than actions to open up opportunities for young people.
An alternative way forward would be to argue for a broader, more strategic approach.

There is evidence referred to in this study that, in practice, support for economic development, and especially innovation processes, focuses on technological change as the principal driver.

This approach needs to be complemented by one that considers the human dimension as well.

A possible approach could therefore be to propose as a core theme for the ESIF – the strengthening of human skills and capabilities as Key Enablers of economic and social development. This theme would at least have the following elements:

- The development of education and training, not only as formal systems for generating knowledge and improving human and social capabilities, but also as informal on-going processes for developing skills and competences and improving performance.
- The encouragement of imagination, creativity, empathy, entrepreneurship and communication, especially by exploiting more fully the potential of the cultural and creative industries.
- The development of motivation, commitment, team playing and dedication, especially by exploiting more fully the potential of sport and physical activity.
- Special provision for encouraging the talents of young people, taking advantage of their enthusiasm and optimism.

It would be important in this approach to emphasise the development of the full range of human capabilities, rather than just a better engagement with formal education and training, important though this is. Frequently, the requirement is not just for building formalised knowledge, but for the imagination, empathy, communication and so many other contributions that the disciplines of culture and sport and the experience of those who work with young people can bring. The contributions of culture, sport and youth, therefore, need to be more than a token gesture, if the real potential benefits are to be realised.

The arguments for this approach are quite compelling. It is likely to have a much more substantial impact on the shape of the future ESIF. Indeed, it is much more radical than an approach which is essentially trying to add to the shopping list of issues to be addressed. It is highlighting a systematic fault in the design of the ESIF, by bringing to the fore, and making more effective, elements that are already present in the ESIF, but not given sufficient attention.

The proposed approach would also have a wider impact. It would require the Member States to consider the human dimension of their programmes, rather than presenting a series of topics as options that they might want to build into their planning, but equally that they might not. This would be reinforced if consideration of the human dimension were to be an ex-ante conditionality, whereas it would be much more difficult to establish an ex-ante conditionality in relation to culture and/or sport.
Furthermore, the proposed approach could have a much broader appeal. Rather than advocating developments focused on a particular sector interest, it is an argument that can make sense to others whose primary interest might be promoting innovation or the development of the ICT sector or addressing environmental and resource efficiency, the low-carbon economy or promoting quality employment and social inclusion. In other words, all of the major areas addressed by the ESIF need to pay more attention to the human dimension of their activities in order to be more effective and could welcome a suggestion of how to do this.

4.3 Recommendations

The main recommendations arising from the study are as follows:

- The actual and potential contribution of education and training, culture, sport and youth to contemporary economic and social development should be highlighted and promoted by the European Commission among the Member States and especially among Managing Authorities.

- Members of the European Parliament, like the European Commission, should also promote the role of education and training, culture, sport and youth in regional development, in particular in their constituencies, and actively help engage organisations that operate in these areas.

- While ensuring that ESIF interventions are as effective as possible should continue to be a central aim of cohesion policy, greater flexibility is required. The aim should be achieved by more coherent programme design (including attention to the human dimension of economic and social development) rather than by thematic concentration.

- A broad theme ‘Strengthening human skills and capabilities as Key Enablers of economic and social development’, with specific reference to the roles of education and training, culture and sport and with special provision for young people, could be proposed by the CULT Committee as a central theme for the ESIF Common Provisions Regulation for the next programming period.

- Integrating this theme into programme planning should be an ex-ante conditionality of all Thematic Objectives.

- As well as promoting the strengthening of formal education and training as an objective of policy, it is necessary to highlight the role of informal education and training, culture and sport in improving skills and competences, encouraging creativity and imagination and engaging with and motivating the widest possible reaches of European society.

- There should be a strong forward-looking element in the formulation of the provisions for strengthening the human contribution to economic and social development, especially by assisting the workforce to adapt to industrial change, as envisaged by the TFEU.

- A more explicit modelling of programme implementation processes should become part of ESIF design, reporting and assessment at all levels, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these processes. Particular attention should be paid to the strengthening of skills and competences and other human capabilities as part of these implementation processes.

- The Operational Programmes implementing smart specialisation strategies at a national and regional level should detail the expected human contribution to the strategy’s implementation.
• Appropriate monitoring procedures should be put in place by EU and national authorities to allow for better analysis of the socioeconomic role and impact of education and training, culture, sport and youth.

• The engagement of a wide group of stakeholders by the national authorities in the development of Partnership Agreements and smart specialisation strategies should be strengthened and civil society associations, such as cultural, sports and youth organisations should be assisted in order to develop this engagement.
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ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATION SOURCES

The methodology lying behind the information collection and analysis of this study owes much to theory based approaches to evaluation, especially those of the Realist school. This approach applies a Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) model, along the lines initially developed by Pawson and Tilley (2004). It insists that it is not sufficient in obtaining an understanding of policy and its outcomes merely to concentrate on the objectives of a policy and the corresponding outcomes. Rather it is important to provide an account of the context in which policy is developed and formulated and also the mechanisms through which policy is implemented – the ways that policy is intended to work and what actually happens in practice.

Note, however, that the intention has not been to conduct a full theory-based evaluation of all the measures that involve the four areas under consideration. This would be a very large task, well beyond the scope of the study. Rather, the approach adopted by theory-based evaluations has helped to shape the kind of enquiries undertaken. In particular, it has helped to differentiate between the various approaches to designing support involving the four areas and the different types of effect that these initiatives achieve. It has also helped the team to understand better how the four areas have been used to deliver other objectives – an important consideration in an overall assessment of the role of education, culture and sport and supporting young people in the operation of the ESIF as a whole.

In addition, because of its emphasis on the importance of the factors influencing policy design, the approach has also helped to highlight some of the flaws in policy and this in turn has made a strong contribution to the formulation of recommendations for the consideration of the CULT Committee.

An underlying determinant of the way that the C-M-O model has been applied in that it is not be possible to investigate all instances where the ESIF are supporting projects of interest to this study. It is known, for instance, that just in France there are over 2,000 projects involving sport that have been supported by the ESIF and the preceding programmes (CSES and B&S, 2016). The approach adopted has, however, been able to build on existing knowledge of these interventions, derived from a range of studies, a number of which study team members have been directly involved in, by supplementing them with information on projects at a national level, obtained either from the published accounts of funding distribution of the Managing Authorities or from project websites.

In following through the approach defined by these preliminary considerations, the methodology deployed established a series of tasks to be undertaken by the study team, beginning with preparatory work in an inception phase to define more precisely the nature of the investigations to be conducted and to prepare some of the tools to be used in the investigation. There followed the actual implementation of the planned investigations in the form of intensive desk research on policy documents and data available on the one hand and investigations on the ground in eight Member States on the other.

Guidelines were developed to help all the study team members, and especially those undertaking the analysis of ESIF support in specific Member States, to orientate themselves and to be clear about the nature and extent of the information being sought and the type of analysis to be conducted. To assist information collection and analysis throughout the investigations, four Typologies of Intervention were developed on the basis of work previously
undertaken to alert all the researchers to the wide range of activities in the four areas that could potentially be supported. These Typologies were adjusted further as the work progressed and will be presented in their final form subsequently in the study report. The idea is that they will highlight the nature of the different types of intervention that the four areas are particularly effective in delivering.

Interviews have been conducted both at the level of the Member States and at an EU level. These provided additional detail and also fed into the final stage of the study, which was one of analysis and the formulation of conclusions and recommendations.

**Sources of Information**

The main sources of information used to collate the data that form the basis of the study’s analysis cover the following EU-level and national / regional level data, plus academic and/or evaluation studies:

**DG REGIO data.** Official data on ESIF planned expenditure and implementation (actual expenditure) is available through online databases provided and maintained by DG REGIO,\(^{30}\) in coordination with other relevant DGs (e.g. DG EMPL, DG AGRI). The Cohesion data portal covers the following funds:

- ERDF – European Regional Development Fund
- ESF – European Social Fund
- CF – Cohesion Fund
- EAFRD – European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
- EMFF - European Maritime & Fisheries Fund

DG REGIO’s InfoRegio site\(^{31}\) also provides a wealth of information ranging from policy documents to information on specific projects. It can be searched by country, region, theme and keywords.

Data downloaded and analysed from the Cohesion data portal is presented in section 3.3 of the main report. However, it should be noted early on that the top-down data made available through the European Commission are largely inappropriate for assessing exact spending on crosscutting themes, in particular sport and tourism, but also to an extent (in descending order) sport, youth, culture and education & training.

Therefore, in order to assess spending on these areas, it is necessary to turn to more detailed data available through various databases at a national level. These are often available via the Managing Authorities for the respective funds. The main challenge in using national (and/or regional) level data is that the level of detail varies enormously across Member States. This makes comparison between Member States difficult, but also means that insights into how the ESIF actually work in practice are based on partial information.

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\(^{30}\) [https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/](https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/)

In addition to primary data and strategic and operational documents relating directly to ESIF, there are existing evaluations and studies which this study makes use of. Particularly notable in terms of relevant evidence is:

- The 2010 CSES and ERICarts Study on the contribution of culture to local and regional development
- The 2016 CSES and Blomeyer & Sanz Study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development
- The KEA European Affairs 2012 study on the Use of Structural Funds for Cultural Projects.
- The Eurocities project - Culture for Cities and Regions

In addition, the study team has made use of various materials from the valuable work carried out by associations and professional groups. Clussport and the Sport Action Network exist to promote sport action supported by the ESIF and CSES wrote a guidance document they use for this purpose. The European Olympic Committee has collected information on sport activity supported by EU Programmes over a number of years. CSES knows these organisations well. The European Creative Business Network has promoted developments related to the Structural Funds over many years, while also catering for the broader business aims of its members and ERICarts, as well as participating in the study on culture and the Structural Funds, has collected and published information on culture-related policy and initiatives over many years. The European Youth Forum is a broader platform, with a less direct focus on the issues at hand, but it does provide access to a network of national organisations, many of whom will have been involved in ESIF projects. In the education and training area, there is a wider range of organisations with some association with ESIF support, but they include the European Association of Institutes for Vocational Training (EVBB), the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) and a number of education associations.

**Other organisations approach the issue from the side of regional development.** As well as the academic organisations, such as the European Regional Studies Association, there are a number of organisations representing the European regions, such as the European Association of Economic Development Agencies (EURADA), the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) and Eurocities (listed above), that have been active in the debate about the use of the ESIF in areas of interest to the CULT Committee, and more specialised organisations, such as NECStouR that is a regional organisation with a focus on tourism, but one that has also been active in supporting regions developing cultural strategies, with an ESIF context.

However, as demonstrated by the findings of this study, ultimately it is specific ESIF projects that reveal the level of effectiveness of various interventions relating to the four areas under consideration. Although it has not been possible to examine all of the relevant projects in the four areas, we have sought to gain an overview of what is happening in the case study countries and focused on highlighting representative examples.

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ANNEX 2: COUNTRY REPORTS

DENMARK

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Education and Training

The Danish educational system is characterised by a strong concept of self-governance whereby educational institutions are responsible for the curriculum and pedagogical development.

There are, however, two parallel systems for Danish education and training: the mainstream education and training system and the adult education and continuing training system.

The qualification levels of both systems are generally comparable and facilitate credit transfer. Denmark has a long tradition of lifelong learning and has the highest participation rate in the EU with more than 30 per cent of the workforce, aged 25-64, participating in adult education and training.

A major reform of the VET sector began in 2013 which has led to a strengthening of the role of guidance centres and trade committees in matching VET with labour market needs, has provided incentives for employers to create more apprenticeship places and has sought to provide high-quality and attractive vocational upper secondary education through the application of the European Quality Assurance Framework for VET and the introduction of training placements abroad.

Over recent decades, the Danish higher education system has also undergone a series of reforms. At the institutional level, reforms have aimed to consolidate programmes of higher education at fewer and more sustainable institutions.

Denmark sees its highly qualified and well-educated workforce as a key to becoming a leading knowledge society.

The National Programme for the EU’s Social fund 2014-20 is entitled ‘Growth via Education and Entrepreneurship’.

Culture and Creative sector

Denmark has a long tradition of public support for artistic and cultural activities, though it was only in 1961 that the first Ministry of Culture was established. This led to programme of cultural legislation, establishing the autonomy of culture, but also financing arrangements. Since then cultural institutions have continued to enjoy considerable freedom and independence in relation to the ministry, which is guaranteed by law and by tradition.

More recently, after a number of years in which cultural policy focused on stimulating Danish culture as a force for social cohesion and cultural assimilation, there has been a growing responsiveness to the significance of the cultural sector as an economic force.

In 2010 a strategy document Denmark 2020 – knowledge, economic growth, wealth, and welfare, emphasised the human contribution to growth and development and included a passage on cultural policy priorities.

Ministry of Education: http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/General.
Currently, co-operation between the economy and the cultural sector is seen as a way of creating a better framework for the cultural life, but also for the economy, not least through culture’s ability to contribute to the new life experiences, creativity and inventiveness that are at the heart of the developing economy.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for initiatives involving support to creative arts, cultural heritage, archives, libraries, museums and higher education in the areas of art, music, film, theatre and dancing. The ministry is also responsible for broadcasting, copyright, sport and international cultural cooperation.

**Sport and Physical activity**

The Ministry of Culture in Denmark is also responsible for sport. The chief aim of sports policy is to strengthen the sports movement in all its diversity, including supporting voluntary associations, which are seen as the cornerstone in Danish sport, and these associations receive the bulk of the public support allocated to sport by the state and the local authorities. Nonetheless, there is also recognition that others engage in sports and exercise outside of the associations and attempts are made to encourage this form of participation too.

It is the objective of sports policy to strengthen the opportunities for the population – especially for children and young people – to engage in sports and exercise in all contexts, and not least to support sports culture in associations with the unique qualities that this has.

Funding is provided for sport (and cultural) activities from the state football pools and the National Lottery.

Encouraging elite sport is seen as a way of attracting large-scale sporting events to the country.

**Youth**

The Danish Government, does not have a specific youth policy but integrates measures and policy for young people across government, including the regional and local authorities.

Youth unemployment is relatively low in Denmark in comparison with some other parts of Europe and this is attributed to the measures that are in place to give opportunities to young people. Nonetheless Denmark has implemented the EU’s Youth Guarantee for all young people under the age of 25 years. This guarantees opportunities for those who have missed out on education to improve their skills and qualifications, for those with the qualifications to find employment.

The Danish Youth Council (DUF) is an umbrella organisation representing a wide range of organisations working with children and young people. It distributes funding for a correspondingly wide range of activities for the benefit of young people.

The Network of Youth Councils (NAU) is an umbrella organisation for around 70 local youth councils across Denmark.

**THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT**

For the 2014-2020 period, Denmark is scheduled to receive DDK 4.1 billion (€ 551 million) from the ESIF. This represents a 22% reduction compared with the 2007-2013 period.

Of this amount, DDK 3.08 billion (€414 million) is allocated to ERDF and ESF national programmes, with the balance going to cross-border and transnational OPs. There is a single national ERDF Programme ‘Innovative and Sustainable Growth in Businesses’ and a single ESF Programme ‘Growth via Education and entrepreneurship’. Most of the allocation (79%)
of the national funding is attributed to 6 regional Growth Fora, which determine the actions undertaken in their regions, within the framework established by the national OP. The biggest beneficiaries at a regional level are Southern Denmark and Northern Jutland. Around 7.5% of the funds are reserved for a national pool for the implementation of projects at a national level.

5% of ERDF will be used for sustainable urban development of cities with more than 30,000 inhabitants, while ESF – through the EURES measure – will contribute to increasing mobility on the labour market.

There are 3 Cross-border programmes and two Transnational programmes – the Baltic Sea Programme and the North Sea Programme.

Interreg V-A - Germany-Denmark Programme promotes cross-border innovation, sustainable development, and the development of the labour market, employment and training. The programme is designed to promote tourism and more sustainable use of resources and energy in enterprises, but more generally aims to promote product, process and social innovation in key sectors: the environment and clean tech, health, the maritime industry, food industry and mobility and logistics as well as tourism.

Analysis in the Danish Partnership Agreement pointed to low growth in output per inhabitant and in productivity as the major issue to address. This low growth in productivity goes back to the mid-nineties and thus preceded the financial crisis. In line with the European Semester analysis in 2013, the Partnership Agreement acknowledges that an increased quality and effectiveness in the education and training system and in human capital was necessary in order to have better prospects for the middle and long term.

Addressing this problem is not only a matter of increasing productivity, though that continues to be a major objective; it is also necessary to increase the amount of work performed. Denmark has a relatively high participation rate, though more can be done to involve socially excluded groups. Denmark also has the lowest amount of time that people in work in the OECD.

In addition, like other EU countries, Denmark suffers from a mismatch in labour market skills and competences, with over-supply in declining areas, along with shortages of labour in growing and high value industries especially in the form of engineers and skills for the biotech-pharma industries and the ICT sector. Higher quality and effectiveness in the education system is needed to support innovation and the building of human capital.

Another significant perspective set out in the Partnership Agreement is the importance of knowledge, which is key for the productivity and innovation of enterprises. Enterprises that invest in research and development are on average 15% more productive than those which do not. Productivity is also higher in enterprises that work with knowledge institutions.

The Danish government has set out a series of national targets for the year 2020:

- that Denmark will see the share of innovative enterprises grow, so that it is among the top 5 OECD countries for this indicator;
- that private investment in research will grow so that Denmark will be among the top 5 OECD countries for private investment as a share of GNP
- that the share of highly educated persons in the private sector will grow so that Denmark will be in the top % OECD countries for this indicator.

These targets imply that more young people will need to choose higher education that is directed towards private sector activity.
In order to address these issues through the ESIF, the Danish government decided to place considerable emphasis on strengthening education and training. In fact the Danish authorities decided to dedicate 50% of the Cohesion Policy funding available under the growth and jobs objective to the European Social Fund (ESF).

The need to address the relatively slow growth in productivity in Denmark led to a major emphasis on improving skills and competences, particularly through professional education and training to improve the skills of those already in work.

Four priority axes (with sub-categories) were defined:

1. Entrepreneurship and job creation - € 79,993,983.00 (37.55%)
   - Advice for entrepreneurs
   - Entrepreneurship courses
   - Growth orientated competence development

2. Mobility across borders (EURES) - € 2,892,622.00 (1.36%)

3. Inclusion via education and employment (Social inclusion Active inclusion)
   - € 42,759,374.00 (20.07%)
   - Youth education for young people with special challenges
   - Inclusion and social enterprises

4. Professional education and training or higher education - € 77,770,666.00 (36.5%)
   - Professional education
   - Professional education for adults and higher education

5. Technical assistance - € 9,607,636.00 (4.51%).

EURES (the European Employment Service) is a recruiting service operating across Europe.

The budgets for each priority axis and the share of the total is also indicated.

Total expenditure on ESF is: € 213,024,281.

The ERDF OP ‘Innovation and Sustainable Growth in Businesses’ aims to boost economic growth in all Danish regions by creating jobs and boosting productivity, particularly in SMEs.

The Programme has four main priorities:

- Increasing the number of innovative SMEs, supporting co-operation between businesses and knowledge institutions on innovation and promoting innovation though clusters.
- Increasing the number of growth SMEs, targeting SMEs with a substantial growth potential.
- Enhancing energy and resource efficiency in SMEs, with networks of targeted SMEs. Reducing energy consumption in cities with more than 30,000 inhabitants. Investments in the latter area will be part of integrated sustainable urban development strategies.

This gave rise to four priority axes (with sub-categories):

1. Strengthened innovation in SMES. Innovation and knowledge sharing - €85,488,278 (41.38%)
Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies

- Innovation co-operation between enterprises and knowledge
- Increased innovation in SMEs through strong cluster organisations

2. More growth enterprises. Development and new growth positions - € 68,002,039 (32.91%)
   - Growth plans for SMEs

3. Energy and resource effective SMEs. Development and new green business models - €33,187,096 (16.06%)
   - Green business models

4. Sustainable green urban development - € 10,330,792 (5%)
   - Urban development through innovative enterprises – innovative urban development
   - Energy and resource effective towns – sustainable towns

5. Technical assistance - € 9,607,636 (4.65%)

The budgets for each priority axis and the share of the total is also indicated.

The total budget for the ERDF is € 206,615, 41. Nearly 75% of this budget is to be spent on the first two priority axes.

The EARDF budget for Denmark at € 629,400,690 (at the time of the Partnership Agreement) is greater than the ERDF and ESF budgets combined. However, 77% of this is devoted to Thematic Objectives, 4, 5 and 6 – broadly environmental objectives - and a further 11% allocated mainly to the agricultural sector, with only € 16,537,311 (2.6%) devoted to 'Strengthening research, technological development and innovation’ and €36,443,408 (5.8%) to ‘Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination’.

Denmark’s Operational Programme, based on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) has a total budget of € 267,599, 842, of which the EU contribution: € 208, 355,420. Most of this is devoted to the development of various aspects of the fisheries sector. Part of the OP, however, is devoted to Community-led local development (CLLD) strategies, for which the total budget consists of €7,518,393 from the EMFF and €1,326,776 in national co-funding. There are 16 CLLD areas where Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) have been established and where there are initiatives to promote economic growth, social inclusion and job creation. Typical FLAG projects address the marketing of fisheries products and diversification of fisheries businesses (coastal tourism, restaurants, etc.).

**THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION**

Denmark publishes relatively detailed information about the allocation of ERDF and ESF funds to projects. This information includes the name of the project, a description of it, total budget and EU funding, the project leaders and other partners. The information is published on the website of the Danish Business Authority (Erhvervsstyrelsen) and the data used in this report were downloaded at the end of January 2018. Details of expenditure commitments of € 84,980,256 for the ERDF and €81,383,069 for the ESF are provided (excluding technical assistance), against targets up to the end of 2017 of just over € 100,000 for each fund.

