

STUDY

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# Addressing the challenges of the policies for the next generation, children and the youth, such as education and skills in national Recovery and Resilience Plans

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A preliminary assessment



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Supporting EU economic governance scrutiny



Economic Governance Support Unit (EGOV)  
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# Addressing the challenges of the policies for the next generation, children and the youth, such as education and skills in national Recovery and Resilience Plans

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## A preliminary assessment

### **Abstract**

This briefing paper is aimed at analysing the measures addressing Pillar 6 – next generation, children and the youth in National Recovery and Resilience Plans, with a focus on two policy domains: early childhood education and care, and youth employment support. Moving from a general overview across the 27 European Union Member States, the analysis is focused on eight Member States (Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CSRs</b>	Country-specific recommendations
<b>ECEC</b>	Early Childhood Education and Care
<b>EIGE</b>	European Institute for Gender Equality
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EU-SILC</b>	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Condition
<b>FTE</b>	Full time equivalent employment
<b>GEI</b>	Gender Equality Index
<b>IFI</b>	International Fund for Ireland
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>ISTAT</b>	Italian National Institute of Statistics
<b>MSs</b>	Member States
<b>NEET</b>	Not in education, employment or training
<b>NRRPs</b>	National Recovery and Resilience Plans
<b>RRF</b>	Recovery and Resilience Facility
<b>RRS</b>	Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard
<b>SOLAS</b>	Ireland State Agency for Further Education and Skills Service
<b>STEM</b>	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
<b>VET</b>	Vocational education and training
<b>YG</b>	Youth Guarantee programme

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Aim

The overall aim of this briefing paper is to analyse the measures addressing Pillar 6 – next generation, children and the youth – in National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs), with focus on two of the Pillar’s policy domains: early childhood education and care, and youth employment support, which have relevance from a gender equality perspective.

The analysis will thus consider, from a gender perspective, the relevance and adequacy of the reforms and investments envisaged in the NRRPs of eight considered countries for the selected policy domains. In detail, the briefing paper presents a general overview of the baseline situation related to the two pillars’ domains across the European Union (EU) 27 Member States (MSs) and an in-depth analysis of the measures envisaged in the NRRPs of eight Member States (Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain) representative of the diversity of gender policy regimes in the EU27. The in-depth analysis of the eight country cases includes:

- an assessment of the extent to which the measures adopted meet the specifications set out in the Council Implementing Decisions and in related Commission documents relating to NRRPs and the European Semester, with a focus on the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) of the 2019 and 2020 European Semester cycles;
- a discussion of the extent to which the underlying milestones and targets are sufficient and appropriate to monitor progress towards achieving the measures’ stated objectives and the overall objectives of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (hereafter RRF and Facility are used interchangeably as synonyms);
- the identification of the risks that may stem from the considered measures and the gaps that remain unaddressed in the broad policy areas underpinning the selected set of measures to derive policy recommendations.

The analysis is based on a systematic desk research, making the best use of any publicly available information at EU and national level.

### Background

This briefing paper focuses on two of the pillars’ policy domains: early childhood education and care (ECEC) and youth employment support, which have relevance from a gender equality perspective.

#### Early childhood education and care

As many scholars have pointed out,<sup>1</sup> participation in early education and care is beneficial to children’s cognitive, language and social development, especially for children from poor households those from migrant and ethnic backgrounds, and for children with disabilities. Accessible, affordable, good quality and inclusive ECEC is also crucial to support the employment and career progression of young mothers. However, the use of early childcare services shows large differences across EU countries in the enrolment and number of hours of formal childcare, in the forms of childcare arrangements and in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ansari et al., 2019; Burger, 2010; Barnett, 2011: pp. 975-8; Mitchell et al., 2008.



level of public spending. In 2019, only 12 EU Member States offered ECEC services to more than 33 % of children below the age of 3, which is the Barcelona target for 2020, set in 2002.<sup>2</sup>

Policies guaranteeing a legal entitlement to ECEC services and improving public ECEC provision are expected to have a positive impact on the use of formal childcare. This includes counteracting the intergenerational transmission of social inequalities and social norms stating that only mothers provide adequate care for their children, supporting mothers' participation in the labour market.

### Youth employment

In many EU Member States, young workers are more likely than adults to be out of employment or to be employed with temporary and part-time contracts with little or no access to employment and social protection measures.

Young women tend to have lower employment rates than young men, to face worse employment conditions and to be more vulnerable to job losses compared to young men. They are more likely to hold part-time or temporary jobs and earn lower wages than young men and to have higher NEET (not in education, employment or training) rates than their male counterparts. Low employment rates and high NEET rates among young women are related to a number of factors. These include gender segregation in education and employment, a lack of affordable and available childcare services (which makes it difficult for young mothers to participate to the labour market or to maintain their job), social conventions or pressures on women's roles in the family.

To support young women's labour participation and employment it is therefore crucial to increase investments in good quality formal childcare services, expanding their availability (also in peripheral and rural areas), accessibility and affordability. It is also necessary to reduce gender segregation in education, and provide targeted employment support for young women in the transition to and maintenance of good quality employment opportunities. The increase in formal care facilities and services not only reduces the unpaid care burden on women, facilitating their participation in the labour market, but may also expand employment opportunities in the care sector for women.