From this information, with keyword searches, it is possible to identify in broad terms the nature of projects being supported. The figures referred to below are largely derived from this source.

The analysis begins with the expenditure committed so far in relation to both ERDF and ESF.
Table 1: Danish ESIF expenditure committed (end 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESF / Priority Axes</th>
<th>Total Budget (€)</th>
<th>EU Contribution (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Entrepreneurship and job creation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advice for entrepreneurs</td>
<td>29,066,594</td>
<td>13,130,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Entrepreneurship courses</td>
<td>9,100,342</td>
<td>4,550,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Growth orientated competence development</td>
<td>44,645,112</td>
<td>22,283,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not attributed</td>
<td>3,467,006</td>
<td>1,651,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>86,279,053</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,615,268</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Mobility across borders (EURES)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increased mobility across borders</td>
<td>2,714,244</td>
<td>1,357,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,714,244</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,357,001</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Inclusion via education and employment (Social inclusion/Active inclusion)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Youth education for young people with special needs</td>
<td>10,817,561</td>
<td>5,017,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inclusion and social enterprises</td>
<td>18,933,683</td>
<td>9,194,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not attributed</td>
<td>789,839</td>
<td>394,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,541,083</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,606,475</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Professional education and training or higher education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional education</td>
<td>22,611,868</td>
<td>11,305,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professional education for adults and higher education</td>
<td>23,932,908</td>
<td>10,576,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not attributed</td>
<td>3,843,548</td>
<td>1,921,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50,388,325</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,804,204</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL European Social Fund</strong></td>
<td><strong>169,922,704</strong></td>
<td><strong>81,382,948</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ERDF / Priority Axes</th>
<th>Total Budget (€)</th>
<th>EU Contribution (€)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Strengthened innovation in SMES - Innovation and knowledge sharing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Innovation co-operation between enterprises and knowledge institutions</td>
<td>90,349,887</td>
<td>35,606,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Increased innovation in SMEs through strong cluster organisations</td>
<td>1,254,315</td>
<td>627,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not attributed</td>
<td>11,031,671</td>
<td>5,405,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102,635,873</strong></td>
<td><strong>41,639,154</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Growth plans for SMEs</td>
<td>75,058,852</td>
<td>32,762,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>75,058,852</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,762,031</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Energy and resource effective SMEs. Development and new green business models</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Green business models</td>
<td>16,915,335</td>
<td>8,427,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16,915,335</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,427,937</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Sustainable green urban development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Urban development through innovative enterprises – innovative urban development</td>
<td>857,923</td>
<td>428,961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Energy and resource effective towns – sustainable towns</td>
<td>3,444,345</td>
<td>1,722,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,302,268</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,151,134</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL European Regional Development Fund</strong></td>
<td><strong>198,912,329</strong></td>
<td><strong>84,980,256</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data available at this level show that information on commitments at the end of 2017 amounted to around 38% of the total available for the ESF Programme and around 41% of ERDF Programme.

It is clear that these figures relate primarily to expenditure on education and training and to a certain extent youth. For the other two areas, it is necessary to examine the information available on specific projects.

**Education and Training**

Within the ESF, commitments on Professional education and training or higher education amounted to just short of 30% of total ESF commitments. Youth education, for young people with special needs accounts for another 6%.

In addition a further 51% of the commitments were for Entrepreneurship and job creation, most of which involves courses, competence development and other ‘soft’ training in the form of business advice.

Arguably, therefore, only ‘Increased mobility across borders’ and ‘Inclusion and social enterprises’ do not explicitly involve some form of training, though even here some of the experience gained has similar effects. But, counting these areas as not involving education and training, only around 13% of the committed ESF budget does not contribute to education and training, to some extent.

Furthermore, examination of the detailed description of ERDF projects shows that 40% of commitments by value refer to training or the development of skills and competences and a further 34% refer to the provision of advice. Other terms such as ‘potential development’ are also used.

The following example is one where this ‘hidden’ training is taking place.

**Title:** North West Smart Production

**Programme:** ERDF, priority axis: Strengthened innovation in SMEs. Innovation and knowledge transfer - 1.1.1 Innovation co-operation between enterprises and knowledge. North Jutland. The project runs from 15.03.2017 to 30.06.2020

**Key features:** In line with the Industry 4.0 strategy the aim is to create or maintain more employment through targeted innovation processes that address the concrete technological and competence needs of participating enterprises. This begins with a technological assessment of the firm’s technical capabilities, followed by technology sessions that, for example, give general advice on innovative enhancements of the firm’s production processes and products, in line with the Industry 4.0 concept. This is accomplished in close partnership between the enterprise and knowledge institutions.

**Budget:** DKK 20,822,600 (€ 375,366) EU contribution :   DKK 6,998,475 (€ 939,645)

Overall, therefore, it can be concluded that a large majority of ERDF support involves the development of skills and competences in one way of another and that taken together with the ESF expenditure, human resource development is present in most of the projects supported by ESIF funds in Denmark.
**Culture and Creative sector**

Unfortunately, it is not possible to get a similarly clear picture for culture.

Denmark has a legacy of support for culture and the creative sector, especially as part of promoting the experience economy. South Denmark, in particular, has promoted this sector over many years. In the current period, the following project on ‘Creativity and Entrepreneurship’ is being supported and is contributing currently to the regional smart specialisation strategy.

**Title:** Creativity and Entrepreneurship – business creation in the creative sector

**Programme:** ESF, priority axis: Entrepreneurship and job creation, South Denmark. The project runs from 02.12.2014 to 31.08.2018.

**Key features:** The project has the objective of promoting greater entrepreneurship and growth in the design sector in the South Denmark region. The project aims to attract graduate talent to the region and work with established enterprises in architecture, interior design, publishing, printing, design, film or video, radio and TV, ICT content and music, art and handicrafts or entrepreneurs wanting to establish new businesses in the sector. A structured development programme takes those participating through an initial camp and idea development phase, followed by a nine-month development phase and a growth phase of a year and finishing with an expansion phase. All the main activities are supported by network activities, optional and professional workshops, matchmaking events and access to test and prototype facilities.

**Budget:** DKK 35,555,556 (€4,773,839); EU contribution DKK 16,000,000 (€ 2,148, 227)

Otherwise a strong theme in Danish ESIF support is the promotion of design. Projects committed worth € 21,670,984 in EU contributions and € 44,812,484 overall have some design element in them, but this can vary from simply some design advice as part of a business support package or projects that may be open to design enterprises to projects addressing environmental issues from the design perspective and several projects promoting design clusters. ‘Growth by Design’, a project from South Denmark with an overall budget of € 3,809, 690 (EU contribution of € 1,904,845) is using design-based knowledge and research to strengthen the innovation and competitiveness of enterprises and the D2i Design Cluster project, again in South Denmark is using ‘data to intelligence’ (D2i) techniques in to help enterprises in the design area to become more innovative.

There are also a number of contributions to the development of a food culture, as the marketing side of foodstuff clusters.

**Sport and Physical activity**

Although in the past, sport and physical activity have been supported in Denmark under the Structural Funds, with projects ranging from sport contributions to experience economy developments, the development of spas and fitness centres, coastal developments including sailing and the organisation of sport festivals, the number of projects, so far approved in the current period is rather restricted. One relatively small project with an EU contribution of € 62,642 on the island of Bornholm, is entitled ‘Outdoor Signature Experience’ and is aiming to add to outdoor tourism by engaging a range of businesses and other stakeholders in the
development of outdoor products and experiences, as part of a move to diversify the tourism offer and extend the season. Other projects, such as the Public-Private Innovation pool project in South Denmark, which helps to move innovations from early stages to market launch can help enterprises in the experience economy or those involved in Health and welfare innovation or Sustainable energy, some of which may concern sport enterprises.

There are also a relatively large number of projects that are promoting developments in relation to health and welfare. It is possible that some of these projects have made links with sport scientists of others in the area of sport and physical activity that are working on health and welfare issues.

However, overall, it appears that support for sport and physical activity has declined from already relatively low levels in the preceding programming period.

**Youth**

It was clear from the figures presented above that Denmark is following through its stated intention of engaging with young people, who are suffering from disadvantages, as well as those who can benefit from general education and training provision in gaining the skills and competences necessary for an active role as part of the labour force. The priority axis ‘Youth education for young people with special needs’ has been mentioned as part of the education provision and the following example shows how this approach can be applied.

**Title:** Inclusion via education and employment

**Programme:** ESF, priority axis: Social inclusion Active inclusion, youth education for young people with special needs. Capital region, North Zealand. The project runs from 2017 to 2020.

**Key features:** Young people are expected to make a series of major choices in the secondary education system – which courses to follow, what profession to aim for and they are faced with many demands from their teachers. They also face social pressures. Not all of them can cope with the demands made on them, especially those on the autistic spectrum or with mental problems such as anxiety or depression. Luckily it has been shown that the right approach in supplementing school provision can effectively help these young people. The project builds on the successful experience of a project in Copenhagen and extends coverage to the northern part of the Capital region, since it has been shown that easy access to local support is an important factor.

54 young people will be assisted over the project period, beginning with a summer school for 18 young people in a particular professional area each year. These sessions aim to build confidence and develop social skills to help the young people to cope with normal education processes. Support continues through the year, provided by specialist agencies.

**Budget:** DKK 15,017,559 (€ 2,016,321) EU contribution: DKK 7,508,780 (€ 1,008,161)

However, action to support young people is not confined to the priority ‘Youth education for young people with special needs, with an overall budget of € 10,817,561 and an EU contribution of € 5,017,145. Taking all the ESF measures, which are partially targeted at young people or which aim to involve them, the commitment figures show a total of € 43,231,921 and an EU contribution of € 20,791,866 – clearly a more substantial contribution.
ESIF and education, culture, sport & youth –
the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in the policy areas of the Committee

These include projects such as ‘the Future’s Maritime Crafts People’, with a sectoral element, but also ‘Better Professional Education’ that encourages young people to develop business skills.

**SPECIAL INTERVENTIONS**

In the Partnership Agreement, the Danish authorities explain that they have not developed a national smart specialisation strategy, because each of the regions have their own strategies of this kind. Nonetheless, there are national strategies that have a sectoral dimension, for instance, the government has growth plans for sectors where Denmark competes in international markets. These sectors are:

- Blue Denmark
- Creative business and design
- Water, bio and environmental solutions
- Health and welfare solutions
- Energy and climate
- Foodstuffs
- Tourism and the experience economy
- ICT and digital growth.

Denmark is an Innovation Leader, according to the Innovation Union Scoreboard.

At the regional level, the Growth Fora that bring together the main stakeholders have developed smart specialisation strategies that have identified usually four sectors on which to focus.

The Capital region, which covers Copenhagen and North Zealand has the Cultural & creative industries and Public health & security in its smart specialisation priorities.

South Denmark, has built on earlier work by including the experience economy.

North Jutland has both Tourism and the experience economy and the Cultural & creative industries among its priorities

Central Jutland has the Creative sector and ICT & Tourism as part of its priorities, stating that it aims to support a rich and diverse cultural climate focusing on artistic development, creation of networks, an international outlook and collaboration. There is a development strategy regarding tourism that was revised in 2016.

Zealand (covering most of the island, except for the capital region) is the region with the least focus on the areas of interest, though Health innovation is one of its priorities, an area where sport and physical activity can make a contribution. The region has a health innovation strategy that focuses on the patient as a partner and that promotes integrated care and health equality. The municipalities are establishing integrated health care centres supported by many small initiatives and pilots on smart health.

**Particularly effective interventions**

The well-focused organisation of projects to assist young people who have not been able to take advantage of the education and training system, as part of Denmark’s response to the need to increase productivity is worth mentioning, but Denmark’s approach to building innovative enterprises is also particularly effective. Over many years, this country has been a leader in cluster development and this approach to promoting growth and innovation is evident in support provided for the creative sector where a number of projects are promoting design clusters in different regions. The strength of this advanced form of economic development is in the multiple activities that are involved in the development of the clusters,
including competence development in enterprises, encouraging networking between enterprises and with knowledge institutions, assisting with the development of research projects and support for marketing and internationalisation. This multi-faceted aspect of the approach is also evident in the support given to clusters in the food sector and in the health-welfare sector. One of the consequences of this is that it is not always possible to give a definitive sectoral allocation. Some of the projects supporting food clusters are directed to developments in food production, but there are also elements of the work that concentrate on the marketing side, which include the promotion of the sector as part of the experience economy, with implications for tourism, but also in the form of encouraging a more conscious food culture, with elements that relate to the cultural and creative industries.

GERMANY

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Before discussing the national policy context in each of the four areas covered by the study in Germany, it is useful to highlight the general priorities set for Germany, based on the 11 investment priorities defined for the ESIFs in the 2014-20 period at a European level. The 11 investment priorities translate into the following priorities in Germany:

- Addressing demographic change and the challenges of an ageing society
- Support innovation capacity and the creation of new businesses
- Address the lack of skilled personnel
- Support marginal groups such as long-term unemployed, low qualified people and people with a migration background in entering the labour market
- Reduce early school and vocational training leaving and facilitate transition from school to traineeships
- Develop rural areas, improve competitiveness and protect biodiversity
- Facilitate transition to renewable energy sources

As these priorities show, and as was confirmed by a national authority responsible for the ERDF’s implementation in Germany, the four thematic areas are not primary strategic priorities for the ESIFs in Germany. Most spending under the ERDF goes to SME support. Overall, more projects could be identified under education and training (especially ESF-funded projects) and culture and the creative sector than in case of sport and youth. In case of youth, most of the projects identified also fall into the ‘education and training’ category.

Germany signed a Partnership Agreement with the European Commission on implementing the ESIF funds in the 2014-20 period. This is then implemented through a total of 47 programmes:

- 15 regional ERDF and 15 regional ESF programmes and one multi-fund ESF/ERDF programme for Lower Saxony
- One ESF programme at a national level

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• 14 development programmes for rural areas and one national programme to link these up for the EAFRD

• One national programme for the EMFF

An external progress report of the implementation of the Partnership Agreement in published in 2017 stated that the priorities and needs identified in 2014 remained in place and no strategic adjustment was necessary, even though the influx of migrants and refugees in the meantime was of great interest in the context of ESF spending.

**Education and Training**

Education and training policy is by and large a regional (as opposed to national) competence in Germany, with the Federal Government’s competence restricted to supporting higher education institutions. This means there is a natural role for regions to set strategic priorities under the Structural Funds, especially with regard to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Two priorities within ESIF funding in the area of education and training in Germany are ‘lifelong learning’ and social integration through education. Many ESIF-funded projects identified tackle long-term unemployment which seems pertinent given that overall unemployment in Germany is low compared to the EU average and thus fits well within the wider national policy framework. Long-term unemployment was also identified as priority in the Partnership Agreement for Germany.

The national ESF OP for Germany highlights positive developments in the education sector such as a trend towards higher educational attainment levels, but also notes that some parts of society do not participate in these positive developments. Improving access to education and training is regarded as key to taking full advantage of Germany’s employment potential. Objective 10 of the European Social Fund (ESF) ‘Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning’ is mentioned as one focus of the 2014-2020 funding period in Germany. In particular, ESF funding is used to reduce early school leaving and to try out new forms of support such as inclusion of children with special needs in regular schools and the integration of children from refugee families.

According to the progress report of 2017 on the Partnership Agreement, the total eligible expenditure on thematic objective 10 ‘(vocational) training and education’ amounted to €1.74bn (with an approval rate of 42.5%), 55.9% of which amount were accounted for by investment priority 10iv ‘improving the relevance of educational systems for the labour market’. This benefitted 350,317 individuals. Investments in infrastructure and educational facilities are a priority in the ERDF Operational Programme for less developed Eastern German states such as Brandenburg and Saxony, whereas this does not feature as a priority in ERDF OPs of more developed regions such as Bavaria or Baden-Württemberg.

The EAFRD also contains an investment priority linked to education and training which mainly supports training of people working in the agricultural sector on things like water protection,
often organised through single events. According to the progress report mentioned above, 8,124 beneficiaries participated in such trainings so far.

In case of the ERDF, very few projects fall into the category of education and training. Most of these concern the renovation of school buildings.

**Culture and Creative sector**

As is the case with education and training, cultural policy is largely a regional competence in Germany. Public (financial) support of culture and cultural facilities (e.g. theatres, opera and concert houses) has a longstanding tradition in Germany and is also understood to contribute to equal access to culture across the country’s territory. Such spending is usually not directly linked to wider economic and social benefits, other than keeping the creative sector afloat financially. Funding provided to the culture and creative sector is regarded as SME support in the case of the ERDF, underlining the fact that whilst relevant projects are funded, these are not easily identifiable due to the way funding is reported on in Germany. In the view of a national authority in charge of the ERDF in Germany, it is easier to justify funding cultural projects when these can be linked to SME support or tourist infrastructure (e.g. making infrastructure accessible for disabled people).

In the ESIF Partnership Agreement 2014-20 for Germany, the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and its tourism potential are the main priorities of note. Protecting ‘agricultural heritage’ and preservation of traditional landscapes are also regarded as cultural policies in the Agreement.

In rural regions, specific support is provided under the ERDF to improve the Internet presence of local cultural offerings. In urban areas, the focus lies on restoration of culturally important structures.

The development of local natural and cultural heritage is regarded as a contribution to developing the cultural sector and tourism more generally. A typical measure may be the installation of ‘barrier-free’ access to natural and cultural sites. Local economies are also supported through ‘creative quarters’.

In Saxony and the Saarland, the Operational Programmes signed for the ERDF contains investment priority 6c which focuses on the preservation and protection of natural and cultural heritage with a link to developing its tourist potential. The same is the case in the OP for Bavaria, but not in the case of Baden-Württemberg, suggesting that the East-West regional divide within Germany does not play a role in case of support to culture under the ERDF.

In Saxony, the Operational Programme for the ERDF foresee investment in the creative sector under investment priority 9b as part of a wider strategy to prevent outmigration from disadvantaged urban quarters by strengthening economic and social spaces.

In Mecklenburg Pomerania, the OP for the last programming period 2007-13 foresaw a rural tourism concept for specific measures aimed at tourism and culture. The aim was to develop the region’s tourism related business through improved innovation, competitiveness and

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attractiveness of regional companies. Measures focused on improving research and training, developing cultural infrastructure and creating customer-oriented tourism services. One project allocated € 32m aimed to promote the regional at national and international trade fairs and exhibitions and thus develop new market segments.

A Cross-Border Poland-Germany OP was developed for the 2007-13 programming period. This provides an example of a combination economic development and social cohesion strategies. The focus here is on protecting cultural and heritage sites, developing a wider public cultural infrastructure, stimulating Polish-German cross-border cultural projects and supporting institutions with the aim of enhancing social and territorial cohesion amongst the two regions. This also included a sports dimension through the funding of cycle paths.

**Sport and Physical activity**

There is no coherent national sports policy or strategy, but sports and physical activities are supported both at national and regional levels.

Correspondingly, sport seems to play only a marginal role in the 2014-2020 ESIF period in Germany – neither ESF nor ERDF operational programmes mention sport as an explicit priority. A national authority in charge of the ERDF funding in Germany commented that it is difficult to use EU funding explicitly for sport because sport facilities are considered essential public services to be provided by the state or municipalities in Germany and thus not considered 'structural policy'. The authority mentioned there had been cases where projects applying for ERDF funding had to be rejected for this reason. Sport projects with a link to culture or tourism can more easily be funded by the ERDF.

The above points notwithstanding, there a few noteworthy project examples (see below), often linking sports to local tourism development (ERDF) or to social inclusion (ESF).

There is also a sports dimension to projects supporting climate change adaptation in alpine regions where the local economy is dependent on winter sports and suffers from reduced likelihood of snowfall and changing natural threats such as rock falls.

**Youth**

The training and education of young people is a key focus area of the Partnership Agreement signed between the EU and Germany for the 2014-2020 period of the ESIFs. This is seen as a measure to counter the impending shortage of skilled workers in various industries and regions due to the demographic change of an ageing society. In this context, the support provided under the ESF’s objective 10 to vocational training is of particular relevance. Apart from unemployment, drug addiction and long-term illness are other challenges that prevent people from entering the job market and this is tackled by the ESF in Germany. As a positive, Germany boasts the lowest youth unemployment in the EU.

ESF funding in Germany puts young people at the centre and focuses on increasing their participation in the labour market by making sure social environment does not prevent them from realising their potential.

The actions supported in Germany under the ESIFs also contribute to the National Reform Programme to reduce poverty. The Partnership Agreement states that there are local (urban) areas where young people lack future perspectives and educational opportunities, combined with a weak local economy and a negative residential environment.
A focus also placed on children and young people growing up in households dependent on welfare. The ESF supports projects that prevent such young people from ending up poor due to their social environment. The focus here lies on families with a single parent.

Under objective 10, the ESF funds instruments facilitating the transition from school to vocational training, building on existing infrastructure such as youth workshops and youth vocational support.

Looking at the ESF regional Operational Programmes, taking the Saxonian one as an example, there is a clear investment priority for reducing early-school and vocation leaving and to improve the career guidance for young people. Another element is equal opportunities in school for children and teenagers from different backgrounds.

In case of the ERDF, youth plays a very marginal role, according to the national authority in charge. The few relevant projects concern disadvantaged young people being supported integration in vocational training, work and society through social work, production schools and youth workshops under thematic objective 9. Youth features in OPs e.g. in Saxony and the Saarland under investment priority 9b supporting disadvantages communities in urban and rural areas, which includes initiatives focusing on social inclusion of young people with dim future prospects. In practice, more youth projects where fund to be co-funded by the ESF than by the ERDF.

THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT

It is difficult to precisely specify the extent of support across the four areas in ESIF funding in Germany since both the ERDF and the ESF are mainly operated through OPs on a regional level – meaning there are separate project databases for each of the 16 Länder. Moreover, only a few of these Länder appear to make project databases publicly available, whereas others merely cite project examples on their website. In order to provide an idea of the extent of support across the four areas, the Länder North Rhine Westphalia (Germany’s most populous) and the East German Saxony were further examined.

While no absorption rates related to projects in the four areas could be singled out, the overall absorption rate as at 16 August 2017 was 27.8% in case of the ERDF, 47.3% in case of the ESF, 15% in case of the EAFRD.39

Education and Training feature prominently in the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes in various regions, in particular under Objective 10 of the ESF which accounts for 33.6% of total ESF spending in Germany in the 2014-20 funding period.40 Overall, education and training is not a major priority in ESIF spending in Germany, and only accounts for 0.5% of the total of € 8.3bn as allocated in 201441. Looking at ERDF project databases of individual states, there appear to be at least 10 projects in North Rhine Westphalia with an education or training element in the 2014-20 period.42 For Saxony, separate databases list all the projects for the ERDF and the ESF in the 2014-20 period. A keyword search for education returned only two projects in the case of the ERDF database.

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40 Partnership Agreement Summary June 2014, p. 5.
42 https://www.efre.nrw.de/daten-fakten/projektbrowser/
A keyword search for training returned 242 project entries in the ESF database, however, suggesting there is a great variety of small-scale relevant projects.

The preservation of cultural heritage is also referred to frequently in Operational Programmes for the ERDF. Support to the creative sector seems to be only a secondary priority, with some funding provided for sustainable urban development and the creation of resilient local economies in deprived urban areas. Overall, a wide range of cultural and creative projects have been identified in regional ERDF OPs. Looking at ERDF project databases of individual states, there appear to be at least 7 projects in North Rhine Westphalia with an education or training element in the 2014-20 period, often with a combination of culture and tourism.43 A keyword search for culture and ‘creative’ returned three projects in case of the ERDF database. The same search in the ESF database gave 41 results. According to the progress report, the total eligible expenditure of 22 projects supporting the development of cultural and creative services by SMEs under the ERDF was € 9.9m as at 31 December 2016. In the same period, € 10.9m was allocated to 6 projects supporting public resources in the area of culture and cultural heritage.

Sports is neither mentioned in the Partnership Agreements nor in the Operational Programmes reviewed for this report. Nevertheless, individual examples of projects with a sports dimension have been identified (see next section). Looking at ERDF project databases of individual states, there appear to be at least 5 projects in North Rhine Westphalia focusing on hiking and tourism in the 2014-20 period.44 In Saxony, 11 sports-related projects could be identified in the ERDF database. A search in the ESF database provided 48 project entries.

A lot of the education and training activities supported by the ESIFs in Germany have a youth dimension in that they focus on integrating underprivileged young people into the labour market, prevent early school and vocational training leaving, and create supportive social environments for young people. Many youth-related projects can hence also fit into the category ‘Education and training’. Looking at ERDF project databases of individual states, there appear to be at least 5 projects in North Rhine Westphalia with a youth dimension, either focusing on interesting young people in STEM subjects or supporting youth centres, in the 2014-20 period.45 A search in the ESF database for Saxony in the 2014-20 period for ‘youth’ provided 77 project entries. The national ESF programme includes a programme ‘Jugend Stärken im Quartier (JUSTIQ)’ (strengthen youth in the neighbourhood) supporting urban development in disadvantaged districts. Overall, according to the progress report46, 441,689 out of a total of 708,299 people benefiting from ESF funding up until 31 December 2016 in Germany were under 25 years old.

A few relevant INTERREG and URBACT projects were also identified:

VIOLET supports the reinstatement and conversion of traditional buildings for improved energy usage whilst protecting architectural heritage which can be exploited for tourism. The measure thus addresses both low carbon and cultural preservation actions. In Munich, the URBACT project Munich - Gscheid Mobil is considered a good practice example of promoting

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43 https://www.efre.nrw.de/daten-fakten/projektbrowser/
44 https://www.efre.nrw.de/daten-fakten/projektbrowser/
45 https://www.efre.nrw.de/daten-fakten/projektbrowser/
46 P. 33.
environmentally friendly transport, including safe cycling and teaching young people skills such as how to carry out small repairs independently.

THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION

Education and Training

One of the most common types of projects funded by ESF money in Germany relates to the investment priority ‘Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change’ is. Another prominent priority is ‘enhancing access to lifelong learning, upgrading skills’.

Overall, however, the largest number of projects was found to fall into the category ‘Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training’. Some examples are provided below:

In North Rhine Westphalia, ESF support goes to vocational training in a local steel firm. Another project provides job coaches and qualification support to long-term unemployed people.

Three examples of projects with fairly large budgets from the state of Berlin are:

- “Modul e.V.”: professional orientation in craftsmanship – network “professional practice” (€2.4m)
- “WeTeK Berlin GmbH”: professional training for social-pedagogical experts (€2.3m)
- BBW Akademie GmbH: professional orientation, advice on career choice (€2m)

Overall, these examples show that there is a focus on strengthening vocational training at a time when many firms struggle to fill traineeships which are crucial to the future thriving of many SMEs in industry in particular.

Culture and Creative sector

Many projects were identified that focus on urban regeneration through supporting cultural and creative sector activities. These often but not always take place in deprived areas with a strong industrial history. Culture seems to also be used as a bridge across countries, with several cross-border projects being supported by the ERDF under German involvement. Some examples organised by investment priority are provided below.

Contributing to urban development & regeneration

Examples:

In the deprived urban area Jungbusch, Mannheim, ERDF funding supported the establishment of a ‘creative economy centre’ hosting 37 start-ups and providing office and co-working space as well as conference and training rooms.

Another creative centre was created in Pforzheim, housing graphic designers, film makers and jewellery designers in a heritage building.

Linking cultural and creative actions with the development of tourism or the experience economy
**Examples:**

**Grimm Welt Kassel** is a museum on all aspects of life of the Brothers Grimm aimed at increasing the attractiveness of the Northern Hesse region. In Thuringia, **CULTUR3D** supports the serial recording and digital modelling of cultural goods in 3D.

There is another project combining cultural and tourism impacts with a cross-border dimension. **Golden Street** is an open-air history park of medieval houses on the Czech-German border which seeks to strengthen cultural and social bonds across the border.

Another project promoting cross-border cultural dialogue is **KulturDialog** which aims to increase mutual understanding on the Danish-German border. This was done by organising a common music school event and other small cultural initiatives.

Cultural tourism is also at the core of **THETRIS**, a project linking 11 partners from 8 Central European countries to create a transnational route of churches using modern technology and exchange know-how.

**Creating employment in cultural and creative activity**

**Examples:**

In Baden-Württemberg, Create!PF is a network supported by ERDF money that links people working in the creative sector with enterprises in the local economy of Pforzheim.

Similar centres were also identified in North Rhine Westphalia (including one centre for designers).

**Sport and Physical activity**

Projects with a sports dimension are less prevalent in Germany compared to the other three categories. The few examples that could be identified tended to support young people, and / or have a tourism dimension, e.g. in the context of promoting hiking or cycling in attractive surroundings. Thus, one fairly common type of projects funded by the ESF concerns ‘cycle track and footpaths’. Below, a couple of examples are provided organised by investment priority.

**Addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to happiness & well-being**

**Examples:**

‘**JobFit Interaktiv**’ in the state of Hesse is an interesting example of a project supporting disadvantaged teenagers during the transition from school to vocation through mentoring and coaching in the framework of sports club.

**Promoting sustainable transport; Linking sport actions with the development of tourism or the experience economy**
Examples:
In North Rhine Westphalia, one project supports bicycle tourism through building 50 rental stations for bikes and pedelecs and facilitate individual tour planning. Another project in Thuringia supports the development of a new pedal mechanic facilitating biking.

There is also a sports projects with a cross-border dimension: “Neue Wege nach Europa / New Paths Toward Europe” supports a German-Czech football school which combines sports activities with linguistic and cultural training. Since 2007, 6,000 youngsters from both countries participated in the school’s activities.

Youth
Most projects with a youth dimension fall under ‘education and training’. Indeed, reducing early school leaving is a priority under the ESF, as mentioned at the beginning of this fiche. Moreover, support during the transition to vocational training is a focus of many projects identified. A couple of projects have a cross-border dimension. Many projects link to either education and training or sports. Below, a range of examples are provided organised by investment priority.

Impacts on related employment; Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training
One of the most common types of projects funded by the ESF in Germany in the 2014-20 period is ‘reducing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education. Examples:

Projects supporting vocation for young people are fairly common across different states.

Regional ESF projects for disadvantages youth to integrate them into the labour market (Baden-Württemberg) improving employability through tailored support measures focusing on social and health stabilisation and low-level qualification and training to bring marginalised young people closer to the rules-based systems of school, vocation and job.

In North Rhine Westphalia, a ‘production school’ support young people in need of extra support in vocational training and productive work in ‘firm-like’ conditions. Another project in the same state supports the training of young disabled people.

In Rhineland Palatinate, Juwel 2017 is a project supporting unemployed youngsters through training and education.

In Baden-Württemberg, an ERDF project supports the creation of a vocational centre at a book binding firm to provide training to local youngsters. This is combined with the use of new machinery and methods, which in turn allows more efficient production thus reducing the environmental footprint of the enterprise.

Apart from vocational training support, there is also one ERDF project helping young unemployed people to start their own firms - SMART - Training Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors. This helped mainstream entrepreneurial thinking in local schools and educational facilities.
Two examples of Berlin are:

“Zukunft im Beruf-ZIB” (Future in the Job) providing pedagogical accompaniment at vocational schools (€8.9m) and “ZukunftPlus” (Future Plus) supporting young people with basic high school diploma to enter the job market (€2.2m).

**Cross-border youth actions**

**Examples:**

The project Go.for.Europe in Baden-Württemberg supports internships abroad for trainees.

Similarly, another project supports cross-border education and vocation for young students from Germany and France to improve their employability.

**Improving skills & competences**

**Examples:**

In Hamburg, Come In supports young adults in problematic life situations and provides training in German and mathematics, ICT basics, job application training, living and economising and other skills. Many of the other youth-related projects identified also include a focus on skills development, among other goals.

| **Title:** JobFit Interaktiv ‘Sport project Engages Young People’ |
| **Programme:** State of Hesse, Germany. In operation since 2006, ongoing |
| **Key features:** JobFit Interaktiv in the state of Hesse is an interesting example of a project supporting disadvantaged teenagers during the transition from school to vocation through mentoring and coaching in the framework of sports club. It tackles the problem that many youngsters still find no vocational traineeship even though many such traineeship placements are on offer. The programme supports youngsters aged 15-21 in developing additional skills and boosting their motivation in the framework of sports clubs. Specific workshops address job applications and interviews, rhetoric and presentation, and conduct. These workshops can be booked by individual sports clubs for their members. In addition, the programme teaches values such as patience, ambition and team spirit through sports. Potential employers are in regular contact with the sports clubs and also act as sponsors. Between 2009 and 2016, 461 early school leavers participating in the programme (out of a total of 2,400) succeeded in finding a traineeship. In 2017, the project was opened up to refugees. |
| **Budget:** total budget: € 281,500; ESF contribution: € 103,700 |

**SPECIAL INTERVENTIONS**

There are 13 Smart Specialisation strategies in Germany with a link to one or several of the four areas.

At the national level, Germany has devised a **strategy** to create an innovative work environment.
At the regional level, OPs include references to developing the creative industries, often linked to Smart Specialisation strategies. For instance, Baden-Württemberg’s innovation strategy includes a reference to the creative sector as a core of innovation and way to diversify the regional economy. As per the Smart Specialisation’s website, this concerns support to arts, entertainment and recreation; creative, arts and entertainment activities; libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities; and sports activities and amusement and recreation activities. Overall, this suggests that Smart Specialisation strategies in disadvantaged areas or areas that underwent economic transformation (e.g. deindustrialisation) can be quite effective when combined with a focus on developing the cultural and creative sector.

In North Rhine Westphalia, the Smart Specialisation strategy includes a focus on media and the creative industries, in particular motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities and also programming and broadcasting activities.

Media and creative industry also feature in the Smart Specialisation and innovation strategies of the states of Berlin, Brandenburg, and Bremen. Berlin’s strategy includes a reference to networking platforms (Berlin Web Week, Berlin Fashion Week, Berlin Art Week), games and edutainment, innovation labs and crowdfunding. In Hamburg, smart specialisation focuses on the creative society, covering architecture, visual arts, performing arts, design, film, literature, music, print media, radio broadcasting, software and games and advertisement.

**Particularly effective interventions**

A few interventions can be singled out as particularly effective in terms of the ESIF objectives and the priorities set for Germany, as outlined at the beginning of this country fiche.

The above-mentioned JobFit Interaktiv shows how education and training, sports, and youth support can be linked to create a particularly effective intervention that contributes to the national priorities of facilitating the transition from school to vocation. The project is also open to refugees, meaning it also contributes to the national priority of facilitating access to the labour market to marginalised groups in society. There is evidence of the measure’s impact in that 461 out of roughly 2,400 participants succeeded in finding a traineeship after participating in the programme. This project demonstrates the wider benefits of sports-based projects in terms of improving young people’s employability and integration into the job market.

Another project that provided swift relief in a situation where a large number of people became unemployed at once concerns ESF support after the bankruptcy of the airline Air Berlin on October 2017. The measure helped set up a transfer society for former employees which provided them with training. In combination with unemployment funding provided by the National Agency for Labour, this proved crucial in supporting these people during the period immediately after bankruptcy of the airline and their reintegration into the job market.

Another innovative project examples is the above-mentioned ERDF project helping young unemployed people to start their own firms - SMART - Training Network for Innovation and

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47 [https://wm.baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/redaktion/m-wm/Intern/Publikationen/Innovation/InnovationsstrategieBW.pdf](https://wm.baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/redaktion/m-wm/Intern/Publikationen/Innovation/InnovationsstrategieBW.pdf)  
48 [https://www.efre.nrw.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Programmtexte/Regionale_Innovationsstrategie.pdf](https://www.efre.nrw.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Programmtexte/Regionale_Innovationsstrategie.pdf) p. 93
Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors. This project is particularly effective in combining education and training support with a youth dimension.

**The interaction of ESIF actions and those undertaken under Erasmus+ and Creative Europe and related EU initiatives**

There seems to be little to no direct interaction between Erasmus+ and the ESIFs in Germany. The ESIF Partnership Agreement does not mention Erasmus+. This is confirmed on the regional level. The OP for the ESF in Saxony, for instance, mentions that there is no overlap with the Erasmus+ programme.

Neither are Creative Europe, the European Capitals of Culture or the European Week of Sport and Physical Activity mentioned in the Partnership Agreement. In previous funding periods, ERDF funding went into protecting cultural heritage and supporting creative industries in the Ruhr Area which was the European Capital of Culture in 2010.

**THE MAIN IMPACTS OBSERVED**

Given that the four areas are not explicit thematic priorities in Germany under the ESIFs, no data is reported on the impact of interventions in these areas. Moreover, the national authority for the ERDF confirmed that there is no monitoring of the implementation of regional OPs at a national level in Germany. Some evidence of impact could be obtained from a Progress Report of implementation of the Partnership Agreement from 2017.49

Hence, the text below largely reports on anecdotal evidence of the impact of individual interventions identified in the four areas. Other than this report, the national ERDF authority confirmed that no further studies of relevance are currently available, although an impact study is underway and will be published in Summer 2018, focusing on the ERDF funding period from 2010 until now.

**Education and Training**

The progress report states that implementation of projects related to the education and training objective under the ESF are well underway, suggesting that these will contribute to the education objective of Europe 2020.50 The biggest impact is expected in reducing early school leaving. This could be expected to lead to longer term positive impacts on professional and societal integration, securing skilled personnel and competitiveness. It is also expected that innovative project models tried out with ESF funding will, if successful, later be mainstreamed into national labour market policy programmes. Another positive finding is that the benchmark for the rate of 30-34 year-olds with tertiary education is easily surpassed (actual 46.8% in 2015 vs aim of 42%).51

**Culture and Creative sector**

49 GEFRA/IFS. 2017. STRATEGISCHER FORTSCHRITTSBERICHT 2017 zur Partnerschaftsvereinbarung zwischen Deutschland und der Europäischen Kommission für die Umsetzung der ESI-Fonds unter dem Gemeinsamen Strategischen Rahmen in der Förderperiode 2014 bis 2020
50 Ibid. P. 44
51 Ibid. P. 24ff.
The progress report states that there have been delays in case of ERDF investments in the protection of natural and cultural heritage. It does not comment on the impact of such projects but delays may mean that these will only occur in the future.

**Sport and Physical activity**

The progress report does not mention any sport-related projects.

**Youth**

The progress reports quotes some figures that are indicative of a positive development for young people in Germany. These concern the high employment rate (79.1% in 2016 vs a goal of 77%) and the fact that Germany has the lowest youth unemployment rate in the EU, and the reduced rate of early school leavers which is now lower than the benchmark (9.8% vs 10%).

**IRELAND**

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

As is the case for all Member States, a Partnership Agreement (PA) covering the period 2014-2020 sets out the policy context within which European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) are employed in Ireland.

The PA sets out priorities for ESIF investment which are being implemented through two ERDF Operational Programmes (OPs) and one ESF OP on Employability, Inclusion and Learning.

The priorities have been selected based on the Europe 2020 Strategy, the National Reform Programme (NRP), Ireland’s Medium Term Economic Strategy (MTES), (the MTES is described in more detail below) needs analyses, ex-ante evaluations, and public consultation processes. Priorities focus on promoting jobs and growth with the ESI funding set to complement national investments in line with national and EU priorities.

Relevant in the context of the NRP, the Irish government has produced the Medium Term Economic Strategy which sets out the policy framework to continue the work of rebuilding the Irish economy, achieving sustainable economic growth, strong public finances, and enduring job creation. This strategy dovetails the NRP. As part of the MTES, Ireland adopts and publishes annual Action Plans for Jobs; the first one was published in 2012.

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52 Ibid. P. 24ff.
The PA describes in details the MTES, presented in December 2013, is which based on three pillars, and is summarised below:

- **Ensuring Debt Sustainability** through a combination of rigorous new debt, deficit and spending rules, institutional reforms and better management of public spending, gross public debt will be brought down to safer levels.

- **Financing Growth.** Rigorous management of the public finances will support strong growth if accompanied by measures to ensure adequate flows of domestic and international finance into enterprise and investment opportunities in Ireland and to resolve legacy debt problems of households and enterprises. At the same time, the Government will open up new innovative sources of non-bank finance for job creation and infrastructure development.

- **Supporting Employment and Living Standards.** Barriers to growth are being identified and removed in key sectors of the Irish economy. Sheltered sectors of the economy will be opened up to competition and investment and the Government is to intensify efforts to enhance the capacity of Ireland’s workforce, through investment in education and training and through measures to support people to set up business or move between jobs and sectors as the economy grows.

In addition to the MTES, the Irish NRP set out the broad macroeconomic context and outline implementation of some of the key policy reforms underway since Ireland’s exit from its Economic Adjustment Programme. The NRP also provides an update on progress under the Europe 2020 Strategy, and sets out the alignment of Irish use of ESI funds with NRP objectives.

The PA states that “Ireland has a broad range of development needs which span ten of the eleven thematic objectives defined in the EU regulations governing use of the ESI Funds (the exception is the objective relating to institutional capacity). Development needs also emerged as a result of submissions, consultations, analyses and evaluations completed for each of the OPs”.

The following development needs is supported through the ESIF:

1. Employment
2. Availability of Next Generation Broadband
3. Poverty and social inclusion
4. Research and development
5. Climate change and resource efficiency
6. Education

The Irish PA states that several consultation processes were undertaken as part of the OP preparations. These raised over a dozen issues (to be addressed in the OPs), of which several were relevant to young people and/or education & training:
Labour market activation activities for Long Term Unemployed (LTU) particularly from disadvantaged areas

- Enhancing employability of prisoners/ex-offenders and managing offenders in the community
- Education and development of life-long learning for young people at risk of offending
- Progression from further to higher education for young people
- Funding for the early childhood education and care sector

Having reviewed the content of the OP, it is not obvious how any of these areas were further incorporated into the programmes, although they may well have been effectively taken into account.

In terms of implementation, Cohesion policy is split between three government departments in Ireland. The **Department of Public Expenditure and Reform** coordinated the overall preparation of the PA, while the **Department of Public expenditure and Reform** is responsible for EU Cohesion Policy and the ESIF, as well as specific responsibility for the ERDF. The Department of Education & Skills has primary responsibility for the ESF, which is implemented through the Employability, Inclusion and Learning OP.

There are three Regional Assemblies in Ireland, but **two ERDF OPs**. Both of these OPs covers regions that are categorised as more developed regions The assemblies were established, following a reorganisation, on 1 January 2015, and are:

- the Southern Regional Assembly
- the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly
- the Northern & Western Regional Assembly.

The Assemblies are also tasked with preparing an overall **Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES)** for their respective region.

Two regional **ERDF Operational Programmes** for the **Border Midland and Western Region** and for the **Southern and Eastern Region** are managed by the Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly and the Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly respectively.

The **Border, Midland and Western Regional OP** primarily focused on supporting growth and innovative sectors to support the creation of new quality jobs, enterprises, innovations, etc.