### Pillar 6

Pillar 6 – Policies for the next generation – is meant to support measures to improve the resilience of Member States' education systems from an early age and to increase youth employment with policies for children and youth. This pillar could represent a unique opportunity for investing in children and youth, strengthening the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of ECEC facilities and services. It can also promote measures to support youth labour market transition and employment. Among the envisaged measures are plans to increase participation in early childhood education and care, measures to support inclusiveness in education and training, and offering individualised support to disadvantaged groups to reduce early school leaving. Other measures include reducing NEET rates and supporting young people in the transition to good quality employment.

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<sup>2</sup> European Commission, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the development of childcare facilities for young children with a view to increase female labour participation, strike a work-life balance for working parents and bring about sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe (the 'Barcelona objectives'), 2018. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/bcn\\_objectives-report2018\\_web\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/bcn_objectives-report2018_web_en.pdf).

## Key findings

The Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard (RRS) data on the 25 NRRPs adopted by the Council as of 25 November 2022 show that planned expenditure targeted to Pillar 6 amounts to EUR 49 billion, equivalent to only 11.3% of the total RRP's estimated expenditure, compared to 50% of expenditure going to the green transition and 28% to the digital transformation.

Moreover, the two policy areas considered in this briefing account for only a quarter (25% overall) of the pillar's expenditure. The majority of the pillar's expenditure (75%) is meant to support general, vocational and higher education, while only 14% (equivalent to approximately EUR 6.9 billion) refer to early childhood education and care, and even less (11%, approximately EUR 5.4 billion) to youth employment support.

According to the Commission's assessment, overall only 129 measures in the 25 plans adopted as of 30 June 2022 have a focus on gender equality. Measures flagged as gender equality in Pillar 6 include reforms and investments to increase access to ECEC, promoted in many NRRPs.

Among the eight countries under analysis, only Italy, Spain, Poland and Croatia received a specific CSR relating to early childhood education and care, while Belgium, Germany, Finland and Ireland did not. Among the four countries with no CSRs on childcare, Belgium and Germany (both representative of the male breadwinner state-centred regimes) include specific measures on childhood care in their NRRPs. Finland and Ireland are the only two countries out of the eight analysed that do not envisage measures for childhood education and care, considering that they have already adequately addressed the issue outside the plan.

Differences among the eight NRRPs can also be detected with specific regard to CSRs relating to youth employment support. In some countries, young people are targets of specific measures (e.g. Italy and Spain register among the highest youth NEET rates) while in others, measures address, in general, weak segments of the labour market without specifying the age.

As for the expected impact of the analysed measures on gender equality, it is worth underlining that only in the case of Italy do the CSRs explicitly make the linkage between 'access to quality childcare' and 'support of women's participation'.

Generally speaking, in all the eight countries the different needs of young girls and boys are not clearly identified in the active labour market measures aimed at facilitating the school-to-work transition. This includes the investments for promoting digital skills and the dual system.

Turning to the RRP implementation, the RRS data for milestones and targets for Pillar 6 show that out of the overall 583 milestones and targets, 362 refer to investments and 221 to reforms. Out of these, 31 were fulfilled by 8 November 2022 with an expenditure of about EUR 3.64 billion, equivalent to around 7% of the total budget for this pillar. This is a fulfilment rate in line with that of the other pillars, which go from 3% for Pillar 2, to 4% for Pillars 1, 4 and 5, and 5% for Pillar 3. Out of the selected eight countries, only Spain, Italy and Croatia have already fulfilled some of the milestones and targets related to Pillar 6.

# 1 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Aims and contents of the briefing paper

The overall aim of this briefing paper is to **analyse the measures addressing Pillar 6** – next generation, children and youth – in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs). It has a **focus on two of the Pillar’s policy domains: early childhood education and care and youth employment support**, which are relevant from a gender equality perspective. To reduce gender inequalities in the labour market and support young women’s labour participation and employment, targeted employment support for young women is particularly necessary. Such support should include investments in good-quality formal childcare services by also expanding their availability, accessibility and affordability.

The briefing paper presents a **general overview of the baseline situation related to the two Pillars’ domains across the EU27 MSs**. It involves an **in-depth analysis** of the measures envisaged in the NRRPs of **eight Member States** (Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain) representative of the diversity of gender policy regimes in the EU27.

The in-depth analysis of the eight country cases includes:

- an assessment of the extent to which the measures adopted meet the specifications set out in the Council Implementing Decisions (and in related Commission documents), with a focus on the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) of the 2019 and 2020 European Semester cycles;
- a discussion of the extent to which the underlying milestones and targets are sufficient and appropriate to monitor progress towards achieving the measures’ stated objectives and the overall objectives of the Facility;
- the identification of the risks that may stem from the considered measures and the gaps that remain unaddressed in the broad policy areas underpinning the selected set of measures to derive policy recommendations.

Following this introductory section on the methodology and scope of the analysis, the paper is structured into three more main sections.

**Section 2** provides an **overview of the baseline situation** concerning childhood education and care, and youth employment conditions in the EU27 Member States. It covers the financial allocations, milestones and targets of Pillar 6 and the considered policy domains, to contextualise the in-depth analysis conducted in Section 3 for the eight selected countries.

**Section 3** focuses on the **eight selected countries** with an analysis of the NRRPs’ measures envisaged for the two considered policy domains (early childhood education and care, and youth employment support). The analysis considers the extent to which the NRRP measures are coherent with the 2019 and 2020 CSRs relating to children and youth support and their potential gender equality impacts. It also considers the adequacy of the envisaged measures, i.e. how the milestones and targets of the measures are sufficient and appropriate to monitor progress towards achieving the measures’ stated objectives and the overall objectives of Pillar 6.

**Section 4** presents **main conclusions** identifying risks and gaps that remain unaddressed, and **policy recommendations**.

**Five annexes complete the report**. Annex 1 provides a synthetic presentation of the gender policy regimes and the eight selected countries; Annex 2 provides additional information and data of baseline

conditions and Pillar 6 policy domains; Annex 3 presents the coherence with CSRs of the considered Pillar 6 measures for the eight selected countries; Annex 4 the gender coherence of the considered Pillar 6 measures for the eight selected countries; and Annex 5 the adequacy of the milestones and targets for the selected Pillar 6 measures in the eight countries.

## 1.2 Methodology and scope of the analysis

The analysis considers, from a gender perspective, the relevance and adequacy of the reforms and investments envisaged in the NRRPs of the eight considered countries for the selected policy domains in:

- their initial conditions in relation to early childhood education and care and youth employment;
- the 2019–2020 CSRs when present;
- the attention to gender equality.

The analysis is based on a **systematic desk research**, making the best use of any publicly available information in English at EU and national levels.

The **documentary review has covered different sources**, encompassing direct and indirect reference to actions implemented to support childhood education and care, and youth employment in the considered countries. The following are among the main documents considered: i) the Commission's assessments of the milestones and targets underpinning the set of considered measures, and information available in the European Commission RRS; ii) the Commission Staff Working Documents underlying the adopted Council Implementing Decisions for each considered country; iii) the Commission analyses under the European Semester; iv) any other national or European policy documents on the NRRP measures envisaged and implemented in the considered policy domains.

The identification and classification of the measures (reforms and investments) contained in the NRRPs are retrieved from the annexes to the Council Implementing Decisions on the approval of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans of the eight considered countries. The data and information collected from the Commission and Council documents have been complemented with information retrieved from the NRRPs submitted by the selected Member States, and national documentation.<sup>3</sup>

To assess how and to what extent the NRRP measures under analysis have addressed the gender dimension and their expected gender equality impacts, the analysis considers both direct and indirect impacts:

- For direct impacts of an intervention, we consider impacts that are directly addressed to women (e.g. measures directly to support girls' access to education, training and employment).
- For indirect impact, we consider impacts that indirectly affect women and gender equality (e.g. childcare infrastructures). These include measures that even if not directly addressed to gender equality issues may contribute, if properly designed and implemented, to support gender equality (e.g. the provision of care services).

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<sup>3</sup> The structure of NRRPs is diversified across Member States, and the measures envisaged for the selected policy areas are distributed in different ways in the NRRPs, therefore they had to be individuated using keywords and national documentation. National documentation in German, French, Italian and Spanish were read in the original language, while for national documentation in Croatian, Polish and Finnish, translator tools have been used.

The distinction between direct and indirect gender impacts is **particularly important when considering measures supporting childhood education and care, and youth employment**. Many measures, such as ECEC services, may appear neutral (because they are indirect) from a gender perspective, although they may have a strong gender impact. Over the medium to long term these effects may even be stronger than those caused by measures directly addressed to women or men. Both direct and indirect impacts are considered according to a different levels of intensity (high, medium, low) based on a qualitative assessments on the basis of the research team's expertise and document review.

### 1.2.1 Scope of the analysis: considered measures and countries

As anticipated, the focus of the briefing is the analysis of the measures envisaged for two out of the three policy domains for Pillar 6, which are relevant in a gender equality perspective, supporting:

- early childhood education and care: accessibility, affordability, quality and inclusiveness, including digitisation and infrastructure (belonging to the social category early education and care);
- youth employment support and youth job creation, including hiring and job transition incentives, and support for self-employment.

The **selection of the eight countries** considered for the in-depth analysis of the NRRPs is based on the classification of EU Member States according to their **gender policy regimes** presented in Annex 1. This classification reconsiders the welfare state models according to the policy approach adopted towards women's and men's position in the household and in the labour market. It classifies the policy regimes on the basis of their support to women in the labour market and society. The classification of national gender policy regimes considers in particular whether and to what extent family, fiscal and welfare policies support women's employment and the work-life balance. This includes the availability of social care services and the degree of de-familialisation in the provision of care, policy support for dual earner-dual carer families and for changes in gender roles.