The programme, worth a total of €160,708,921, focuses on five main priorities:

1. Develop and exploit commercially research excellence and innovation capacity in the BMW region with active company engagement financially and intellectually in such research
2. Access to, use and quality of high-speed information and communication technologies by settlements in the BMW Region, including SMEs
3. SME competitiveness, especially micro-enterprises in high growth and innovative sectors
4. Shift towards a low-carbon economy, especially energy efficiency in housing, and promoting low-carbon strategies for urban areas
5. Integrated urban development to revitalise urban areas
The BMW OP does not cover E&T, culture, youth or sport to any great extent although there are some descriptions in the OP which suggest these areas, including tourism are supported through:

- Enhanced skills of work-force relative to enterprise needs leading to reduced unemployment;
- Growth of targeted enterprise sectors in which the region already has a strong base, including agri-food, green economy, tourism and marine economy;
- Enhanced attractiveness of urban growth centres to support inward investment, tourism and enterprise development.

Moreover, the BMW OP underlines support to urban areas, such as “stimulus [to] arts, culture or heritage-based initiatives.

The Southern & Eastern Regional OP is larger than the BMW OP, and is worth €250,066,177. It has a similar emphasis to the BMW OP and focuses on:

1. Developing and exploiting commercial research excellence and innovation capacity in the Southern & Eastern region with active company engagement intellectually and financially in such research (a total €180 million will be invested)
2. Accessing and using high-speed information and communication technologies by settlements in the S&E Region, including SMEs (€60m)
3. SME competitiveness, especially micro-enterprises in high growth and innovative sectors (€69.2m)
4. Supporting a shift towards a low-carbon economy, especially energy efficiency in housing, and promoting low-carbon strategies for urban areas (€133m)
5. Integrated urban development to revitalise urban areas (€52m)
6. 'Technical assistance' for programme management (€4m)

The Southern & Eastern Regional OP makes brief references to education (in relation to RTDI and higher education institutions), training (of enterprise employees) and youth (young entrepreneurs) but makes no mention of the role (if any) of culture, sport, and tourism.

In addition to the two ERDF OPs, Ireland is included (either full territory or partially) in the following European Territorial Co-operation Programmes (ETCs):

- Atlantic Area Transnational Co-operation Programme;
- Ireland/Scotland/Northern Ireland Cross-Border Programme;
- Ireland-Wales Programme Cross-Border Programme;
- Northern Periphery and Arctic Transnational Co-operation Programme;
- North West Europe Transnational Co-operation Programme; and
- INTERREG V Inter-regional Programme.

The ESF OP on Employability, Inclusion and Learning has been allocated €544 million from the ESF, an equal amount from the Irish Exchequer and just over €68 million from the Youth Employment Initiative (total investment = €1.157 billion).
The ESF OP The Priority Axes are as follows:

- Priority 1: Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.
- Priority 2: Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market
- Priority 3: Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force
- Priority 4: Youth Employment Initiative
- Priority 5: Technical Assistance

In our assessment, there is some, but limited mention of the relevant areas in the OPs. Clearly, the ESF OP refers directly to E&T and to lifelong learning. Education and training are generally described as tools for upskilling workers and creating employment opportunities for the population at large, but often in particular young people. Crosscutting areas such as culture and tourism are clearly eligible for support as part of a drive towards growth and employment creation, but not a prominent feature in its own right (e.g. the creative or tourism sectors are not singled out for support). In our assessment, sport is not mentioned as a potential area of investment.

But interestingly, although overall it appears that there are few concrete references to culture, tourism, and sport in the PA and Irish OPs, it is worth noting that in the last few years – i.e. after the publication of the current ESIF documents – a number of highly relevant national strategies have been published:

- **‘Culture 2025 - Éire Ildánach’,** a policy framework which was launched in the summer of 2016 with a 10-year scope of up to the year 2025. This framework describes tens of priorities/tasks to be carried out in order to strengthen the Irish cultural sector, including a critical analysis of direct and indirect supports that are funding arts and cultural activity. It also mentions a need to “improve funding structures through multi-annual funding, investment in capital infrastructure, cross-streamed funding and investment in regional and local services”, “examine mechanisms to further promote private investment in the cultural sector”, “examine existing systems and supports with a view to helping more people pursue sustainable careers in the cultural and heritage sectors” and “ensure education and economic policies foster creativity”. The framework finally makes explicit links to tourism, setting out to “emphasise tourism policies that continue to highlight Ireland’s cultural richness as a basis for a sustainable tourism industry in Ireland”.

- **The Tourism Action Plan 2016-2018,** which is to examine the capital investment and enterprise supports that will be required in the tourism sector in order to meet the 2025 targets set out in the Irish Tourism Policy Statement. A review of the effectiveness of existing supports available to new tourism enterprises will be undertaken as part of the Action Plan, including the potential to establish a start-up fund to support innovative tourism projects, involving collaborative approaches at Local Authority and community levels.

- A separate **Irish Whiskey Tourism strategy** has also been published.

- The Tourism Action Plan 2016-2018 also talks about a forthcoming **National Sports Policy,** to be published in 2016, will include specific objectives with regard to sports-related tourism. This may however have been delayed as a public consultation into a
**National Sports Policy** Framework closed in 2017 and no documents describing any launched policy has been found.

- **National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020** (Better Outcomes: Brighter Futures). The Framework will centralise common outcomes, capture policy commitments, prioritise key transformational goals and ensure an innovative and effective way of working across Government as they relate to children and young people aged 0-24 over the next seven years.

- Less recently (2010) the **Irish Sports Council** published an Assessment of Economic Impact of Sport in Ireland, which argued that the “very significant contribution of sport in the Irish economy, in terms of spending, output and particularly employment supported, has not been fully acknowledged and should be highlighted to policy-makers and the wider population”.

The content of these strategies point to a potential increasing interest among Irish stakeholders to enhance the role of culture and tourism in particular in the Irish economy. Should this interest persist, it may well spill over into the next ESIF programming period.

The following sub-sections will look more closely at how the each specific area is addressed, primarily through the Irish PA.

**Education and Training**

E&T is the most frequently area addressed in the PA and OPs.

As a high-level guidance for job creation in Ireland, the Action Plan for Jobs, developed as part of the MNES, places a focus on developing sectors with potential for growth. These sections include ICT, the green economy, and health services, with particular on Agri-food, International Financial Services and the Green Economy.

The Irish Programme Agreement also makes several references to the Irish Expert Group on Future Skills Needs which has been tasked with indicating shortages in a number of areas across the Irish economy. In its assessment demand for biopharma and pharmachem scientists, professional and technical precision engineers, ICT software developers, project managers and security experts, business and finance professionals, some healthcare professionals and specialist sales and customer service staff in online and contact centre sectors remains strong. The Irish PA makes a note of this and calls for these profiled shortages to be addressed through relevant education and training opportunities.

A consultation processes and needs analyses carried out as part of the preparation of the PA also identified the need for support to develop professional training, new professional skills and lifelong learning, particularly within the seafood sector. A further need was also identified for support to promote economic growth, social inclusion and job creation, and providing support to employability and labour mobility in coastal/marine areas which depend on fishing and aquaculture.

**Culture and Creative sector**

Culture tends to be addressed under urban and rural needs in the ERDF OPs and as part of a drive to tackle poverty and social exclusion, including integration of migrations and activities that deal with cultural differences in communities.
As far as this assessment is concerned there is no specific support for the creative sectors. However, tourism is given some importance in both ERDF OPs both for rural as well as urban areas. Tourism is also suggested as an opportunity for the Irish coastal areas as part of a wide Blue sector growth drive.

**Sport and Physical activity**

Sport and Physical activity is not an apparent priority. The BMW OP indirectly addresses physical activity as part of an effort to wean Ireland off its overreliance on private cars for transport and the need to reduce transport emissions.

**Youth**

Unsurprisingly, considering Ireland’s comparatively young population and experience during the economic recession, the youth area is fairly closely interlinked with E&T. Statistics featured in the PA suggest that as late as 2013 the unemployment rate for young people with below higher secondary education was 44% (OECD paper on the Irish Youth Guarantee), although youth unemployment has since fallen.

The PA references a number of national initiatives aimed at bringing down youth unemployment, including the Pathways to Work initiative, which targets youth who have suffered long-term unemployment. The PA also states that the ESF has a significant role to play in supporting and enhancing the delivery of measures to support the Irish NRP target on youth employment.

Furthermore, the integration of young people, particularly those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), into the labour market is an explicit priority for Ireland. Policies and programmes to provide opportunities for the long term unemployed and young people are being developed and implemented and the support of the ESF through specific Youth Employment Initiative measures.

**THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT**

Before describing the findings of the extent of Structural Fund and ESIF support relevant to the CULT areas, it is important to describe the extent of data available on which to draw conclusions on the support provided:

There are a number of main data sources available:

Project data from the two ERDF OPs published on separate websites. The two ERDF MAs publish data on beneficiaries. These are very sparse and make analysis of the content of the projects near impossible. The BMW OP publishes the project name, project location (NUTS), year of allocation and the total amount paid. Similarly, the Southern & Eastern Regional OP publishes the beneficiary name, operation/project location and funding amounts.

**ESF OP data.** This appears to be published as part of the annual reports produced by the Managing Authority. It provides project example and overviews of spending.

Thus none of the three OPs produce data that are sufficiently detailed to explore crosscutting issues or which allow for an analysis of culture, sport, E&T or youth spending. This leaves an analysis rather dependent on the DG REGIO project database. This database provides very good information on the 2007-2013 programme period, but unfortunately is not sufficiently up-to-date (February 2018) for an analysis of the current programme periods as
it lists only two Irish projects for the 2014-2020 period. Neither of these is relevant to the remit of this study.

Although limited information is available, in our assessment of the 2007-2013 programme period, out of the four areas under consideration, Irish projects have predominantly focused on culture and tourism and education and training.

**THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION**

According to DG REGIO’s database, no projects under the theme of ‘Culture’ were funded in Ireland for the last programme period, however six projects can be found under the theme ‘Tourism and Culture’. These are described in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective/impact</th>
<th>Funding (Total/EC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishment project - Christchurch building</td>
<td>This project brings a two-fold benefit to the city by both ensuring that the Christchurch building is maintained as a landmark in the city and adding to the city’s cultural capital.</td>
<td>EUR 4,360,000 / EUR 2,180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lough Key - Irish landmark</td>
<td>Lough Key boasts one of the most extensive and picturesque forest parks in Ireland, covering 324 hectares on the west coast of Ireland, 40 km south east of Sligo. The idea to embellish the Lough Key forest park originated locally and culminated in the creation of a joint venture between Ireland’s forestry board, Coillte Teoranta, and Roscommon’s county council. The project entailed a string of innovative developments, all set along the side of the lake. The Lough Key experience enables visitors to discover and engage with the park’s history, ecology and nature. The range of activities on offer, since the park officially opened in 2007, has enhanced Lough Key Forest Park’s status as a major tourist attraction in the region.</td>
<td>EUR 6,300,000 (EU investment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience</td>
<td>The dramatic and rugged Cliffs of Moher are now home to a Visitor Experience centre. The cliffs are Ireland’s most visited natural attraction, and as a result of the Cliffs of Moher project, this underground centre now houses state-of-the-art facilities and an award-winning exhibition – Atlantic.</td>
<td>EUR 10,800,000 (EU investment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim Design House</td>
<td>The overall aim of the Leitrim Design House project is &quot;the creation of businesses and growth of existing business&quot; in the arts and craft sector. The promoters also aspire to the sustainability of the project in terms of the continued provision of craft-specific supports through core funding from wide ranging funding sources, including the private sector.</td>
<td>EUR 370,654 / EUR 296,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateways and Hubs Investment Scheme</td>
<td>The aim of the &quot;Gateways and Hubs Investment Scheme&quot; was to enhance the attractiveness of major towns and cities throughout the Republic of Ireland by providing funding for a wide range of infrastructure, regeneration, transport, cultural and energy projects. Schemes were chosen that enhanced the economic, social and environmental fabric of strategically important urban centres across the country.</td>
<td>EUR 40,510,000 / EUR 28,150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6 Ballinasloe Motorway</td>
<td>A new road between Ballinasloe and Athlone, makes up the final stretch of Ireland’s newly completed M6 motorway linking Dublin in the east to Galway on the west coast, and allowing motorists to travel coast-to-coast on almost continuous motorway. This project provides an important boost for national industrial and commercial sectors. Tourism will also benefit, with tourists benefiting from safer and shorter journey times. The M6 Ballinasloe Motorway route is part of the strategic National Primary Road network development programme undertaken by Transport 21, traversing Ireland from Dublin to Galway.</td>
<td>EUR 84,120,000 / EUR 42,060,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When using a keyword search and/or doing a thematic search, several projects can be found however most are of little relevance when assessing the project synopsis. The below ESF project is however a substantial initiative relevant to both E&T and young people.

**Table 2: Example of Irish E&T projects, funded under the 2007-2013 programme period**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective/impact</th>
<th>Funding (Total/EC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Momentum</td>
<td>This programme funded private, non-profit and state agencies so they could develop and deliver support to people in need of work. The goal was to build motivation, help find potential employment opportunities and provide assistance to people as they searched for that elusive job. Efforts were made to find placements with small indigenous businesses where the employer was in direct contact with the participant on a daily basis. The emphasis was not on providing individuals with training certification as a finishing point, but rather to ensure that the experience could act as an important step into the labour market. Momentum, which secured EUR 10 million from the ESF, demanded that the trainers source the work placement for the participants; the aim being to help people showcase their skills to potential employers. Following the placement, job outcomes had to be at least two consecutive months in duration to ensure that the person had a chance of ongoing sustained employment.</td>
<td>EUR 20 000 000 / EUR 10 000 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the ESF project Momentum (listed under Table 2 as an E&T related project) a second interesting youth project is listed below.
Table 3: Irish youth projects, funded under the 2007-2013 programme period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective/impact</th>
<th>Funding (Total/EC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Back to the Future’ for peace building in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>‘Back to the Future’ is a peace building programme aimed at all young people aged between five and 25 years who have been affected by the years of violence or ‘the Troubles’ in Northern Ireland. The programme provides support services to children and young people affected by ‘the Troubles’ in centres across Northern Ireland. These services include: counselling; one to one befriending; educational support and group work based on the principles of play and art therapy, storytelling, citizenship, personal and social development and widening horizons. The project impacts upon young people, the wider community and Northern Irish society on a number of levels. It has supported participants to become more active in the building of peace and reconciliation in their own communities and beyond, while also allowing them to heal and develop on a personal level. It has encouraged participants to grow in self confidence and enhance their ability to engage in dialogue about themselves and with others, especially those from a different background or community. One project of the programme saw a group of 12-18 year olds work over 16 months to produce two dramatic performances, scripted and directed by the group based on their own stories of ‘the Troubles’, which were played in venues around Belfast to much acclaim.</td>
<td>EUR 340,632 / EUR 230,073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No projects relevant to sport could be found.
Special interventions

As described above, Ireland participates in several ETC programmes, of which at least one project is relevant to E&T:

Table 4: Irish ETC projects, funded under the 2007-2013 programme period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective/impact</th>
<th>Funding (Total/EC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for All: PACTS (Partners Collaborating in Training for Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities)</td>
<td>The Ireland’s National Learning Network (NLN) has a remit to provide services for people with specific learning difficulties. In delivering these services the NLN became aware of certain difficulties experienced by some of its students in progressing to further education, training, or employment within a mainstream setting because of their specific learning difficulties and the lack of services to cater for their needs. The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) in Dublin encountered similar difficulties and begun discussions with NLN with regard to addressing this issue for students with learning difficulties attending ITB courses. Arising from this initiative, the NLN, the ITB and the Dyscovery Centre in Cardiff (Wales) began a collaboration to explore how individuals with specific learning difficulties could be provided with services which would facilitate their progression to further education, training or employment. The partners subsequently decided to make a joint application under the Ireland-Wales Interreg IIIA programme for funding to support their work to collaboratively create mainstream networks to address these two key issues. The aim of the project was to empower individuals with specific learning difficulties to achieve their potential. The project is expected to have increased access to third level education for individuals who may have conditions, which preclude them from achieving their goals academically. The project succeeded in producing a wealth of information and training material. A series training programmes were undertaken with schools, colleges, training providers across the area. Parent training evenings were been organised. The Dyscovery Centre in Wales is now delivering assessments on the part of JobCentre Plus as a mainstream activity. In Ireland, the collaboration between NLN and ITB on this project will ensure that individuals with specific learning difficulties attending both services will be provided with a high quality service, which will identify their needs and offer support and remediation.</td>
<td>EUR 911,000 / EUR 683,250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Particularly effective interventions**

Although this assessment has been limited in scope and not included an in-depth review of Irish evaluations, as a result of the relatively few projects funded, it is our assessment that the most effective interventions have been those funded under Culture and Tourism, as this combination of objectives seems to be particularly relevant to the Irish context.

However, the two projects listed under E&T and Youth could equally be put forward as interesting interventions, albeit standalone measures.

**THE INTERACTION OF ESIF ACTIONS AND THOSE UNDERTAKEN UNDER ERASMUS+ AND CREATIVE EUROPE AND RELATED EU INITIATIVES**

At a policy level, the Irish PA explicitly refers to potential synergies between the ERDF OPs and other EU instruments, of which two relate to funding for culture, youth and/or education & training, namely the Creative Europe and Erasmus+ programmes. The PA recommends that references to these are incorporated in the OP “as appropriate”.

But at an operational level it is very hard to gauge the extent to which these programmes interact as there is insufficient data published at a project level.

**The main impacts observed**

Clearly, not too many projects have been funded in Ireland that are relevant to the study scope, however if one looks at the budgets involved for the activities that have been funded, it should be noted that the sums invested are fairly substantial.

In terms of culture and tourism, the key objectives of the activities have been to create jobs in the wider tourism industry however at least one infrastructure project has also been supported (M6 Ballinasloe Motorway).

Upskilling and job creation also appears to be the main impacts from the E&T projects found.
### Annex A 2014-2020

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern &amp; Eastern Regional OP</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>€249,109,350</td>
<td>€33,506,549.00</td>
<td>€34,177,372.00</td>
<td>€34,861,528.00</td>
<td>€35,559,230.00</td>
<td>€36,270,875.00</td>
<td>€36,996,738.00</td>
<td>€37,737,058.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border, Midland &amp; Western Regional OP</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>€160,097,179</td>
<td>€21,533,933.00</td>
<td>€21,965,056.00</td>
<td>€22,404,748.00</td>
<td>€22,853,147.00</td>
<td>€23,310,505.00</td>
<td>€23,777,001.00</td>
<td>€24,252,789.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability, Inclusion and Learning OP</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>€542,436,561</td>
<td>€72,960,638.00</td>
<td>€74,421,358.00</td>
<td>€75,911,109.00</td>
<td>€77,430,360.00</td>
<td>€78,979,968.00</td>
<td>€80,560,537.00</td>
<td>€82,172,591.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Employment Initiative</td>
<td>YEI</td>
<td>€68,145,419</td>
<td>€38,283,943.00</td>
<td>€29,861,476.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development Programme</td>
<td>EAFRD</td>
<td>€2,190,592,153</td>
<td>€313,148,955.00</td>
<td>€313,059,463.00</td>
<td>€313,149,965.00</td>
<td>€313,007,411.00</td>
<td>€312,891,690.00</td>
<td>€312,764,355.00</td>
<td>€312,570,314.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood Development Programme</td>
<td>EMFF</td>
<td>€147,601,979</td>
<td>€20,231,798.00</td>
<td>€20,490,256.00</td>
<td>€20,677,561.00</td>
<td>€21,012,701.00</td>
<td>€21,501,645.00</td>
<td>€21,648,669.00</td>
<td>€22,039,349.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>€3,357,982,641</td>
<td>€499,665,816</td>
<td>€493,974,981</td>
<td>€467,004,911</td>
<td>€469,862,849</td>
<td>€472,954,683</td>
<td>€475,747,300</td>
<td>€478,772,101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FRANCE

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

Education and Training

Education is a national priority in France, with government expenditure on education, accounting for 5.5% of GDP in 2015. An additional EUR 3 billion was included for education in the initial government budget for 2017, although this was reduced as part of a larger budget rationalisation following national elections.

France faces significant performance gaps in basic skills, a discrepancy which has been linked to pupils’ socio-economic backgrounds. This may be partly linked to a difference in quality between academic and vocational training. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to be steered towards vocational educational training (VET) earlier on in their academic careers, which may provide some explanation for this. While students in general and technological upper secondary education perform better results than the OECD average, those in VET tend to perform below the OECD average.

A number of measures have been introduced to reduce inequalities. Examples of this include the creation of 54,000 additional teaching posts since 2013, the introduction of new curricula and pedagogical methods, and a new ‘homework done’ scheme was introduced in September 2017. This enables students in lower secondary education students to do their homework at school, at no cost, under qualified supervision. A large proportion of European Social Fund money is also being directed towards this problem, particularly with regard to the funding of short-term apprenticeships.

Culture and Creative Sector

The cultural sector is an important contributor to the French economy, worth an estimated EUR 44.5 billion in 2016. This accounts for about 2.2% of the national economy, a slight decrease from 2.5% in 2003. This decrease has been attributed to the “cultural crisis” in the press and publishing industry (i.e. a switch from print to digital).

Policy for culture and the creative sector in France is managed centrally by the Ministry for Culture and Communications, whose mission is to make “the major works of humanity” accessible to as many people as possible. The Ministry aims to protect France’s cultural heritage and to promote and support the creation of art and the development of artistic practices. Cultural diplomacy has long been seen as an important soft power tool by the

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54 Education and Training Monitor 2017.
55 According to the 2015 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the performance gap between lower and upper socioeconomic quartiles in France is 34.6 pps. compared to an EU average gap of 26.2 pps.
59 https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000025915890&categorieLien=id
60 https://culture360.asef.org/resources/ministry-culture-and-communication-france
French government. The promotion of French culture abroad is currently managed through a network of French cultural centres (centres culturels français).