Based on this classification, **five gender policy regimes** can be outlined: i) the universalistic welfare regimes of Nordic countries; ii) the liberal universalistic welfare regimes of Anglo-Saxon countries; iii) the male breadwinner state-centred regimes of continental European countries; iv) the male breadwinner family-centred regimes of southern European countries; and v) the composite regimes of eastern European countries.

In recent decades, socio-economic and cultural changes have determined a decline of the 'pure' male breadwinner model. This has promoted an upward convergence of national gender regimes towards a greater attention to gender equality both within households and in the labour market and society, a convergence supported by EU legislation and policies.<sup>4</sup> However, national differences in gender policy regimes remain significant, given that EU countries started from different initial conditions and progressed at a different pace. This evolution is reflected in the upward trend of the Gender Equality Index (GEI) calculated every year by European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for European Member States<sup>5</sup> and in the GEI ranking of the EU27 Member States.

<sup>4</sup> Attention to the gender relations that underpin labour market and socio-economic gender inequalities is present for example in the Directives on Part-time Work, Working Time and Parental Leave. It can also be seen in the recent Directive on Work-Life Balance, as well as the EU strategies for gender equality and programmes promoted by the EU over the years.

<sup>5</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/about>

For this study, **the eight countries selected as representative of the different gender policy regimes** illustrate well the diversity of national approaches to gender equality and their evolution and performance over time. This is summarised by the dynamics of the EIGE GEI presented in Table A1 of Annex 1:

- **Finland:** representative of the universalistic welfare regimes of Nordic countries, based on individual rights to equal opportunities and a strong gender equality commitment. Finland has shown a much higher GEI than the EU average since 2005. The GEI reached 75.4 in 2020 (compared to 68.6 for the EU27 average), the highest value among the selected countries.
- **Ireland:** with the UK, representative of the liberal universalistic welfare regimes, based on residual government intervention. Ireland shows a strong increase in the GEI, going from 61.9 in 2005 (similar to the EU average) to 73.3 in 2020, much higher than the EU average.
- **Germany and Belgium:** representative of the male breadwinner state-centred regimes of continental western European countries. This large group of countries is rather differentiated in the extent to which welfare systems support gender equality in the labour market and society. The two selected countries well represent this diversity. Both show a strong improvement in their GEI since 2005; Belgium presents a much higher GEI than Germany, thanks to a policy approach more oriented towards gender equality in the labour market and in access to social protection. The 2020 GEI reached 74.2 in Belgium and 68.7 in Germany.
- **Italy and Spain:** representative of a different extent of the male breadwinner family-centred regimes of southern European countries. Also in this case, the two selected countries present different trends in policy approaches and performance in terms of gender equality. However, both show the highest increases in the GEI between 2005 and 2015 among the eight countries considered in this report. Spain shows a much stronger commitment to women's empowerment in the labour market and society compared to Italy. In 2020, the GEI reached 74.6 in Spain compared to only 65.0 in Italy.
- **Croatia and Poland:** representative of eastern EU countries, they have gone through major processes of reform and redesign of their welfare regimes since joining the EU. Both countries show a GEI much lower than the EU average, although Croatia is progressing more rapidly than Poland in all policy domains. In 2020, the GEI of the two countries was 60.7 for Croatia and 57.7 for Poland.

As shown in Section 2 below, these countries also well represent the diversity of EU Member States in early childhood and care, and in youth labour market conditions.

## 2 BACKGROUND: OVERVIEW OF BASELINE CONDITIONS AND PILLAR 6 POLICY DOMAINS ACROSS THE EU27 MEMBER STATES

Before going into the details of the eight selected countries (see Chapter 3), this section presents a brief overview of baseline conditions before the NRRPs were drafted, and Pillar 6 main stylised facts. Additional data and information are presented in Annex 2.

### 2.1 Baseline conditions: the need to invest in children and youth with a gender perspective

Child poverty and the youth difficult school-to-work transition result in high NEET rates and precarious employment and working conditions. These are **structural problems in many EU Member States** that existed even before the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, with girls and young women particularly disadvantaged.

The **Covid-19 pandemic aggravated these pre-existing challenges and generated new ones**; disruptions in ECEC and youth's education due to lockdowns and social distancing led to increases in school drop-out rates. This especially affected young people with a poor family background, negatively affecting their chances of successfully transiting from education to good quality employment opportunities. Distance learning and telework are spreading across Europe, even though many Member States continue to face challenges in ensuring adequate digital infrastructures, connectivity and equal access to digital skills, online learning and working tools and platforms. In addition, the pandemic worsened children's and youth's mental well-being, leading to ILO to speak of a 'lockdown generation' (ILO, 2020).

Young women have been particularly affected by the pandemic, for their over-representation in sectors more hit by lockdowns and the increase in unpaid care work due to the reduction in care support (either formal or from other providers).

#### 2.1.1 Early childhood education and care

It is now well acknowledged<sup>6</sup> that participation in **ECEC is beneficial to children's cognitive, language and social development**, especially for children from poor households, migrant and ethnic backgrounds, and for children with disabilities.

**Accessible, affordable, good quality and inclusive ECEC are also crucial to support the employment, earnings and career progression of young mothers** and achieving gender equality in the labour market and within households.<sup>7</sup> According to an EIGE study (EIGE, 2020), unpaid care responsibilities keep around 7.7 million women in the EU away from the labour market, compared to only 450000 men. In 2019 the largest gender gap – 27 percentage points – in full-time equivalent employment (FTE) was among couples with children, with only 62% of women, compared with 89% of men working full time (EIGE, 2021). The unequal division of unpaid care work between men and women in households not only reduces women's access to and permanence in the labour market. It concentrates women in sectors and jobs allowing a greater working time flexibility at the price of lower

<sup>6</sup> Ansari et al., 2019; Burger, 2010; Barnett, 2011: pp. 975-8; Mitchell et al., 2008. Morabito and Vandebroek, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Nieuwenhuis et al., 2022; Olivetti and Petrongolo, 2017; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2019; Cingano, 2014.

wages and career opportunities. In turn, gender gaps in the labour markets reinforce the unequal division of unpaid care work in households, although cultural and social norms on the gender division of unpaid work in the household are still relevant. However, the availability of affordable and quality childcare plays an important role in enabling full and equal parents' participation in the labour market.

**To be effective in supporting children's enrolment rates and mothers' labour market participation, ECEC need to be accessible, affordable and of good quality.**<sup>8</sup> Country differences in the use of formal childcare reflect not only the diversity of social norms on early childcare, but especially differences in the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of early childcare provision. Enrolment rates in ECEC for children with disabilities and children from disadvantaged groups, including those with a migrant and Roma background and those living in remote areas, tend to be lower than average. This is despite such children being among those who would benefit the most from participation (Gambaro et al., 2015). The main obstacles to ECEC access for the most disadvantaged children are the lack of places in disadvantaged or remote and rural areas, combined with their high costs for low-income parents. This is especially the case in systems that favour market-based solutions for ECEC services (and therefore a high financial participation from families). Conversely, EU Member States where ECEC services are prevalently public or publicly subsidised to reduce out-of-pocket fees for parents and there is a childcare guarantee and flexibility in opening hours, experience fewer barriers for children from lower socio-economic households (Thevenon et al., 2016; Morabito & Vandenbroeck, 2020).

**Policies guaranteeing a legal entitlement to ECEC services and public ECEC provision with attention to the dimensions mentioned above, are therefore expected to have a positive impact on the use of formal childcare.** This would counteract the intergenerational transmission of social inequalities, contrasting social norms stating that only mothers provide adequate care for their children and support **public attitudes in favour of maternal employment** (Neimanns 2021). In addition, the increase in the provision of formal ECEC services **expands women's employment opportunities in the childcare sector**, where employment is predominantly female.

However, the **use of early childcare services shows large differences across EU countries** in the enrolment rates and the number of hours of formal childcare, the forms of childcare arrangements and the level of public spending.

Eurostat data (Eurostat, 2021) shows that in 2019 only 35.3 % of **children aged less than three years** in the EU were in formal care for at least one hour per week<sup>9</sup>. **Nearly half (47.1 %) were cared for exclusively by their parents**, and a quarter were cared for by their grandparents, other relatives or professional childminders. Among the eight country cases analysed in depth in Section 3, this share ranged from 60.8 % in Croatia to 34.5 % in Belgium. The **Covid-19 pandemic** increased the share of children cared for exclusively by their parents to 53.4 %. Parents' (usually mothers') exclusive care

<sup>8</sup> The quality of childcare facilities and services is related to care workers' qualification and working conditions; staff-to-child ratio; equipment, areas and spaces in ECEC facilities, etc. Accessibility concerns: eligibility conditions and whether a place in ECEC is guaranteed to all children under 3 years old; flexibility to meet parents' needs in terms of opening hours; adequacy to territorial needs; connections and transport systems; attention to the specific needs of children with disabilities, etc. Affordability relates to the costs for parents and their sustainability for the household economy.

<sup>9</sup> Only 21.5% were in formal care for more than 30 hours per week.



prevails in eastern and southern Member States (with the exception of Portugal), while formal childcare prevails in northern and western Europe, with the exceptions of Finland, Germany and Austria.<sup>10</sup>

The **share of children over three years old in formal ECEC** (see Figure A4 in Annex 2) is much higher in all EU Member States, being often compulsory and directed at preparation for primary education. Seventeen Member States are above the Barcelona target of 90% of children between 3 and mandatory school age cared for in formal ECEC, with only Greece showing a coverage rate slightly below 70%. Moreover, **public expenditure in ECEC as a share of the gross domestic product (GDP)** is an indicator of public investments in ECEC facilities, services and cost abatements with wide variations across EU Member States, reflecting the prevalent gendered welfare model (see Figure A5 in Annex 2).

### 2.1.2 Youth employment

In many EU Member States young workers are more likely than adults to be out of employment or to be employed with temporary or part-time contracts with little or no access to employment and social protection measures. Young workers were particularly hit by firms' closures related to the pandemic and less covered by income support measures, while for many young people Covid-19 delayed the start of their working life.