The Ministry for Culture and Communications support cultural and arts education for children and young adults, as well as encouraging local cultural initiatives and overseeing the cultural industries (for example, developing new broadcasting technologies and supporting the creation of cultural heritage).

**Sport and Physical activity**

Sport and physical activity is overseen by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport. The management of sports is delegated to national associations which are allocated government funding subject to the provision of an assessment for the last Olympic period and a four-year strategy outlining their future priorities.

Sport plays an important role in French foreign policy. The country played host to Euro 2016 (leading to an investment of EUR 1.7 billion in football stadiums). In 2017, France hosted the Men’s Handball World Championship, Ice Hockey World Championship, World Wrestling Championships and Canoe Slalom World Championships, the Ryder Cup golf tournament in 2018 and the FIFA Women’s World Cup in 2019. France also won the right to host the Olympic Games in 2024, and the French government is using this to push for the development of a Common European Agenda for Sport. Other important international sports tournaments hosted in the country include the Tour de France (cycling), Roland Garros (tennis) and Le Mans (sports car racing).

Winter sports are particularly important to the French economy, with the Diplomatic Service declaring France the world’s leading ski destination (54 million ski days sold in 2014/15).

**Youth**

From 2013 to 2017, youth policy in France was governed by the national strategy known as the Priority Youth Plan which was introduced in February 2013.

The policy had 5 main focuses:

1. Young people’s access to social rights;
2. Fostering young people’s autonomy;
3. Combating all forms of inequality and discrimination;
4. Encouraging young people’s participation in public debate;
5. Implementing youth priorities at regional level.

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62 [https://culture360.asef.org/resources/ministry-culture-and-communication-france](https://culture360.asef.org/resources/ministry-culture-and-communication-france)
63 NICOLAS SCELLES, FRANCE: ORGANISATION OF SPORT AND POLICY TOWARDS SPORT FEDERATIONS, 2017
This policy was designed to be holistic, encouraging partnership between ministries, local authorities, associations, social partners and young people themselves, who were invited to help co-construct public policies regarding youth.

No youth policy has yet been introduced under the new French government, a fact which has drawn criticism from public figures including the economist Thomas Piketty, who declared that the 2018 French budget has “sacrificed” young people by reducing funding for higher education.69

Youth is an important area within the ESIFs however, with a lot of ESF and ERDF money dedicated to training and increased employment amongst NEETS aged 16-25.

**The extent of Structural Funds and ESIF support**

France was allocated EUR 26.9 billion from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) support for the period 2014-2020, out of a total European budget of EUR 454 billion. France’s national contribution for this period totals EUR 8.8 billion.

The most significant of the ESIFs in France is the European Agricultural Rural Development Fund (EARDF), which has invested a total of EUR 11.4 billion for the current programming period. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) are also important, investing EUR 8.4 billion and EUR 6.3 billion respectively. The European Marine and Fisheries Fund is much smaller, with an overall investment of EUR 588 million for the 2014-2020 period. The Youth Employment Initiative allocated a further €310 million for the period 2014–2015.70 France currently has 83 ESIF-funded programmes.

Because of the limited funding available, objectives set for ESIF spending in 2014-2020 were limited to improving economic growth, security and employment. Nonetheless, some key priorities were set in the national partnership agreement. These focus on economic development, with money being directed particularly towards training and employment schemes targeted towards NEETS aged 16-25 and older workers. Some funds are managed jointly by the national and regional governments (this is the case, for example, for the YEI – 70% goes into a national programme and the rest is spent by the regions).

France has a relatively high unemployment rate (21.7% in 2013), particularly amongst those aged 16-25.71 There is therefore quite a significant overlap between the areas of youth and education and training. An important focus of spending in 2014-2020 has been on the provision of subsidies for businesses offering short-term youth apprenticeships to provide on-the-job skills training and improve youth employment.

The areas of education and training, culture, sports and youth are primarily supported under the ESF and to some extent under the ERDF. The EAFRD does contain some training aspects, but funding is mainly focused on economic goals and support for innovation.

The 2014-2020 funding period marked a transition away from centralised management of the ESIFs towards a more regional approach. This means that much of the funds are spent according to the priorities of locally elected regional Presidents rather than in accordance with priorities decided by the national government. It can also make it quite difficult to understand precisely how much money was spent in each area, as it was absorbed into

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regional budgets and spent in conjunction with other funding sources according to regional priorities.

Programmed spending at project level was published by the French government in 2014, however this is subject to change depending on regional and national elections so cannot be entirely relied upon. Furthermore, there is a lot of crossover (for example between education/training and youth, sport and culture, tourism and culture/sport, youth and sport) which makes it hard to clearly delineate how much was spent on each area. Nonetheless it is clear that by far the most significant of the four areas is education, followed by spending on youth. A significant amount of money was spent on support for cultural heritage, particularly with regard to tourism initiatives promoting local products, cuisine, landmarks and cultural traditions. Funding for sport is limited, but can be seen with regard to tourism projects (particularly focused on development of cycling and walking routes, and winter sports) and in projects to help prepare for the Olympic Games in 2024.

Inter-regional programmes are used to support cultural exchange, particularly in border regions or regions with strong links to neighbouring countries (eg Alsace, Piedmont, Normandy) and to promote cooperation between different regions. Here, for example, Interreg funding is used to promote cultural exchange and coordination. Within the URBACT programme, French participants are focused relatively narrowly on economic development.

THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION

Education and Training

A significant proportion of the ESIF budget is focused on education and training, particularly for members of socially disadvantaged groups. In the French context this means NEETs aged 16-25, older people who find themselves excluded from the jobs market (for example, due to a lack of digital skills). There are also a number of programmes targeted at preventing student from underprivileged backgrounds dropping out of school.

Title: ‘Action program to prevent school dropouts among college (lower secondary) students’

Programme: Val d’Oise, ERDF, 2015-2016

Key features:

This programme targets children aged 14-16 who are disengaged with school or are at risk of dropping out. It is particularly interesting because it is proactive, targeting students in the two years before they reach school-leaving age and offering multi-disciplinary support. Three forms of support are provided:
1. Personalised accompaniment of pupils in their studies (100 pupils)
2. Workshops to strengthen pupils’ self-esteem (40 workshops for 480 pupils),
3. “Springboard” to trade programme (100 pupils)

Budget: €84,54
**Culture and Creative sector**

Direct funding for sports and culture was explicitly ruled out of the national partnership agreement covering the use of ESIF funding. The reason for this decision is not clear, however feedback from our interview programme suggests that as sports and culture policy are highly centralised in France, it may have been difficult to incorporate these into the decentralised ESIFs. In terms of culture, ESIF funding can therefore mainly be seen in the form of support which is primarily focused on economic effects and social integration, in line with the priorities identified in the section above. This include the construction of infrastructure such as sports stadiums, libraries and media libraries - or médiathèques, as well as funding for activities organised by local cultural associations.

There is also a strong link between culture and tourism across regions, with a good deal of funding being directed towards projects to protect and promote local heritage (including landmarks, culinary heritage and local cultural specificities). Other projects aim to protect cultural heritage against the risks associated with climate change, such as flooding.

**Title:** Symphony Orchestra Divertimento tour

**Programme:** Nantes, ERDF, Jan-Dec 2017:

**Key features:**

This project is interesting because it combines education, culture and youth to provide new mediation/conflict resolution and to reengage children with education through cultural means. The orchestra provides workshops in schools, which offer a multidisciplinary artistic journey for a historical and musical journey, to explore the cultures of the world. These are accompanied by cultural outings to partner venues such as the Théâtre Paris-Villette and Center Pompidou, meetings with artists and conductors. Finally, students work alongside professional musicians to develop a creative project and perform it on stage.

**Budget:** €92,242

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**Sport and Physical activity**

There is some funding in the form of subsidies for particular activities undertaken by sports clubs, cultural societies etc. Sports mainly appears in ESIF programming as part of funding for regional tourism projects to boost the local economy (particularly winter sports, walking and cycling). Some funding has also been allocated for the development of sporting activities in the run-up to the Olympic Games. Other projects involve supporting innovation within the sporting world.
Title: Accompaniment for innovative sports projects

Programme: Picardie, ESF, 2017-2018

Key features:
This project supports the development of innovative start-ups related to sports entrepreneurship. The project aims to drive and develop a sports innovation network in the Saint-Quentinois territory by creating a venue that will host and bring together start-ups (young companies offering innovative products or services). For the first call for applications, the goal is to support at least 3 project leaders. Support provided includes access to an incubator for 10 months, accompaniment by experts in the field of sport and incubation specialists.

Budget: €14,611

Youth

Youth is treated primarily in conjunction with Education and Training under ESF and ERDF programmes. As mentioned above, there is a significant focus on NEETS – both through projects to prevent early school leaving and short-term industrial apprenticeship schemes. Furthermore, there is a strong focus on working with vulnerable children (those in poverty, children of immigrants etc) to try and integrate them into communities and enhance social cohesion.

Title: ‘Integration of newly arrived non-francophone youth’

Programme: Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, Seine-et-Marne, ERDF, 2016-17

Key features:
This project is interesting because it is a language-based project which also includes social aspects to try and encourage integration of excluded groups. The project concerns the reception of young immigrants aged between 16 and 18 years old who do not have sufficient command of the French language to consider immediate schooling. The aim is to build support systems that meet their specific needs in terms of acquiring basic French language skills, acquiring skills to integrate qualifying or pre-qualifying training, understanding the social environment and in order to facilitate integration.

Budget: €219,628
Special interventions

There is some focus on culture and sport within the smart specialisation strategies, with regard to the intersection between innovation and tourism\(^{73}\). This can be seen particularly in overseas counties (départements), such as Martinique, Guadeloupe, Mayotte, Guyana and Réunion\(^{74}\). Tourism in these areas is linked to creative industries, heritage, conservation and digitisation. In Rhone-Alpes, particularly, winter sports are linked to the development of tourism strategies.

**PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS**

**Cultural heritage to create jobs**

The redevelopment of the Chauvet Cave\(^{75}\) in Rhone-Alpes in the 2007-2013 funding period provides a good example of how culturally focused projects can help boost the local economy. The cave is a UNESCO World Heritage site, with wall painting which have been estimated as being 36,000 years old. The cave had remained closed for preservation reasons, in order to ensure the paintings remained undamaged. The ERDF provided €9 785 676 to this €51 million project, to help recreate a replica of the cave so that the paintings could be shown to the public without risk of damage. A permanent exhibition was also installed. The project has helped to preserve local cultural heritage, allow it to be accessible to the public and has created an estimated 65 new jobs.

**Cultural exchange and digital media promote youth employment**

The Channel Marine Academy was an ERDF-funded collaboration between the Brittany region and the South-West of England to provide awareness raising and training for employers and young people, in order to get more young people aged 16-24 into careers in the maritime industry.

Tools to promote maritime training and careers were created, including an interactive video game and a 3D movie. A cross-border network of approximately 50 ‘maritime’ ambassadors was created to promote awareness of maritime careers and a pre-training programme for 80 young people was delivered, including exchange visits and training sessions. Potential careers available after training include boatbuilding, engineering, fishing, water sport instruction and the merchant navy. To date, more than 50 % of the pre-trained youth have found employment, many within the marine and maritime sectors.

**THE INTERACTION OF ESIF ACTIONS AND THOSE UNDERTAKEN UNDER ERASMUS+ AND CREATIVE EUROPE AND RELATED EU INITIATIVES**

No clear evidence has been found of any interactions between ESIF funds and actions undertaken under Erasmus+, Creative Europe, the European Capitals of Culture or the European Week of Sport and Physical Activity.

**The main impacts observed**

As sport and culture have been explicitly excluded from the partnership agreement and do not form part of the objectives of the Structural Funds within France. This means they have


not been monitored or evaluated at the national level, making it difficult to draw any clear conclusions.

Anecdotal evidence from interviews and case studies suggest that culture and sport have been successfully used to help promote economic growth (especially through tourism) and better societal integration (two principal objectives of the Structural Funds within France). The upcoming Olympic Games in Paris in 2024 can be expected make sport a bigger focus for France in the next funding period.

**Education and Training**

This has been an important area of focus for the French government particularly with regard to early school leavers. Early indicators are promising, with a slight reduction (from 9.7% to 8.8%) between 2013 and 2016 (European Commission, 2017). This has been credited, at least in part, to ESF funding.

**Culture and Creative sector**

No clear evidence of impacts has been observed. However, there is anecdotal evidence of cultural projects helping to boost certain sectors (such as tourism) and helping to create jobs.

**Sport and Physical activity**

No clear evidence of impacts has been observed. However, there is anecdotal evidence of sports projects helping to boost certain sectors (such as tourism), particularly in the run-up to Paris 2024, and this is expected to help create jobs. One or two projects have also been found combining sport and entrepreneurship in the Ile de France region, which may be linked to the Games.

**Youth**

There is a strong national focus on reducing unemployment amongst NEETS aged 16-25. This has continued to increase since the economic crisis of 2008 and there is little evidence of any impacts to date. 2016 OECD data suggests 17.19% of 15-29 year olds in France are NEETS (a more than 3% increase since 2008). Amongst 20-25 year olds, the figure is even higher, sitting at 21.92% in 2016 (a more than 5% increase since 2008). It is hoped that these figures will improve over
ITALY

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

**Education and Training**

The Italian educational sector was subjected to a major reform in 2015. The “Good schools” strategy promoted: an increase in public spending on education (reaching € 3 billion); the change in the rationale behind teachers’ and principals’ promotions, to be based on merit rather than experience (FT 2015); the hiring of 100,000 new full-time teachers; the establishment of digital labs in schools; the deployment of new resources for teachers’ training. This led to protests as many noted that the reform favoured the better-quality schools of the North of the country over the Southern ones. The main source of national support for education and training, is the Ministry for Education, University and Research (MIUR). The MIUR employed over 180,000 teachers in 2012; this number is likely to have increased as a result of the 2015 “Good School” reform.

There is an entire European Structural and Investment Fund’s (ESIF) National Operational Programme dedicated to education and training (Agenziacoesione 2014). The programme aims to reduce the percentage of early school leavers, improve educational attainment and promote university enrolment among young people, in order to have a greater number of graduates aged 30-34, which is currently among the lowest in Europe. In line with the recommendations of the European Council, the programme is committed to improving the school evaluations, reducing school leaving rates, and promoting work-based learning.

**Culture and Creative Sector**

The Italian Ministry of Culture (MiBACT) supports cultural and creative activities in Italy with a budget of over € 2 billion in 2018. One of the most relevant recent policies introduced by the Ministry of Culture was the “Value Culture” policy in 2013. This is comprised of three intertwined objectives: A) promoting the preservation, restoration and valorisation of Italian cultural heritage; this included a “Pompei” project aiming to improve the positive exploitation of this ancient Roman town; B) providing incentives for the development of the cinema and music sectors through tax exemptions; C) ensuring that a sufficient amount of funds and resources are allocated in order to improve the management of heritage sites: funds will be no longer assigned automatically, but they will be based on the activities carried out within the sites (MiBACT 2013).

Although very little space was dedicated to Culture in past ESIF Partnership Agreements (CSES and ERICarts 2010), culture appears in Thematic Objective 6 of Italy’s 2014-2020 Partnership Agreement (p.64): “This thematic objective pertains to the strengthening of different contextual aspects for the preservation and valorisation of natural and cultural resources”. In particular, the objective highlights the fact that the Italian cultural/tourist sector is characterised by a great unexplored potential. As far as the 2014-2020 National Operational Programmes are concerned, there is a specific Operational Programme for “Culture and Development” (Agenziacoesione 2014). This programme is managed and administered by the Italian Ministry of Culture and aims to improve the preservation, valorisation, and fruition of cultural heritage sites located in the “least developed” Italian regions, namely Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily.
Sport and Physical Activity

Sport is a major component of Italian life. There are 95,000 sport facilities in the Country, more than churches and hospitals. At the national level, the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) constitutes the main source of funding for sport centres, clubs and associations. CONI had a budget of over € 420 million in 2017 (CONI 2017) and is in turn funded by the Ministry for Economy and Finance (MEF). There are almost 35,000 enterprises dealing principally with sport and employing over 100,000 people in Italy (Istat 2017). These companies are worth € 4.5 billion and have a sales volume of € 14.5 billion (Istat 2017). This sales volume comes from commercial activities involving buying and selling sport equipment (46.6%), industrial production of sport equipment (20.8%) and services related to sport activities (34%). According to Eurostat, people employed in the Italian sport sector are 0.54% of the total working population, below the EU 28 average (0.72%).

Sport in itself is not directly supported by the ESIF. Yet, sport has been often utilised as a means to pursue the ends of ESIF, mainly the promotion of economic and social cohesion, sustainability, etc. (CSES and Blomeyer & Sanz 2016). Sport is considered in Italy’s 2014-2020 ESIF Partnership Agreement (attachment 3, p.5) as having a complementary role in the valorisation of the cultural and natural attractions of a given territory. Sport is mentioned in the National Operational Programme for education and training. The programme makes reference to the concept of “open school”, where schools play a key role in the community, promoting cohesion and aggregation, through sport and other activities (PON per la Scuola 2014, p.14). For instance, in the Regional Operational Programme for Sicily, sport is said to be a supportive activity for socially excluded and disabled children. Additionally, sport is mentioned in the context of urban revitalisation: The Operational Programme stresses the importance of regenerating outdoor spaces and sport facilities, important for youths’ development.

Youth

Italian youths are characterised by high levels of unemployment. The percentage of young NEETs, namely young people not in education, employment or training is the highest in Europe reaching 40%. A high proportion of young Italians emigrate to seek job opportunities in Europe or outside the continent: in 2016 50,000 young people aged 18-34 left the country (Pasolini 2017). Both the ministry of Economic Development and the Ministry for Work and Social Policies are in charge of measures to try and increase youth employment, the former with a national budget of € 2 billion and the latter with a national budget of € 10 billion (Lavoro.gov 2018).

The issue of youth unemployment was mentioned in the 2014-2020 ESIF Partnership Agreement, with a National Operational Programme entirely dedicated to youth employment. It is worth mentioning one of the most successful national measures, the “Smart & Start” programme: this consists of an interest-free loan intended to cover up to 70% of the initial investment needed for an innovative and research-driven start-up in Italy; if one of the researchers is a young person /someone returning from abroad, then the loan would cover up to 80% of the initial investment.
THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT

Education and Training

The ESIF and Structural Fund explicitly support education and training activities. One of the objectives of Italy’s 2014-2020 ESIF Partnership Agreement (section 1A, p.104) is “to invest on education, training and professional training for skills and permanent learning”. The Agreement makes reference to a great deal of issues hindering the quality of the education and training sector in Italy. These include: young people aged 18-24 who suddenly interrupt their studies; the decrease in the number of enrolments to university, which dropped by 17% in the last 10 years; the regional differences in educational attainment between the North, which is above the OECD average for maths and reading skills, and the South, which is below the OECD average; Italian schools are below the European average for broadband coverage and number of computers per students; the educational sector is disconnected from the job market. A great deal of programmes funded measures to tackle these issues. The ESF-funded “Dritti a scuola” programme played a key role in tackling early school leaving in the southern region of Apulia. ESIF-funded project “Alternanza scuola-lavoro” is providing high school students with valuable work experience in sectors such as tourism. ESIF funding for the renovation of school infrastructure amounts to € 455 million, while additional ESIF funding for education and training amounts to over € 300 million (European Commission 2017).

Culture and Creative Sector

The National Operational programme “Culture and Development” provides a very good idea of how ESIF supports cultural activities in Italy. The programme highlights how the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is backing art and culture in the least developed Italian regions, i.e. Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, Apulia and Sicily. The “Culture and Development” programme proposes three action items:

a. strengthening of cultural assets through investments on the preservation, promotion and development of the natural and cultural heritage; the ERDF funds this action with over € 270 million, while the national government contributes with over € 90 million;

b. promoting competition among SMEs, in particular among SMEs operating in the cultural sector; this is brought about through the provision of services and micro-credit instruments to spur new business opportunities as well as favouring innovative entrepreneurial initiatives in the creative and cultural sector; ERDF’s contribution to this action is over €85 million and the national contribution to this amounts to over € 28 million;

c. providing technical assistance to the culture/touristic sector through supporting the implementation of the Operational Programme, conducting ex post impact evaluations, promoting co-operations and partnerships between the various stakeholders; this action is financed by the ERDF with over € 12 million, while national contributions amount to over €4 million.

Sport and Physical Activity

According to OpenCoesione (2016), 2,300 sport projects benefit from ESIF support. European structural funds and national funds account for a combined budget of € 600 million for these projects. The “Perimetro sport” project, for instance, embodies the values of cohesion policies: urban regeneration, social inclusion, promotion of education and employability, local economic development. Projects financed by the European Social Fund include education and sport programmes, initiatives aiming to disseminate sport culture, projects providing training for sport coaches for disable people, and sport and life-style initiatives promoting healthy
nutrition. 41% of projects receiving European Structural funds deal with sport in the educational context; 42% of the projects with highest budget are concerned with culture and tourism.

**Youth**

The ESIF in conjunction with EC’s direct investments financed the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), which aims to reduce youth unemployment in the country. The YEI funding was utilised at the national level to implement the “PON Occupazione Giovani”, a National Operational Programme dedicated to the issue of youth unemployment.