As shown in Annex 2, in 2019 **youth employment rates** were highest in continental and Nordic countries, and lowest in some southern European countries (Italy, Greece and Spain). **Young women tend to have lower employment rates than young men**, face worse employment conditions, and be more vulnerable to job losses compared to young men. They are more likely to hold part-time or temporary jobs and to earn lower wages than young men. Among the eight country cases considered in Section 3, the gender gap goes from 11.1 percentage points (pp) in Croatia to 2.6 pp in Finland.

The youth employment rate is influenced by participation in education and training. A better indicator of the difficult youth labour market conditions than the youth employment rate, is the **NEET rate**, which measures the share of young people not in employment, education or training. These young people are more likely to experience social exclusion, poverty and financial insecurity in their life than other groups, and are often not reached by support measures (Moxon et al., 2021)<sup>11</sup> NEET rates are highest in some southern (especially Italy, Greece, Spain) and eastern EU Member States (especially Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia). NEET rates increase with age, as more young people exit from education and training, going from 6.8% for those aged 15–19, to 14.8% for those aged 20–24, and to 17.3% for those aged 25–29. NEET rates increased considerably in 2020 compared to 2019 (see Figure A8 in Annex 2). In almost all the EU27 Member States, **young women also tend to present higher NEET rates than their male counterparts**, with the gender gap particularly high in some eastern European countries (Czechia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Poland), and in Italy and Germany.

<sup>10</sup> In the case of Finland also due to long and generous parental leave provisions for both parents and the child homecare allowance for children below 3 years old, which may hinder enrolment into formal childcare. In this country, a recent reform of parental leave, which entered into force in August 2022, gives equal access to parental leave for both parents. Each parent is entitled to 160 days of parental allowance. Such 160 days can be taken in four separate periods during the same calendar year. This could be both on full-time or part-time basis. If the children is under three years of age, two full-time periods out of the four are envisaged. Parents can transfer up to 63 parental allowance days of this quota to the other parent, another custodian, their spouse or the spouse of the other parent. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, <https://tem.fi/en/childcare-leave>).

<sup>11</sup> According to the European Youth Forum, nearly half of young NEETs are not even aware of available government support measures for them. (Moxon et al., 2021).

**Gender gaps in youth employment and NEET rates increase for those in their late 20s**, especially in the case of young women with family responsibilities. In 2019, the gender gap in NEET rates at EU level was only 0.6 pp for young people aged 15–24, but reached 9.4 pp for the age group 25–29 years.

Low employment rates and high NEET rates among young women are related to several factors. These include **gender segregation in education and employment, lack of affordable and accessible childcare services, and social conventions or pressures on women’s roles in the family**. These factors affect not only young women’s labour participation, but also the **employers’ behaviour**, where they tend to prefer to hire young men over young women.

The **Covid-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns worsened this situation**. Research conducted during the pandemic (Alon et al., 2020; Andrew et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Hank & Steinbach, 2021; Hjálmsdóttir & Bjarnadóttir, 2021; Kulic et al., 2021; OECD, 2021) pointed to stronger negative effects of the Covid-19 lockdowns on young mothers with small children compared to fathers, exposing them to higher job insecurity, and lower career and earnings progression. A higher share of mothers than fathers exited the labour market in 2020. Although during lockdowns, fathers started sharing more childcare and home-schooling responsibilities than before, the gender gap remained high, especially in Italy (Del Boca et al. 2020), and Spain (Farré et al., 2020).

## 2.2 The policy context and Pillar 6: measures, funding and implementation

Several **EU initiatives and funding tools** have been set up in recent years to support ECEC and youth employment, which are considered as the reference framework in the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) for Pillar 6.

Concerning **ECEC**, in 2021 two landmark EU initiatives were launched to address child poverty and support access to ECEC: the **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child**<sup>12</sup> and the **Recommendation for a European Child Guarantee**.<sup>13</sup> These were adopted by the Council on 14 June 2021 and indicated as the reference normative framework for national policies in the RRF. However, only 15 countries have so far released their National Action Plans for the Child Guarantee. The Commission is also going to propose an increase of the Barcelona targets to support further upward convergence among Member States in ECEC participation. The Commission’s proposal aims at ensuring that by 2030, at least 50 % of children under 3 and at least 96 % of children between the age of 3 and the age for compulsory primary education, participate in ECEC.<sup>14</sup>

As for **youth employment**, the European **Youth Guarantee programme (YG)** adopted in 2013<sup>15</sup>, is aimed at integrating the most disadvantaged young people in the labour market. It will ensure that all those under 24 years of age receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, or an apprenticeship or traineeship. During the Covid-19 crisis, the **Communication on Youth Employment**

<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2021), EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, Luxembourg 2021 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/ds0821040enn\\_002.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/ds0821040enn_002.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> European Commission, Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION Establishing a European Child Guarantee COM(2021) 137 final, 24.3.2021. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2021:137:FIN>

<sup>14</sup> European Commission, Proposal for a Council Recommendation on the revision of the Barcelona Target on early childhood education and care, COM/2022/442 final, 7 September 2022, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:442:FIN>

<sup>15</sup> European Council, Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee, 2013/C 120/01, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2013:120:0001:0006:EN:PDF>

**Support**<sup>16</sup> and the **Recommendation on a Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee**<sup>17</sup> were adopted to address the worsening of youth labour market conditions. All EU countries have committed to the implementation of the reinforced YG in a Council Recommendation of October 2020<sup>18</sup> as part of the Youth Employment Support package.<sup>19</sup> The recommendation is backed up by significant EU financing, under both the Next Generation EU facility and the long-term EU budget.

Within this policy context, **Pillar 6 – Policies for the next generation** is meant to support measures to improve the resilience of Member States' education systems from an early age and to increase youth employment. This pillar could represent a unique opportunity for investing in children and youth, strengthening the availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of ECEC facilities and services, as well as measures to support youth labour market transitions and employment. Among the envisaged measures are:

- plans to increase participation in early childhood education and care;
- measures to support the inclusiveness in education and training and offer individualised support to disadvantaged youth to reduce early school leaving;
- measures to reduce NEET rates, supporting young people in the transition to good quality employment.

The latest RRS data on the 25 national RRP adopted by the Council as of 25 November 2022<sup>20</sup> show that **planned expenditure targeted to Pillar 6 amount to EUR 49 billion. This is equivalent to only 11.3% of the total NRRP estimated expenditure**, compared to 50% of expenditure going to the green transition and 28% to the digital transformation.<sup>21</sup> Within Pillar 6, the two policy areas considered in this briefing account for only a quarter (25% overall) of the pillar's expenditure with only 14% (equivalent to approximately EUR 6.9 billion) referring to ECEC, and even less (11%, approximately EUR 5.4 billion) to youth employment support.

Although these data have to be considered only as illustrative,<sup>22</sup> according to the Commission's assessment, overall 397 measures have a focus on **supporting children and youth**. The eight country cases considered in this briefing represent well the overall distribution of these measures across

<sup>16</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Youth Employment Support, a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation (COM(2020) 276 final, 1.7.2020).

<sup>17</sup> Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (OJ C 372, 4.11.2020, p. 1). The reinforced Youth Guarantee is a commitment by all Member States to ensure that all young people under the age of 30 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship, and traineeship, within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving education.

<sup>18</sup> Council Recommendation of 30 October 2020 on 'A Bridge to Jobs – Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee' and replacing the Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee (OJ C 372, 4.11.2020, p. 1).

<sup>19</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation, COM/2020/276 final, 1 July 2020, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1594047420340&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0276>

<sup>20</sup> The latest data reported in the Scoreboard as of 25 November 2022, refer to the 25 NRRPs endorsed until June 2022 by the European Commission and the Council. The NRRPs not yet adopted were those of Hungary and the Netherlands.

<sup>21</sup> Data provided in the Commission's report on the implementation of the RRF COM(2022)383 final. As indicated in the RRF Regulation, each measure contributes to two of the six policy pillars. The total amount of RRF contribution to Pillar 6 considering both contribution towards the first and the second pillars is 11.29%, of which 7.2% is for the first pillar and 4.1% is for the second pillar.

<sup>22</sup> As underlined in the scoreboard: *Figures are illustrative, meant to be used for qualitative analysis, and do not constitute a comparative assessment of Member States' RRP. The number and structure of the measures in each national plan vary greatly, as well as the approach to reflect commitments to gender equality or contributions to children and the youth. For a more detailed analysis, please refer to the Staff Working Documents adopted by the European Commission for each endorsed plan.*

Member States: Belgium (14.3%) and Germany (12.7%) are among the countries with the highest share while Croatia and Finland among those with the lowest.

Concerning **gender equality**, according to the RRF regulation gender equality should be promoted as a horizontal objective and mainstreamed in all the pillars of the national plans.<sup>23</sup> However, this principle is not mentioned among the formal criteria for the Commission's assessment of national plans.<sup>24</sup> This lack of earmarked funding in the RRF is reflected in the national plans, which tend to show few investments and reforms addressing specific gender-related challenges or targeting women as their main beneficiaries (Sapala, 2022).

According to the Commission's overall assessment and flagging reported in the Scoreboard, only 129 measures in the 25 plans adopted as of 30 June 2022 have a focus on gender equality. As illustrated in Annex 2, the highest share of gender equality measures are to be found in the Swedish (11.1%) and in the Austrian Plans (9.3%). The lowest shares are in the plans of Luxembourg, Denmark (both with no measures flagged as gender equality ones) and Croatia (0.3%). The eight country cases considered in depth in this briefing include countries with high shares of gender equality measures, such as Spain (8.2%) and Ireland (5.6%), and countries with low shares such as Croatia and Germany (1.4%).