The Programme promotes the introduction the *Youths’ Guarantee* initiative, a mechanism which ensures NEETs’ re-integration in education, employment or training within 4 months. This measure was financed by the YEI funding as mentioned above, SF-funding worth € 500 million and over € 300 million of national funding, amounting to a total of over € 1.3 billion (European Commission 2017).

The *Youths’ Guarantee* initiative built a centralised online portal where NEET youths can register; the portal is the result of the collaboration between the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, the Italian Regions and the autonomous provinces, providing a common service for unemployed youths. The portal combines the datasets of the various institutions involved to better match supply and demand, assigning internships, and/or professional traineeships, and/or vocational courses to young people seeking an opportunity to re-enter work or training.

**THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION**

**Education and Training**

ESIF-funded educational programmes have a direct effect on the reduction of early school leaving and contribute to the enhancement of equal access to lifelong learning. This is shown by the “Dritti a Scuola” programme in Apulia, which is now running for its 7th year and is supported by the ESF. The project consists of conducting activities in primary schools, aiming to prevent young people’s early interruption of their study career. According to the European Commission (2017), the programme reached 200,225 children and was very successful: early school leaving in Apulia was 24.5% in 2009 and it dropped to 16.9% in 2015. Reading skills have also improved as the percentage of 15-year-olds with higher reading skills increased from 4.2 % in 2009 to 6.1% in 2012. This allows students to enjoy life-long learning as they grow. This programme won the Commission’s 2015 RegioStars Award in the category “Inclusive growth”. Other projects, such as “Alternanza scuola lavoro” had a positive impact on facilitating the transition from education to work. The project funded by the European Structural Fund deployed over € 57 million on initiatives promoting the involvement of students in work activities, within various sectors (MiUR 2017). For instance, in a high school in the province of Messina, Sicily, students studying humanities were given work opportunities as tour guides, showing tourists the Greek and Roman sites of the area.
**Title:** “Alternanza Scuola Lavoro”- “Alternating School and Work”

**Programme:** Italy, all regions. The duration of the programme is 2014-2020.

**Key features:** The programme promotes a series of initiatives aiming to strengthen the connection between school and work. The programme is aimed at high school students and funds internships, work experiences and professional courses to facilitate students’ access to job work market. In particular the programme links students with local SMEs contributing to local economic development. See below the transcripts of short interviews with programme’s beneficiaries: SMEs and students.

**Budget:** The total budget for this project amounts to € 103,244,921.8; Within this budget, € 57,458,928 were destined to funding internships and work experiences abroad.

**Culture and Creative Sector**

Based on the aforementioned “Culture and Development” National Operational Programme, ERDF-funded measures had a direct effect on the development and preservation of cultural heritage sites and monuments, and on urban regeneration and development. ERDF funds were destined to the renovation of the Archaeological Museum of Naples, the archeological sites of Pompei and Ercoleano, the Carthusian monastery of Padula, Manduria’s excavations, the monastery of Saint Mary of the Justice in Taranto, the National Museum of Reggio Calabria, and the Sibari area. This heritage is located mainly in the Mezzogiorno area (F.Si. 2015).

Furthermore, ERDF-co-funded measures had an employment-related economic effect, as one of the prerogatives of the organisational programmes is precisely to promote competition among SMEs active in the cultural sector. In particular the programme provided financial incentives to over 1,700 SMEs operating in the touristic/ cultural sector with a view to employ 2,500 more people in the sector by 2020 (Europa Facile 2015).

**Title:** “Cultura Crea”- “Culture Creates”

**Programme:** Italy, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Apulia, Sicily. The duration of the programme is 2014-2020.

**Key features:** The programme supports entrepreneurial initiatives in the cultural sector of the five least developed Italian regions cited above. It provides support in the form of interest-free loans for start-ups in the cultural sector.

**Budget:** € 114,000,000.

**Sport and Physical Activity**

Many ESIF co-funded sport programmes have a direct effect on the improvement of the physical environment of the cities, contributing to urban regeneration, through the restoration and construction of sport facilities. An example of this is the 30th Universiade to be held in the city of Naples in 2019: for this event, CF-funds have been employed to restore the sport infrastructure of the city. This initiative will also have strategic and social effects, as the Universiade will support tourism through sport activities. This will in turn contribute to tackle poverty and spur economic development in the heart of the Mezzogiorno, the least
Economically developed part of Italy. Other projects co-funded by ESIF which have a direct effect on the improvement of urban infrastructure and social cohesion are the restoration of the multi-sport centre in Priolo Gargallo, Sicily and Lamezia Terme, Calabria, both cities of the Mezzogiorno. Interestingly, there seems to be a divergence between high level policies and on the ground experiences with regards to sport. This plays in fact a much more prominent role than simply supporting educational activities as outlined in the Operational Programmes, especially in terms of urban regeneration.

**Youth**

The ESIF-co-funded *Youths’ Guarantee* contributed directly to reducing school leaving by re-directing NEETs towards professional courses. Additionally, it facilitated the transition from education to work, strengthening vocational education and training. This measure brings about innovations in the labour market as the portal it contributed to create is a rare example of database harmonisation in Italy to better match supply and demand.

**Sport and Physical activity**

The Safe Ahead project was carried out in Italy and Austria from May 2011 to May 2014. The project consisted of developing an innovative and high-tech ski helmet, based on previous analyses of commercial helmets and had at its disposal an EU-budget of € 393,849. The project was led by private company Dolomiticer Scarl, based in Belluno, in conjunction with the University of Padova and the University of Salzburg. The designing on the helmet was based on scientific research which included impact and penetration tests and creation of thickness distribution maps referred to impact tests. This is an example of how EU-funds can spur sport-related innovation and smart specialisation, as this project took advantage of the place-based competencies to generate technology-driven market opportunities.

**PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS**

The “Dritti a Scuola”- “Straight to School” programme is now running for its 7th year in Apulia, Southern Italy, and is supported by the ESF. The project consists of conducting activities in primary schools, aiming to prevent young people’s early interruption of their study career. According to the European Commission (2017), the programme reached 200,225 children and was very successful: early school leaving in Apulia was 24.5% in 2009 and it dropped to 16.9% in 2015. Reading skills have also improved as the percentage of 15-year-olds with higher reading skills increased from 4.2 % in 2009 to 6.1% in 2012. This allows students to enjoy life-long learning as they grow. This programme won the Commission’s 2015 RegioStars Award in the category “Inclusive growth” (European Commission 2017).

**The interaction of ESIF actions and those undertaken under the European Capital of Culture Initiative**

The European Capital of Culture initiative has gained prominence and popularity in the last years. Matera, a southern city in the Basilicata region, was named European Capital of Culture for the year 2019. This may have had a direct impact on Matera’s urban development and regeneration. Matera’s transport infrastructure is among the least developed in the country: in 2016, the city had a non-functioning train station which contributed to its isolation. As a result of Matera’s nomination as European Cultural Capital, € 400 million were deployed by the government to accelerate the development of the city (Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 2017); this funding includes € 4 million from the Cohesion Fund. This is an example of how initiatives such as *European Capitals of Culture* attracts ESIF funding.
THE MAIN IMPACTS OBSERVED

Education and Training

The evidence gathered thus far shows that projects co-funded by ESIF have been successful in: 1) improving school premises and infrastructure, 2) reducing early school leaving, 3) contributing to the enhancement of equal access to lifelong learning, and 4) facilitating the transition from education to work. This is evident in the “Dritti a Scuola” project, and the “Alternanza Scuola Lavoro” projects. It should be noted that both projects had a focus on the Mezzogiorno, the least developed part of Italy. This is in line with the ESIF objectives such as regional cohesion and development. There seems to be an alignment between high-level policy planning and on-the-ground experiences in the case of education and training: the prominence given to this area by the partnership agreement is reflected in the number of successful projects which have been carried out. Furthermore, it should be noted that the concept of “open school” provides a valuable link between national government’s competencies and the EU’s ones, as schools are considered active players in the community, being responsible for social cohesion and a deterrent of social exclusion.

Culture and Creative sector

The impact of the ESIF-funded programmes and initiatives described in the National Operational programme above on the Italian cultural/touristic sector is expected to be very positive. As a result of the restorations 560,000 more tourists are expected to visit Italian heritage sites in the 2014-2020 period, bringing the average total number of yearly visitors to over 4 million. Restoration works have covered a surface of over 277,000 square meters. ESIF’s support to SMEs is projected to have a significant impact on the firms located in the regions covered by the national operational programmes: private investments on the cultural sector is projected to increase from 6.9% to 7.1% of the regional GDP in these regions.

The Operational Programme “Culture and Development” appeared to have had a positive impact on Italian SMEs operating in the cultural sectors: 118 SMEs received financial support worth over € 18 million; this increased employment in the sector as 283 people were hired (Invitalia 2018).

Regarding the beneficiaries of ESIF- support, in Sicily over € 8 million were allocated to the historical town of Caltagirone, to open the National Ceramics Museum in March 2021. Furthermore, € 5 million were destined to the revitalisation of the historic Tobacco factory in Catania, which is projected to become a cultural hub of the city. These examples show the impact that ESIF-funded cultural initiatives have on the revitalisation of urban (Catania) and rural (Caltagirone) areas in Sicily, one of the least developed regions in the country.

Sport and Physical activity

The evidence gathered thus far shows that sport projects co-funded by ESIF have been successful in improving sport infrastructure, contributing to urban regeneration. A great deal of these projects has been carried out in the Mezzogiorno, in line with the purpose of the Cohesion Fund. In some occasions, i.e. the restructuring of sport facilities for the 2019 Universiade in Naples, sport projects have allowed citizens to utilise European funds which would have been returned otherwise (Universiade2019.it, ND). This is a success for a country which takes up only 1.2% of the 2014-2020 regional development funds allocated by the European Commission (The Economist 2017). Investing in the city’s infrastructure will have in turn a direct impact on tourism and will stimulate further economic growth.
Youth

The YEI and Youths’ Guarantee measures appears successful as they may have contributed to lowering the level of youth unemployment in the country at the end of 2017. The youth unemployment rate in December 2017 was 34.7%, 2.5% less than it was in October 2016. The Youths’ Guarantee programme was characterised by a massive enrolment: currently 1,400,232 young people are part of the initiative. The programme has been particularly effective in the southern regions of Sicily and Campania, where the beneficiaries of the programme are respectively over 157,000 and 120,000.

POLAND

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

The national policy context in the areas of education and training, culture, sport and youth is reflected in two key strategic documents, namely the (1) “Strategy of Responsible Development” and the (2) “Partnership Agreement (EU support for Cohesion Policy Programmes)“.

(1) “Strategy for Responsible Development”

At present the fundamental document creating the basis for the whole of public intervention in Poland is the “Strategy for Responsible Development up-to 2020 (with a perspective until 2030)”, adopted by the Prime Minister’s Council on 14th February 2017. It comprises three specific objectives, including one entitled "Socially sensitive and territorially balanced development". The Strategy also enumerates several areas affecting the achievement of the Strategy's objectives. One of them is "Human and social capital" development. This intervention area assumes several groups of actions, which have detailed goals assigned to them that should lead to:

- improvement of the quality of human capital, resulting in the development of high competences and qualifications that are well-adjusted to the challenges of a changing economy, being a pre-condition for rapid economic development and the improvement of life quality,
- an increase of the share of social capital (including civil society organizations) in socio-economic development of the country.

The Strategy assumes that improvements in the quality of human and social capital will be the result of a better functioning of the education system, higher education and the adult learning sphere, but also health protection, access to cultural assets, and the development of civil society. Specific interventions under the Strategy should assure the emergence of a better educated society and - thanks to this - the creation of better opportunities for finding high quality jobs.

A specific direction of intervention concerning "Human and social capital" development encompasses the following areas:

- better adjustment of education and learning to the needs of a modern economy,
- improving the society health and efficiency of the health care system,
- development of social-capital,
• strengthening the role of culture for economic development and social cohesion.

These intervention spheres are directly connected with two of the areas of interest for the present study, education and culture. The two other areas - youth and sport - are not directly mentioned. The prominence of the first two is reflected in both strategic level documents – the national “Strategy for Responsible Development” and within the 16 (voivodship) regional strategies for programming of ESIF support, but developed before the publication of the “Strategy for Responsible Development”.

It is planned that the goals, directions of intervention / strategic actions and flagship projects indicated in the national Strategy will be reflected in other ‘sectoral’ strategies, policies and programmes. At present, these are still under preparation (among them: the “Strategy for the development of Human Capital” and the “Strategy for development of social capital”).

The “Strategy for Responsible Development” forms the basis for preparation of both these documents. According to announcements from the public authorities, it is planned that during 2018 all strategic documents (“sectoral” strategies) should be prepared and finally these should shape a coherent system of national strategic documents.

(2) Partnership Agreement (EU support for Cohesion Policy Programmes)

The key document, regulating the implementation of Cohesion Policy programmes within the 2014-2020 period is the Partnership Agreement (PA) adopted between the Government of Poland and the European Commission, signed in 2014 and amended in 2017.

As far as the areas interesting for this analysis are concerned, the strongest emphasis within the PA is put on culture and education and, to a more limited extent, tourism (as an area partially related to sport). Support for culture is mainly for cultural infrastructure and the renovation of national monuments such as churches or castles and is also linked with the strengthening of Poland’s potential as a tourism destination. The projects supporting culture were also strongly represented in 2007-2013 EU programming period, both within the national and the regional Operational Programmes and are widely perceived as having been very successful.

The key directions within the area of education are linked to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, although Poland has a higher share of the population with higher education than the EU average, as well as a much lower share of persons completing education too early, than both the EU average and the Europe 2020 goal. It should be mentioned, however, that the Polish school system is now undergoing a controversial reform of primary and secondary education that was introduced in 2017. The PA emphasizes also the need to reform the tertiary education system as well as continuing to support the vocational schools’ development and their stronger cooperation with the business sector. Support within the labour market, financed from the ESF resources in the past proved to be, in general, well addressed and effective.

In the 2014-2020 period, support for culture will be mainly concentrated on national heritage sites as well as soft support aimed at increasing the participation of Polish citizens in culture, in co-ordination with “Creative Europe” actions.

Support for young people is coordinated with the Youth Employment Initiative, which in the case of Poland have been extended to people up to the age of 30. The support for education and training within Thematic Objective 10 will mainly be concentrated on better relations

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76 The importance of the areas of interest for the present analysis, reflected by numbers and values of supported projects, co-financed with ESIF 2014-2020 resources and contracted so far, are presented later in the present document and attached annexes.
between the education sector and the labour market, support for groups with special needs and increasing the quality and innovativeness of the education provided.

Sport as an area of Structural Funds intervention is totally absent within the Partnership Agreement. It is only mentioned in the context of the Erasmus+ programme. In reality, however, some projects in this area are implemented under various programmes.

THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT

The table below presents the proportion of the value of all the projects signed so far under Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 that are projects completed by the end of 2017 and the proportion of all projects that are those for which the completion date is in the following years.

As the data show, currently the absorption of funds is at a moderately low level. By the end of 2017 completed projects amounted to approximately 21% of the total value of concluded contracts. However, many projects are scheduled for completion in the current year. As a result, by the end of 2018 most of the projects (in their value terms) will be finalized. To a lesser extent, contracts concluded will be still implemented until 2023 and only then will there be full use of Structural Fund and ESIF funding.

Table 1: Value of contracts in the 4 areas concerned and type of programme, signed under Cohesion Policy 2014-2020, broken down by year of completion (percentage values - cumulative)\textsuperscript{77}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>5 031.6</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>14 576.9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>1 875.1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>6 675.2</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of programme</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>402.5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National operational programmes</td>
<td>10 548.6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional operational programmes</td>
<td>17 207.8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL | 28 158.8 | 21% | 61% | 81% | 92% | 94% | 98% | 100% |

\textbf{Source:} Ministry of Economic Development, data for 1\textsuperscript{st} January 2018

\textsuperscript{77} The percentage values show the proportion of the value of all projects in a considered areas that were completed by the end of a given year (cumulatively - since the implementation of Cohesion Policy 2014-2020).
THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION

Projects contracted within the 4 areas concerned, signed under Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 (12 026 contracts - as of 1st January 2018), have been examined against the types of effect they are expected to result in. For this purpose, a random selection of 220 projects was made first. Then, based on the projects’ descriptions (both 2014-2020 Operational Programmes and European Territorial Cooperation programmes) the frequency of individual effects, consistent with the categorization of ESIF Interventions, was determined.

### Education and Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reducing early school-leaving and promoting education to good quality education.</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting access to tertiary and equivalent education.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning.</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting mobility, particularly the adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change.</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination.</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributions to other ESIF priorities</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to strengthening research, technological development and innovation.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to enhancing access to, and use of, information and communication technologies (ICT).</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector and of the fishery and aquaculture sector.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy and promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency, promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to European territorial cooperation.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that the categorization was based only on analysis of projects’ general descriptions, it should be treated as an approximation.
### Culture and Creative sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct support to cultural organizations.</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/preservation of cultural facilities and cultural heritage (sites,</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monuments etc.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to urban development &amp; regeneration.</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures reducing environmental impact.</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion &amp; encouraging inward investment.</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Employment and related economic effects</strong></th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating employment in cultural and creative activity.</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on related employment.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect impacts on employment.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business growth &amp; other economic impacts.</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using culture and creative activities as a means of promotion and marketing.</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strategic effects</strong></th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging developments in technology and other innovation.</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic development of a broader cultural and creative strategy.</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking cultural and creative actions with the development of tourism or</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the experience economy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Skills development</strong></th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving cultural and creative skills &amp; competences</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using culture to develop broader skills for employment</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social effects</strong></th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving governance and administrative capacity.</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happiness &amp; well-being.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Sport and Physical activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support to sport SMEs.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement of the physical environment.</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting sustainable transport.</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other measures reducing environmental impact.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion &amp; encouraging inward investment.</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment and related economic effects</strong></td>
<td>% of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating employment in sport and physical activity.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on related employment.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect impacts on employment.</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business growth &amp; other economic impacts.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using sport and physical activities as a means of promotion and marketing.</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic effects</strong></td>
<td>% of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging developments in sport technology and other innovation.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic development of a broader sport-based strategy.</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linking sport actions with the development of tourism or the experience economy.</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills development</strong></td>
<td>% of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving sport skills &amp; competences.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using sport to develop broader skills for employment.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement.</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social effects</strong></td>
<td>% of projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving governance and administrative capacity.</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to happiness &amp; well-being.</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct effects</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reducing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education.</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting access to tertiary and equivalent education.</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training.</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment and related economic effects</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment creation specifically aimed at young people.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on related employment.</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect impacts on employment.</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business growth &amp; other economic impacts.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-border youth actions.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support to Young farmers.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primarily Social Effects</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools renovated (capacity).</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to migrants, foreign background, minorities (including marginalised communities such as the Roma) – youth.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement (youth).</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct support to youth organisations.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic effects</th>
<th>% of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving skills &amp; competences.</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training.</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special interventions

A series of examples are provided illustrating the nature of the actions in the four areas of interest.

EXAMPLE #1.

Title: Repayable assistance Fund “Nationwide Programme of Scientific Education” (OPEN – Ogólnokrajowy Program Edukacji Naukowej”

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79 Types of direct effects in the area of ‘Youth’ direct effects are identical to the types of direct effects in the ‘Education and Training’ area. Thus, the impact of a project such as 'Promoting access to tertiary and equivalent education' and 'Facilitating transition from education to work and strengthening vocational education and training' is much more frequent than it appears from the presented table.
Programme: Operational Programme “Knowledge Education Development” (ESF financing), Measure 4.1 – Social innovation, 2014-2020 (country-wide intervention)

Key features:

The OPEN Fund is being implemented from November 1, 2017 to October 30, 2020. The Fund is operated by a consortium of three organizations selected through a grant competition process organized by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme “Knowledge Education Development”.

The aim of the Fund is to test a new form for the financing of the education goals for adults in Poland, leading to an improvement of the knowledge and skills of the beneficiaries (borrowers) resulting in positive change of their situation on the labour market. The financing mechanism of the OPEN Fund is an innovative solution in the sphere of education.

The OPEN Fund is a repayable assistance facility financing the lifelong learning of adults. The repayable assistance is provided in the form of interest-free loans available from PLN 1 000 up-to PLN 100 000 (≈ EUR 240 up-to ≈ EUR 23 800). In fact, it is a “zero-cost” loan because the borrower does not bear any commissions or fees associated with obtaining the loan.

The loan is offered for a period of up to 60 months. After the successful completion of a given form of education (financed from the loan) the borrower is given a 15% capital rebate on the loan repayment. Additionally, after meeting some other criteria the rebate rises to 25% maximum (the maximum repayment rebate depends on the borrower achieving tangible results related to a rise of qualifications and the acquisition of new competencies reflected – for instance – in finding a job, or a new better paid job position).

The loans of the OPEN Fund are intended for adults (age 18 years or more, domiciled in Poland) to finance all forms of education and competence training with the exception of tertiary education (first, second and third degree), lasting no longer than 24 months.

Budget:

The total value of the project is PLN 29,990,000 (≈ EUR 7.14 million), of which PLN 27,200,000 (≈ EUR 6.5 million) is intended directly for loans. The Fund plans to finance about 1.3 - 1.5 thousand of loans.

EXAMPLE #2.

Title: Database of Development Services (DDS)

Programme: Regional Operational Programmes of 14 Polish regions (all, except pomorskie and mazowieckie)

Key features:

DDS is a completely new tool, managed by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PAED), implemented to provide training and coaching services for Polish SMEs, based on European Social Fund resources, applying a demand driven model. Within the 2007-
2013 programming period, a supply driven model (implemented through individual, large and long-lasting projects’) was applied which occurred to be neither very effective, nor efficient. Therefore, the present model has introduced competition between the various training providers and includes temporary certification of training institutions, based on the fulfilment of mandatory conditions (controlled by PAED). The feedback from the trained participants and their evaluation of the quality of the training is also considered when prolonging the certificate for the given institution providing services. All the planned training events are published on the DDS web page. The system also allows enrolment on a given course electronically. All the training events, organized though the DDS and successfully completed, are financed by ESF money within the respective state aid regulations.

At the moment it is too early to evaluate the impact of the new approach. However, it is rather obvious, that access to the training events has been substantially improved, as well as the adaptation of the training offer to meet the needs of SMEs. Nowadays the supply (both content and timing) of the training and coaching for SME staff is strictly related to the demand.

**Budget:**

Approximately: EUR 800 mln – EUR 1 billion in total (all respective regional operational programmes); the individual allocations within individual ROP can vary.

**Special interventions**

For the distribution of ESIF funds in Poland, a catalogue of national and regional smart specializations has been adopted. National / regional specializations influence the distribution of support under Thematic Objective 1 of the ESIFs programming, being a condition for granting support from both, national and regional Operational Programmes.

One of the areas of smart specialization on the national level is the creative industries i.e. specialization no. 16 entitled “Intelligent creative technologies” (this specialization directly includes the sphere of the “Culture and creative sector”).

On the regional level, each of the Polish regions has adopted its own regional smart specialization strategy. In the case of 11 regions (out of 16) there are smart specialization strategies covering the issues of: (i) the development of creative industries (in 3 regions), (ii) the quality of life (4 regions) and (iii) tourism and sport, including medical tourism services (4 regions). One area of specialization is therefore to “Culture and Creative sector” directly and others (“tourism” and “quality of life”) refer indirectly to the sphere of “Sports and Physical activity”.

These specializations play an important role in the distribution of support from the nationwide Operational Programme Smart Growth and from all Regional Operational Programmes (in both cases based on ERDF financing under TO 1). In the case of projects supporting the TO 1 objective, a project must be thematically compatible with one of the national smart specializations – the same mechanism functions on the regional level. In consequence, this opens preferences to projects concerning at least some of the areas of interest of the present

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80 In Poland, the process of identifying smart specializations is continuous and open. It involves economic and scientific partners as well as the civil society, in accordance with the concept of entrepreneurial discovery. The work leading to selecting a smart specialization is organized at the national level by cooperating in this respect two central organs: the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology and the Ministry of Investments and Development, and at the regional level by marshals of voivodeships in cooperation with the above ministries.
document (in some cases such a compatibility is a formal prerequisite for transferring support, but in others it also results in granting additional scoring in competitions for grant support). In addition, sometimes the smart specializations are also used for channeling support under other thematic objectives – in this case, possible compatibility gives preferential grading within contests for grants (such solutions are more common for distribution of grants under regional Operational Programmes).

**Particularly effective interventions**

It is still too early to assess which intervention within the period 2014-2020 are particularly effective. As far as the 2007-2013 period is concerned, intervention within the Priority 11 of the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme (total value of financing: PLN 2.5 billion) seems to be quite widely regarded as very effective (based on both assessment of the level of indicators achieved and some evaluation research conducted).

The interventions in the area of culture, consisted of projects directed to the protection of cultural heritage and the improvement of the infrastructure of cultural institutions and art schools. The impact of this intervention was very broad and stimulated a substantial improvement in the offer of many institutions throughout the country, including disadvantaged groups, for instance handicapped persons.

Architectural solutions in both newly-built and refurbished buildings have been implemented and efforts have been made to adapt these buildings to the needs of physically disadvantaged persons. Also, facilitations in access for individuals with other dysfunctions have been introduced. For example, in response to the needs of persons with a hearing disability, induction loops were provided in concert halls, museums and libraries, while persons with eyesight dysfunctions are provided with typhlographics; websites have also been adapted accordingly.

The intervention also affected the participation of the Polish citizens and foreign tourists in culture. Since 2008, partially thanks to the EU interventions, the number of persons visiting museums and participating in concerts and other cultural events increased by approximately 2-4% each year, which represents a substantial rise in public interest in cultural participation. In the case of some newly built or renovated philharmonic halls, the tickets have to be booked very early in advance, including in smaller cities.

**The interaction of ESIF actions and those undertaken under Erasmus+ and Creative Europe and related EU initiatives**

A very illustrative example of an effective interaction between various interventions based on the EU Structural Funds is the case of the Polish National Opera in Warsaw. Since 2014, the National Opera - one of the most important cultural institutions in Poland - has been able to join a group of partners benefiting from a project called ‘Opera Vision’, which was launched under the Creative Europe programme. Participation in this initiative was mainly possible due to previous investments leading to an improvement of the various operational functionalities of the Polish National Opera. This was done through implementation of a project (2012-2014) financed under the Polish Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme 2007-13 (Priority Objective 11 – Culture and National Heritage; Measure). The project objective was to renovate the historical National Opera building and to modernize it by supplying equipment improving *audience experience* (sound and lighting systems, vision transmission from the stage to the foyer) and to improve working conditions of opera and ballet artists. The project also included the establishment of a ‘digital culture’ unit offering the wealth of the National Opera’s archives to Internet users, including costume designs, posters, and recordings. The project successfully contributed to enriching the cultural offer of Warsaw, the region, and the whole country.
The results of the above project made it possible for the Polish National Opera to join a group of 30 opera houses from 18 countries across Europe, working together under the supervision of Opera Europa, the European association of opera companies and festivals. The goal of the present project is to disseminate European opera work through the application of modern communication technologies - first, through the implementation of a platform that offers viewers the possibility to watch live streams and on-demand recordings of operas staged by contributing institutions (operas), and to access behind-the-scenes materials (teasers, trailers), and also related works, such as operettas, dance performances, musicals, and concerts.

Opera Vision is the first initiative on such a large scale, offering easy and free access to opera for all, regardless of the place of residence or social status. With new media enabling global reach, Opera Vision effectively promotes European culture across the world, which is in line with the objectives of the European Day of Cultural Heritage 2018. The Polish National Opera, being a partner within the “Opera Vision” initiative has received a new and extremely effective tool allowing it to promote Polish art to broad international audiences. Most probably this would not be possible, if previous technology-related investments had not been undertaken. Those turned-out to be possible thanks to financing received under the previous EU structural funds programming period. Finally, support implemented throughout 2012-2014, established a well-organized development path for the Polish National Opera. Previous investments allowed more sophisticated ventures later, and to all of this was implemented with a large group of the most important and prestigious European opera houses.

THE MAIN IMPACTS OBSERVED

Conclusions based on the types of intervention financed within the areas of concern):

**Education and Training**

A wide impact is observed in this area, both in the case of direct provision and other types of influence. The vast majority of projects relate to enhancing equal access to lifelong learning and social inclusion and combining poverty and discrimination - this is due to the fact that a very significant part of the support concerns economic activation of people in a particularly difficult situation on the labor market. Another type of direct impact is promotion of sustainable and quality employment and supporting the quality of all learning stages (including lifelong learning). The direct impact is commonly associated with contributing to the strengthening of the public capacity. The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is clearly less frequent.

**Culture and Creative sector**

All projects concern the development / preservation of cultural facilities and cultural heritage, and in the majority also direct support to cultural organizations, contributing to urban development & regeneration, reducing environmental impact, increasing profile and promotion & encouraging inward investment. The effect of the development of institutions and cultural objects always generates a positive influence on employment (in the cultural institution itself and / or its surroundings), and often also on the development of enterprises operating in the surroundings of cultural institutions. Other types of impact from projects from the culture and creative sector also include: improving cultural and creative skills & competences (performers and administrators) and increasing social engagement (community identity and cohesion, promoting social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination). Social effects arise from addressing societal challenges (often discrimination and health issues) are very often seen, but also increase general well-being.
Sport and Physical activity

The direct effect of almost all projects arises from the development of sport infrastructure and facilities, urban regeneration and improving the attractiveness of urban environments. The majority of projects also promote sustainable transport, and a significant part is related to the use of sport as a focal point for business and inward investment. Projects in the area of sport and physical activity very often form the basis for promotional and marketing activities and positively affect the creation of jobs and the development of entrepreneurship. A very important and widespread social effect is the increase of happiness & well-being.

Youth

Most of the projects have an impact on reducing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality education. In addition, there is a widespread impact on areas such as education and training, although such projects are often based on contributions to the education and training area. The indirect impact of the projects is mainly related to the area of employment creation (among young people) and economic impacts (social and social incentives). The vast majority of projects have a positive effect on improving young people's skills & competences (e.g. digital skills, STEM skills).

List of annexes - data on concentration of intervention under Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 programmes within areas of education and training, culture and creative sector, sport and physical activity, youth)

Attached are tables presenting data on projects broken down by ESIF intervention categories within areas of interest of the present analysis (education and training, culture and creative sector, sport and physical activity, youth), data on the share of the areas of interest (projects number and respective values) within Poland’s Cohesion Policy 2014-2020.

Table 1. Contracts within the 4 areas signed within Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 – aggregated data.

Table 2. Contracts within the 4 areas signed within Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 – aggregated data - broken down by group of programmes
DATA ON CONCENTRATION OF INTERVENTION UNDER COHESION POLICY PROGRAMMES WITHIN AREAS OF YOUTH, SPORT, EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Below we present data on contracts already signed within 2014-2020 operational programmes as well as European Territorial Cooperation programmes.

**Table 1: Contracts within the 4 areas signed within Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 – aggregated data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Contract number</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>Amount of EU co-financing (million PLN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture and Creative sector</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>5 031.6</td>
<td>3 401.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>6 819</td>
<td>14 576.9</td>
<td>11 678.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>1 875.1</td>
<td>1 305.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>4 256</td>
<td>6 675.2</td>
<td>5 824.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 026</strong></td>
<td><strong>28 158.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>22 209.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ministry of Economic Development, data for 1st January 2018
### Table 2: Contracts within the 4 areas signed within Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 – broken down by group of programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture and Creative sector</th>
<th>Contract number</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>Amount of EU co-financing (million PLN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>225.8</td>
<td>189.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National programmes</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2 405.3</td>
<td>1 711.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional operational programmes</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>2 400.4</td>
<td>1 500.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education and Training</th>
<th>Contract number</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>Amount of EU co-financing (million PLN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National programmes</td>
<td>1 216</td>
<td>3 787.7</td>
<td>3 296.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional operational programmes</td>
<td>5 585</td>
<td>10 739.7</td>
<td>8 340.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Contract number</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>Amount of EU co-financing (million PLN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>127.1</td>
<td>105.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Operational programmes</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>1 748.1</td>
<td>1 200.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Contract number</th>
<th>Total projects’ value (million PLN)</th>
<th>Amount of EU co-financing (million PLN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National programmes</td>
<td>1 660</td>
<td>4 355.6</td>
<td>3 862.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional operational programmes</td>
<td>2 596</td>
<td>2 319.6</td>
<td>1 961.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**                    | **12 026**      | **28 158.8**                        | **22 209.1**                           |

**Source:** Ministry of Economic Development, data for 1st January 2018
SLOVAKIA

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

From the 454 billion euro of the European Structural and Investment Funds (EFSI) support for the period 2014-2020, Slovakia has been allocated with EUR 15,3 billion. Slovakia counts 9 national programmes. The national contribution of Slovakia is EUR 4,3 billion. The ESF finances two national programmes, one of them directly related to our areas of interest: Operational Programme (OP) of Human Resources, financed by the ESF, ERDF and YEI. The financial allocation from the EU for this OP is EUR 2,21 billion. The other Fund also related to our areas of interest is the Integrated Regional Programme ERDF that receives a financial allocation of EUR 1,73 billion.

The Slovakian Partnership Agreement has chosen to prioritise the following areas:

- Promoting innovation friendly business environment by enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, improving innovation and research performance and developing an e-economy,
- Developing infrastructure for economic growth and employment, in particular key transport networks and sustainable urban transport,
- Developing human capital growth and improved labour market participation by reinforcing all levels of education, increasing access to employment of the most vulnerable groups in society (in particular the young and long-term unemployed) and promoting social inclusion of Roma communities,
- Encouraging sustainable and efficient use of natural resources through promotion of energy efficiency and a low carbon economy, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change,
- Building a modern and professional public administration by means of a thorough reform aimed at improving governance, tackling corruption and ensuring efficiency and impartiality of the judiciary. Special attention should be given to ensure the stability and professionalism of bodies responsible for ESI Funds.

Investing in human capital and supporting people to enter the labour market are a top priority in Slovakia (this is in response to European Semester recommendations). A strong emphasis is placed on combating youth unemployment. The funds finance initiatives to improve education and training systems and ensure young people get the right skills that make them more competitive.

Early childhood education and care as well as vocational education are also key areas for investment.

According to the Partnership Agreement, funds allocated to human capital are expected to contribute to an increased employment rate (at least 72%), reduced poverty and exclusion (by 170,000 inhabitants) and improved adaptation of education to the labour market needs.

Education and Training

The OP of Human Resources allocates EUR 550 million to educational and vocational training; the Integrated Regional Programme ERDF allocates EUR 323 million.

In Slovakia, the main authority responsible for Education and Training is the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports. The Ministry is in charge for pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education. It is also responsible for educational facilities and lifelong learning. Several other institutions contribute to education and training policy, such as the National Institute of Education, the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements,
the National Institute of Vocational Education, the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre and the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information.

**Culture and Creative sector**

The main competent institution in Slovakia for the policy of culture is the Ministry of Culture; however, being considered as an inter-sectoral issue, it is also a strong area of interest of the Ministry of Education, Science and Research, as well as of the local and regional authorities. Slovakia has developed a Strategy of the Development of Culture 2014-2020 establishing the main priorities of the Slovak policy:

- education and training for the formation of cultural needs,
- preservation and accessibility of the cultural heritage,
- supporting original art works,
- financing of culture,
- the use of creativity and culture in the economic development of Slovakia,
- research in the field of culture,
- presentations of the national culture abroad.\(^{81}\)

An interesting part of this policy is the Strategy for Librarianship 2015-2020 considered as a 'significant investment in the future development of the knowledge, culture and education of the country’s population'.\(^{82}\)

**Sport and Physical activity**

The ministry in charge of youth policy in Slovakia is the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. 'Sport policy is designed in a way to support high-level sport, especially national teams and elite athletes, including disabled athletes, national and international competitions, national federations, to fight against doping, to reinforce school sport and to promote beneficial effects of sporting activities on health'.\(^{83}\)

Slovakia counts with and Act on Sports\(^{84}\) focus on promoting sport at professional and amateur level and on the organisation of sports at national, regional and local level.

The Slovak government promotes a very large number of initiatives focused on sport for youth and other groups of population, such as support for sports clubs at schools; improvement of sports infrastructure at universities; implementation of a system of care for talented young athletes, etc.

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\(^{84}\) Act No. 440/2015 Coll. on Sports.
Youth

The ministry in charge of youth policy in Slovakia is the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. The Slovak Youth Institute is the National Agency for Youth. Youth policy is defined in the Strategy of the Slovak Republic for Youth 2014-2020, which focuses on the following nine thematic areas aiming to improve the quality of life of young people:

- education,
- employment,
- creativity and entrepreneurship,
- participation,
- health and healthy lifestyles,
- social inclusion
- volunteering
- youth and the world (global issues)
- youth work.

THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT

The ERDF and ESF support the four areas of interest through the OP of Human Resources and the Integrated Regional Operational Programme.

The ERDF supports the Investment priority 10: investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning by developing education and training infrastructure with the following interventions:

- construction of new kindergarten facilities, including elements of inclusive education;
- expanding the capacities of existing kindergarten facilities by adding, reconstructing, changing of disposition of objects;
- construction and technical modifications of existing facilities and their adaptation to the needs of nursery schools with elements of inclusive education (e.g. unused primary school premises)
- construction and technical modifications of the kindergarten area including children’s playgrounds, sports facilities for children - closed and open with the possibility of year-round businesses, gardens, including elements of inclusive education
- procurement of material and technical equipment of kindergartens
- increasing the energy efficiency of kindergarten buildings
- provision of language classrooms for the teaching of Slovak and foreign languages, including the Slovak language for people growing up in different language environment
- provision of school libraries including spaces for the further development of the key competences of the pupils
- procurement of natural sciences, polytechnic and ICT classrooms
- construction and technical modifications for the needs of classrooms procurements
• procurement and modernization of material and technical equipment of vocational schools for practical teaching, professional training, professional practice, lifelong learning, language teaching, professional workshops, vocational training, libraries, lecture and teaching rooms at secondary vocational schools, centres of vocational education and training, centres of professional practice, practical training centres and related construction modifications

• provision and modernization of material and technical equipment of boarding houses and related construction modifications, including elements of inclusive education

• extension, superstructure, construction and reconstruction of external and internal spaces and areas of secondary vocational schools, centres of vocational education and training, centres of professional practice, practical training centres and school management, related, inter alia, to the provision of inclusive education and amenities for the wider community centres of vocational education and training

• establishment of a business incubator- by extension, superstructure, construction or reconstruction of the internal premises of vocational education and training centres and the purchase of material and technical equipment for the business incubator, including high-speed Internet access equipment and ICT

• Improving the energy efficiency of secondary vocational schools, Vocational Education and Training Centres, Vocational Training Centres, Practical Teaching Centres, School facilities including student residences
The following tables show ESF support to five different IPs with several interventions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment priority for thematic objective 8</th>
<th>Introduction of a guarantee for young jobseekers belonging to NEET, to increase employment, employ-participation and participation of young people in the labour market</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility): 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</td>
<td>Implementing measures to support young NEETs (not in employment, education, or training) with a view to achieving sustainable employment or sustainable SRAs (Social Responsibility Agreements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs increasing the chance for young NEET people to offer a high quality job offer</td>
<td>Support for the first regularly paid employment of a young unemployed NEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of practice as a part of the employment in the first job of a young unemployed NEET using elements such as training, incorporation, mentoring, etc., implementing measures supporting the second chance of young NEETs for education or training or supporting the offer for education and training for the labour market related to their integration into the labour market</td>
<td>Programs enabling young NEET jobseekers to adapt qualifications to labour market needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help and support of young NEETs when starting a business through innovative start-ups and help with self-employment, or creating partnerships with entities operating in start-up sectors in the form of coordinator</td>
<td>Programs enabling young NEETs to complete education at elementary or secondary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs and projects that enable young NEETs trainings or internships, practices, skills trainings, and so on.</td>
<td>Programs enabling to build a work experience profile to improve the opportunities for getting a stable employment for a young unemployed NEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs designed to look for new or innovative forms of support for NEET young people with the objective to educate, seek employment, internships, practice, and so on.</td>
<td>Specific programs to support graduates with disabilities in finding a first job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific programs to support young NEETs with disabilities in finding a first job</td>
<td>Introduction of a special support program for the employment of young people after termination of substitute care or after being imprisoned and for young people with disabilities with residual work potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills support for young NEET in the environmental sector (green professions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Investment priority a for the thematic objective 10</strong></td>
<td>activities contributing to balancing the disadvantages of pupils and ensuring equal opportunities in the education and training process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning): Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting 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</td>
<td>provision of teaching aids, texts and methodical materials for the needs of quality inclusive education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creation, innovation, implementation of educational programs aimed at the promotion of inclusive education, e.g. the implementation of a full-day educational system, operating of pedagogical assistants and professional staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities developing collaboration with parents and the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities promoting an intercultural environment with objective to prevent segregation in schools and classes (e.g. through the creation and implementation of local action plans of inclusive education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>promoting innovative and alternative forms of education and teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>career and educational counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improving the diagnosis and re-diagnosis of children and pupils in order to prevent unjustified postponement of the beginning of compulsory school attendance, school failure of children and their placement in special classes and schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activities aimed at creating suitable conditions for joint education of majority and children / pupils with special educational needs with regard to children / pupils coming from marginalised Roma communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting cooperation in the domain of exchange of experience in the educational process (e.g. best practice, exchange of information and networking between schools, relevant institutions, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creation, innovation, and implementation of education programs aimed at enhancing natural sciences, mathematics, environmental, linguistic, and ICT skills including financial literacy, entrepreneurial knowledge and economic thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assessment of education system and level of increase in pupils literacy, including pupils with special educational needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support for development and verification of key competences and literacy of children / pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support for models of evaluation and self-evaluation of schools and school facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identification and evaluation of the competence level of pedagogical and professional staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support for mobility activities (synergy with programme Erasmus+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mentoring and tutoring activities aiming at preventing early school leaving and transition to the next level of education for children / pupils with special educational needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Investment priority b for the thematic objective 10** | supporting university projects to identify and remove barriers in accessing to education for people with specific needs, e.g. accessibility and access to information and material in an accessible format  
networking and training of university staff for students with specific needs  
counselling for students with special needs, including students from a socially disadvantaged environment, as well as marginalized communities, such as Gypsies  
preparatory courses for students from a socially disadvantaged environment and student with special educational needs, including marginal communities, such as Gypsies |
| activities aimed at improving school success rate among pupils, including pupils with special educational needs  
activities aimed at non-formal, informal and interest-based learning, e.g. learning by doing  
activities aimed at involving professionals from other sectors in the education process  
creation, implementation and control of quality standards for the further education of pedagogical and professional staff with a view to ensuring inclusive education  
creation or innovation and implementation of continuous education programs for pedagogical and professional staff with an emphasis on the inclusive aspect  
support for development of key competences of teaching and professional staff, including language and ICT skills  
traineeships and practical training of teachers following the interconnection of theoretical and practical teaching with regard to the inclusive dimension of education |
| **Investment priority c for the thematic objective 10** | creation and implementation of educational programs to develop the competences of adults in line with labour market requirements (increase, acquisition, replenishment) including ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), increasing financial literacy, etc.  
Support for partnerships with employers and professional organizations, employers’ associations, associations and chambers in the process of creation, innovation and implementation of education  
Forecasting and monitoring of labour market needs in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, regions and social partners  
Support for educational programs to complement elementary and/or lower secondary education (so-called second chance programs), and for stimulating the continuation of post-secondary education studies  
Ongoing review and updating of the national qualifications framework and the national qualifications system in line with the European Qualifications Framework  
Monitoring, evaluation, creation and implementation of quality standards for lifelong learning  
Support for inclusive educational activities for people with special educational needs and other disadvantaged groups  
Support for young people with specific problems in their employment, generating examples of cooperation between employers and education providers  
Identifying and evaluating the level of adult competences used in working life  
Interconnection of data bases related to lifelong learning, social statistics, and labour market |

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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Investment priority d for the thematic objective 10</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introducing and applying the attendance of pupils in practical education directly at the employer’s workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counselling and promotion of vocational training and preparation for pupils of elementary school (also with cooperation with parents) with regards to the needs of market and requirements of employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional and career counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partnership support between schools and employers as well as with professional organisations, employers’ unions, associations, and chambers while creating, innovating and implementing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitoring of the labour market’s needs in collaboration with Ministry of work, social issues and family in relation with enhancement of the quality of professional education and preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creation and implementation of educational programs aimed at enhancing of competence necessary for adjusting the education to the labour market’s needs (linguistic, financial background including entrepreneurship knowledge and economical thinking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>establishment of a set of indicators and descriptors for quality assurance of initial vocational education in compliance with European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitoring, evaluation, creation, and quality assurance of learning outputs - e.g. by the employer’s participation in the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support for mobility activities in the field of vocational training (synergy with Erasmus+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promoting innovative and alternative forms of education and teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support for development and validation of key competences and literacy of pupils in vocational education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projects focusing on the creation of training companies including the extension of the subject training company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counselling for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including pupils from a socially disadvantaged environment, as well as marginalized communities, such as Gypsies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preparatory courses for pupils with SEPA, including marginalized communities, such as Gypsies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creation, implementation and control of quality standards for the further education of pedagogical and professional staff, including with a view to ensuring inclusive education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creation, resp. innovation and implementation of continuing education programs for pedagogical and professional staff with an emphasis on the inclusive aspect and the needs of the labour market</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The different types of intervention identified in the previous question relate to activities programmed under the specific investment priorities. These are activities that should be supported within the given investment priority, however, there is no information about their actual fulfilment.

**Title:** ‘Digital Library and Digital Archive’

**Programme:** Slovakia, ERDF, 2012-2015

**Key features:** The project focusses on mass digitalisation of library and archive funds and on protection of written cultural heritage from the inevitable degradation. One of the main objectives was to digitalise more than 2.5 million objects. It is one of the biggest projects of written cultural heritage digitalisation not only in Slovakia but in the EU. The project has been an inspiration for several world’s libraries, e.g. United Kingdom, Poland, Latvia, Albania, Kosovo.

Another benefit of the project is the acquisition of high-quality and cutting-edge digital and conservation technologies that can serve for building of a new modern specialised workspace.

The ultimate goal is to digitalise the entire Slovakian fund, that is to say everything that has been published in Slovakia, published in Slovak, written or traduced by Slovak authors or anything else that somehow concerns the territory of today’s the Slovak Republic. It will be done within 10-15 years, even though the project’s implementation officially ended in 2015. Nowadays, they digitalise approximately 5.5 million pages per year.

There were numerous projects of digitalisation in Slovakia such as Digital Gallery, Digital Museum, Digital Monument Fund, etc. but the project Digital Library and Digital Archive was the biggest one in terms of funds allocated as well as number of digitalised objects. Also, the digitalisation is considered as a core business for the Slovak national library.

Thanks to the project, around 200 new job positions have been created. There was an obligation to sustain at least 73 of them after the official end of the project.

The new technology and workplaces that were implemented thanks to this project qualitatively changed the work of the Slovak national library. Before, the amount of documents that went through restoration was counted in units maybe ten pieces per year. Now, we speak about thousands per year.

Once documents are digitalised, users can review them online. The system for browsing is based on the same principles as very well known Spotify or Netflix that is to say that users have to pay a lump sum per month which allowed them to brows all of the available documents on the website.

Thanks to this all the national written heritage should be preserved and remain in good conditions for much more generations.

**Budget:** EU: 29.894.904,71 €; Slovak national budget: 9.800.892,27 €
Title: ‘Increasing the qualification of physical education and sports educators’

Programme: Slovakia, ESF, 2012-2015

Key features: The project was led by National Sport Centrum which is directly managed organisation of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. The main idea of the project was to enhance the relationship of children towards sport through physical education classes. Teachers will be encouraged to use new teaching practices, to introduce new sports and exercise activities not the learning process, and to use new innovative tools to make physical education more attractive to children.

Results: There were 141 trainers instructed during the project who subsequently instructed 3259 teachers of physical education in whole Slovakia with exception of the Bratislava region. 1100 schools participated. Each teacher that participated in the project obtained 14 sport tools. The guarantors of the project together with a collective of teachers from sport universities/faculties created 4 teaching publications supporting the introduction of new methods and forms of physical education. Based on these publications, 50 short instructional videos were created showing how to practice and use the acquired sports aids correctly. Videos, as well as learning materials are available at www.telesnavychova.sk

Budget: EU: 4.605.514,18 €; Slovak national budget: 759.796,62 €

For the following points only limited information was identified and this is explained by the limited availability of the Slovak authorities to provide feedback (relevant authorities did not respond to requests for interviews). The following points were therefore prepared, as far as possible, on the basis of desk research.

Special interventions

On the basis of the Research and Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) of the Slovak Republic85, we have identified different special interventions related to the four areas of interest. The creative industry is one of the areas identified by RIS3 in Slovakia as a prospective area of specialisation. The development trends in this area are the implementation of new technologies allowing the transmission, processing and storage of data; and the use of smart technologies for the intelligent management of smart products consumption.

The RIS3 of the Slovak Republic identifies six measures related to education and training and the creative sector: the stimulation of knowledge oriented and creative industry; improving the quality of secondary education; improving the quality of higher education; improving business involvement in education; improving the quality of life-long learning and increasing emphasis on education in fields relevant to the RIS3 priority areas.

The following table shows the different activities and implementation tools corresponding to the identified measures86.

86 Idem, p. 71.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Tools</th>
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| stimulation of knowledge oriented and creative industry | • modernization of technologies in creative sectors  
• support for implementation of results of creative activities in the business and social practice, support for the creation of prototypes and support of businesses in the area of KIBS  
• support for the use of digital technologies in creative and non technological areas | • projects  
• grants  
• innovation vouchers  
• start-ups  
• spin-offs  
• incubators  
• financial tools (loans, assurances schemes, venture capital, microloans) |
| improving the quality of secondary education | • rationalization of the network of secondary schools, including the harmonization of founders’ competencies (including state approval) and the system for financing schools  
• strengthening the financing of secondary schools especially in the area of technical and natural sciences in a way that they fulfil the RIS3 mission | • audit  
• legislative changes  
• tax incentives to entrepreneurs - support projects  
• legislative changes aiming to adjust the financing of secondary schools |
| improving the quality of higher education | • implementation of measures recommended in the EUA audit report  
• strengthening the financing of excellent public universities especially in the area of technical and natural sciences  
• change in the categorization of universities in order to reflect the mission of specific universities | • legislative changes |
| improving business involvement in education | • the support for training departments in businesses  
• creation of conditions for businesses to professional training through the establishment of specialized (vocational) secondary schools or joint workplaces of schools and businesses  
• motivate businesses to cooperate with schools in the area of vocational training  
• improving the facilities of vocational schools and universities in technical/research-oriented study programmes  
• involvement of experts from practice into educational process | • legislative changes  
• tax incentives to entrepreneurs  
• support for schools  
• projects  
• grants  
• conferences  
• exhibitions  
• workshops  
• trainings |
| improving the quality of life-long learning | • strengthening the vocational competencies verification system  
• establishment of the quality of consultant services verification system | • functional network of eligible institutions for verifying the results of vocational competencies  
• the set of qualitative standards for administering the consultancy centres in life-long learning |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Tools</th>
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</table>
| increasing emphasis on education in fields relevant to the RIS3 priority areas | • improving the financing of relevant study fields according to the RIS3 SK priorities  
• Motivation to study relevant fields according to the RIS3 SK specialization  
• improving conditions for the involvement of young scientists in participation in grant programmes of science and research | • grants supporting R&I for young scientists  
• conferences  
• exhibitions  
• workshops  
• scholarships |

**Particularly effective interventions**

The Synthesis report on the ‘Pilot projects to carry out ESF related counterfactual impact evaluations’ is one of the Commission’s initiatives to support the production of evidence on impacts of ESF interventions. The report presents eight pilot projects funded by the ESF in different Member States, aiming to encourage the practical implementation of the counterfactual impact evaluations. However, the Slovak pilot project is mainly focus on employment.
SPAIN

THE NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

From the 454 billion euro of the European Structural and Investment Funds (EFSI) support for the period 2014-2020, Spain has been allocated with EUR 37.4 billion. The national contribution of Spain is EUR 15.8 billion. The total investment of the European Social Fund (ESF) in Spain for the current period is EUR 7.59 billion; the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) allocates EUR 19.41 billion; the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) allocates EUR 943 million.

The Spanish Partnership Agreement oversees four European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The Partnership Agreement focus on the following priorities:

- Increasing labour market participation and labour productivity, as well as improving education, training and social inclusion policies, with specific attention to youth and vulnerable groups.
- Supporting the adaptation of the productive system to higher added-value activities by enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs.
- Promoting an innovation-friendly business environment and strengthening the R&D and innovation system.
- Making a more efficient use of natural resources, including the development of the potential of the blue economy.

Spain has 64 National and Regional Programmes. One of the National Programmes very much related to the four areas of interest is the Operational Programme of Employment, Training and Education.

Some of the main priorities of the EFSI in Spain are to increase employability, with a specific focus on young people; to improve education and training policies. Indeed, Although Spain is mobilising 10 out of the 11 thematic objectives foreseen in the regulations; there is a clear focus on those investments having a greater potential impact in terms of sustainable growth and job creation, one of the key elements of the reformed Cohesion Policy.

In terms of the ESF, these funds are envisaged to support innovation and competitiveness of firms by developing human capital through all levels of education and training, including higher education, cooperation with the business sector and increased private investment.

Investing in human capital and helping people enter the labour market has been made a top priority in Spain. A strong emphasis is placed on combating youth unemployment. The ESF will finance initiatives to improve education and training systems and ensure young people develop skills that make them more competitive. Vocational education is also a key area for investment.

According to the Partnership Agreement, the Funds will also contribute to increase the employment rate (from 59.3% in 2012 to 74% in 2020), to reduce early-school leaving (from 24.9% in 2012 to close to the target of 15% in 2020) and to take 1.5 million people out of a risk-of-poverty or exclusion situation.
Education and Training

The Education system in Spain is partly decentralised. The National Government (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports) oversees the design of the legal framework and part of the curricula; the 17 Regional Governments develop and implement these guidelines.

In 2014, the public expenditure on Education in Spain was EUR 45 billion (4.39% of the GDP). However, the national authorities realised the importance of investing in Education and Training and increased these percentage of the GDP increased to 10.8% in 2016. The national policy also supports the Vocational Training as an instrument to fight against school dropout and to promote social inclusion. In order to improve the link between higher education and the enterprises, the Spanish government offers tax incentives to companies recruiting researchers and trainees.

Culture and Creative sector

The National Plan Culture 2020 of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports identifies five priorities for the period 2017-2020: to promote a quality cultural offer; to update the legal framework of protection of culture; to promote a social alliance for culture; to expand the Spanish culture abroad and to boost the creative activity.

Sport and Physical activity

In 2010, Spain adopted a Plan for physical activity and sports that establishes a series of objectives, result indicators and programs to be completed by 2020. The main objectives of the Plan are to increase considerable the practising of sports; to spread the practice of sports in the school age; to promote the sports as an instrument of social inclusion; to increase equality between women and men.

Youth

The area of Youth falls under the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality. There is a public Institute of Youth established in 1977 to promote equal opportunities for young people and to enhance the free and efficient participation of young people in the economic, political, social and cultural development of Spain. In 2011 Spain published a White Paper on Youth Policy Spain 2020 establishing four priorities and 26 objectives, followed by the Youth Strategy 2020. There is also a National Plan of Implementation of the Youth Guarantee mainly financed by the European Social Fund (about EUR 2826 million, included the national co-financing).

THE EXTENT OF STRUCTURAL FUND AND ESIF SUPPORT

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89 Spain suffers the highest school dropout rate of the European Union (20% in 2016). Source: footnote 2.
90 In 2016, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports allocated 10 million euro to a territorial cooperation programme focused on improving the quality of the vocational training. Source: footnote 2.
Feedback from the Spanish ESIF authorities suggests that the four areas are primarily supported under the ESF. In this context, it is worth noting that a search on relevant ESIF websites and feedback from ESIF authorities suggests that there are no specific strategies in place directing ESIF support specifically to the four areas of interest. The ESF in Spain finances three large national Operational Programmes (OPs) and 19 regional OPs:

- OP for Employment, Training and Education.
- OP for Social Inclusion and Social Economy.
- OP for Youth Employment (linked to the Youth Employment Initiative – not to be analysed here).

The ERDF finances two large national OPs and 19 regional OPs:

- SME initiative ERDF.
- Sustainable growth ERDF.

There are also ten transnational, cross-border and interregional cooperation programmes.

The exact extent of support in each of the four areas at both national and regional level and the current levels of absorption in these areas is not known since there are no budget breakdowns specifically relating funding under the OPs to the four areas of interest. Rather, the four areas can be considered as horizontal themes that might be funded under relevant OP interventions.

THE RANGE OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION

Due to the large number of OPs in Spain, we have focused on the regional ESF OP of Castilla-la Mancha. The regional authorities have identified five needs related to different thematic objectives. The needs related to our areas of interest are: to decrease unemployment and to increase employment (Thematic Objectives (TO) 8 and 9); to promote entrepreneurship and self-employment (TO 8); to increase human resources and to improve capacities (TOs 8, 9 and 10); to reduce early school dropout (TO 10) and to support people at risk of social exclusion (TOs 8 and 9).

The Castilla-la Mancha OP has chosen three priority axis (PA), two of them directly related to our areas of interest: PA 1 Employment; PA 3 Education. In every PA the relevant authorities allocate resources to different Investment Priorities (IP) to finance the selected interventions. The following table\(^\text{93}\) shows the PAs and IPs in the region, as well as the interventions managed by the regional Ministry of Education and Culture.

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\(^{93}\) Source: http://fondosestructurales.castillalamancha.es/sites/fondosestructurales.castillalamancha.es/files/resumen_di_vulgativo_fse_11-4-16_logof.pdf
<table>
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<tr>
<th>PA</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>Selected interventions</th>
<th>Financial allocation per PA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 Employment | 8.1 Access to employment | Subsidies to recruit doctors.  
Subsidies to recruit researchers – agreement with the Research and Technology Business Park of Castilla-la Mancha | 51.78% of the budget of the OP |
| | 8.3 Promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment, through training and advice activities | | |
| | 8.5 Adaptation of employees and companies to change | | |
| 3 Education | 10.1 Prevention and reduction of early school dropout | | 23.97% of the budget of the OP |
| | 10.2 Improvement of the quality of higher education | Subsidies for training of researchers | |
| | 10.3 Improvement of equal opportunities to access lifelong education | Linguistic training abroad for student of higher education.  
Linguistic training abroad for teachers.  
Programmes for Assistances of conversation. | |
| | 10.4 Ensuring a better match between education, skills and labour market needs | Specific programmes of vocational training | |
The region allocates most of the financial resources to employment, and more specifically to the IP 8.1 that receives 40.73%, the largest financial allocation of the entire OP.

**Title:** ‘Capacitatic 55’, Training  
**Programme:** Castilla-la Mancha, Spain, ESF, 2014-2020  
**Key features:** The aim of the project is to train adults aged 55+ in new technologies. This programme is interesting since it helps adults of rural areas to be trained in IT and to find new employment opportunities in the region of Castilla-la Mancha, which is sparsely populated.

Thanks to this project, 1221 adults aged 55+ have been trained in IT in 2016, and 1724 trained in 2017. In 2016 and 2017, about 240 training interventions had been programmed and about 40 people have been recruited for providing the training.

The project will last until 2023.

**Budget:** EUR 3.5 million (ESF contribution: EUR 2.8 million).

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**Title:** ‘Rehabilitation of the craft and cultural centre Antoni Tur’, Culture  
**Programme:** Baleares, Spain, ERDF 2007-2013  
**Key features:** Rehabilitation of the old headquarters of the military police in the island of Formentera and transformation into a craft and cultural centre. The project aims to recover the cultural heritage of the island and to offer a cultural space where local craftsmen could meet and show their products. Thanks to this project several exhibitions have been organised and the local craftsmen have received different specialisation courses, such as the training course of production of espadrilles.

**Budget:** EUR 615.000 (ERDF contribution: EUR 307.000).

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For the following points only limited information was identified and this is explained by the limited availability of the Spanish authorities to provide feedback (relevant authorities did not respond to requests for interviews). The following points were therefore prepared, as far as possible, on the basis of desk research.

**Special interventions**

In Spain, there are 17 Regional Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation. About 13 regions include the four areas of interest between the priorities of their strategies. The following table\(^{94}\) shows the regions and priorities included in the concerned strategies in relation to our four areas of interest.

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\(^{94}\) Source: [http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/](http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galicia</td>
<td>Diversification of the tourism sector and of the Galician cultural industries via use of ICTs to achieve a tourism sector that is competitive at the European level and based on cultural tourism and on natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantabria</td>
<td>Tourism with strengths in natural environment, gastronomy, sports, culture and history. The tourism focus is supported by ICT services, a key instrument for touristic promotion and for optimising supply and demand in touristic experiences. Also linked to agrofood, supporting natural products of Cantabria, based on gastronomic tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque Country</td>
<td><strong>Culture and creative sector:</strong> covering 15 sub-sectors: videogames, audiovisual, performance, gastronomy, editing, visual marketing, music, language, p-culture, crafts, publishing, architecture, fashion, design, cc digital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navarre</td>
<td><strong>Education</strong> and knowledge generation. Sustainable tourism: culture and recreation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aragon</td>
<td>Tourism based on cultural and natural heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castile and Leon</td>
<td>Language technologies and applications to cultural heritage. Advanced materials (new treatments for wood, stone, and other materials, advanced materials for the conservation of cultural heritage).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castile la Mancha</td>
<td>Neo-tourism, wine tourism, language tourism, hunting tourism, innovative promotion of tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremadura</td>
<td>Creative industry: enhancement of a creative and innovative culture amongst young generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalonia</td>
<td>Creative and cultural industries and key services for Catalonia, such as tourism and sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balearic Islands</td>
<td>To support creative and cultural industries and promote the synergies with touristic sector and its activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andalusia</td>
<td>Promoting Andalusia as a Leisure and Culture Destination; cultural heritage management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murcia</td>
<td><strong>Sport</strong> and health; cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valencia</td>
<td>Tourism, health promotion and active ageing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focusing on the regions of Catalonia and Valencia, we have identified one special intervention related to sports. Both regions are included in a consortium together with six other EU regions called ClusSport. The aim of the consortium is to boost investments and foster collaboration among the stakeholders along the sport value chain in Europe developing different models for public-private partnerships that are needed in sport. The region of Valencia considers sports as a horizontal issue to the areas of tourism, health promotion and active ageing.

The main impacts observed

Feedback from the region of Castilla-La Mancha confirms that to date there is no evidence on impacts in the four areas of interest, and this is explained by the fact that the evaluation effort for the current programming period remains to be launched.

However, the 2016 evaluation of the National OP Employment, Training and Education, points one example of impact in one of the four thematic areas (education and training): the IP 10.1 focused on prevention and reduction of early school drop-out shows very positive results. There is no evidence on a specific focus on youth, culture or sports.

Particularly effective interventions

The Synthesis report on the ‘Pilot projects to carry out ESF related counterfactual impact evaluations’ is one of the Commission’s initiatives to support the production of evidence on impacts of ESF interventions. The report presents eight pilot projects funded by the ESF in different Member States, aiming to encourage the practical implementation of the counterfactual impact evaluations. The Spanish pilot project shows the evaluation of the ESF training interventions implemented from 2008 to 2013 for employment in Castilla-La Mancha. ‘The aim of this pilot project was to measure the impact of two training interventions aimed at increasing skills and competencies of unemployed people and their chance to integrate back into the labour market in the autonomous region Castilla-La Mancha96. The two interventions were considered very effective since the results indicate that 18 months after the start of training participants in intervention 2.66.7 were 12 percentage points more likely to be in employment, had longer employment duration measured in both days (36 more days) and number of job contracts (0.38 more contracts) and had longer job tenure (22.5 more days)97.’

96 Synthesis report on the 'Pilot projects to carry out ESF related counterfactual impact evaluations', 2015, p. 15.
97 Idem, p. 16.
The study examines the nature and extent of ESIF funding for education and training, culture, sport and youth, including the legal base for such support. Much activity in these areas is hidden in official data, under other headings, but all of the areas are already making a significant contribution to economic and social development. The study concludes with a recommendation that there be greater recognition in the future of the human contribution of these areas to cohesion policy.