Measures flagged as **gender equality in Pillar 6** include reforms and investments to increase access to ECEC promoted in many NRRPs (e.g. Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Spain). These measures contribute to addressing the challenges identified in the relevant CSRs) for childcare and gender equality, and more than two thirds include employment incentives.<sup>25</sup>

Turning to the **RRPs implementation**, the RRS data on milestones and targets<sup>26</sup> show that out of the overall 583 milestones and targets of Pillar 6, 362 refer to investments and 221 to reforms. Out of these, the RRS indicates that 31 were fulfilled by 8 November 2022 with an expenditure of about EUR 3.64 billion, equivalent to around 7% of the total budget for this pillar.<sup>27</sup> This fulfilment rate is in line with

<sup>23</sup> The RRF regulation requires Member States to explain how their plans contribute to gender equality and equal opportunities for all, in line with Principles 2 and 3 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and, where relevant, with the national gender equality strategy. It also requires Member States to describe the coherence and complementarity of their measures with other policies as well as with funding from other EU sources, including from the European Social Fund+ (ESF+). The Regulation specifies that the Facility should pay special attention to women in mitigating the impact of the crisis (Article 4 and Article 18(4)(o)). Equality considerations are also addressed through the aim to reduce social vulnerabilities, which is part of one of the assessment criteria of the plans. Finally, Article 17(3) of the Regulation requires that the plans address all or a significant subset of the challenges identified in the relevant CSRs, including those addressed to Member States in 2019 and 2020, which were directly or indirectly linked to improving gender equality. In line with the dual approach of the European Gender Equality Strategy, the Commission encouraged 25 Member States to include targeted measures to promote equality as well as to mainstream equality considerations throughout the plans. In addition, Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2015 on the *ex-post* reporting on social expenditure, provides for an assessment of measures with a focus on gender equality by the Commission in consultation with Member States, and 4 of the 14 common indicators to be produced by Member States to monitor the NRRPs' implementation and progress towards the RRF's objectives have to be disaggregated by sex.

<sup>24</sup> Annex V *Assessment Guidelines for the Facility* of the Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of 12 February 2021 establishing the RRF, and Art. 19 of the RRF Regulation.

<sup>25</sup> Report from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Review Report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, COM(2022)383 final, 29 July 2022, pp. 3–4, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/com\\_2022\\_383\\_1\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/com_2022_383_1_en.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> The RRF is performance-based, and funds are disbursed when Member States have satisfactorily fulfilled key steps in the implementation of the reforms and investments included in the NRRPs. These key implementation steps are referred to as milestones and targets, which represent respectively qualitative and quantitative implementation steps.

<sup>27</sup> Data available on the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard: [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/milestones\\_and\\_targets.html?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/milestones_and_targets.html?lang=en)

that of the other pillars. The latest Commission Review report on the implementation of the RRF<sup>28</sup> underlines that the fulfilled milestones and targets are associated with active labour market policies. These include support to digital transformation in education and training, hiring subsidies for apprenticeships and support for youth higher education.

The RRS includes a set of **common indicators** related to the objectives of the RRF<sup>29</sup>. Only one of the three common indicators identified by the Commission for Pillar 6 provides detailed information for the policy fields considered in this briefing.

The two common indicators on education and training, **indicators 10 and 13, do not allow any specific information on ECEC to be derived**<sup>30</sup>. **Common indicator 14**<sup>31</sup>, **on the employment outcomes of RRF support**, provides detailed information for policy support to youth employment. This indicator measures the number of young people (aged 15–29) receiving monetary and in-kind support (such as education, training and employment support) through the RRF. Scoreboard data for this indicator show that the **total number of young people receiving support** at the EU27 level is a little above 2 million. There is a slightly higher share for young women (51% compared to 49% for young men).

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<sup>28</sup> European Commission (2022), Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Review report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Brussels, 29.7.2022 COM(2022) 383 final.

<sup>29</sup> The common indicators show the progress of the implementation of the NRRPs and the overall performance of the RRF. Common indicators data are collected by Member States and reported to the European Commission twice a year.

<sup>30</sup> Indicator 10, measuring the number of participants in education or training (ISCED 0–6 and adult education and training) due to support received through RRF measures, is disaggregated by gender but not by level of education, therefore it is not possible to assess the number of participants in ECEC. Indicator 13, measuring classroom capacity of new or modernised childcare and education facilities (ISCED 0–6) due to support by measures under the facility, also does not allow a disaggregation of ECEC from other education facilities.

<sup>31</sup> According to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2106 of 28 September 2021: *'The number of participants aged 15–29 years old upon receiving monetary or in-kind support by measures under the Facility. The indicator shall be disaggregated by gender'*.

### 3 A FOCUS ON EIGHT SELECTED COUNTRIES

This section presents the in-depth analysis of the eight selected countries providing data and information to assess the way and the extent to which the eight NRRPs are addressing Pillar 6. It covers the two specific policy domains under analysis according to adequacy and coherence, also from a gender perspective.

#### 3.1 An analysis of adequacy

One of the key features of the RRF is its performance-based nature. RRF funds are disbursed when Member States have satisfactorily fulfilled key steps in the implementation of the reforms and investments included in the recovery and resilience plans. These key implementation steps are referred to as milestones and targets, which represent respectively a qualitative and quantitative implementation step.

The eight selected countries are assessed to see how the milestones and targets of the analysed measures are sufficient and appropriate to achieve their stated objectives and the overall objectives of the plans. This section considers the **progress so far achieved** to better understanding their contribution to the objectives of Pillar 6 and to gender equality. Annex 3 presents detailed information for each of the eight countries with regard to their milestones and targets. Looking at the two Mediterranean countries in the sample, it is paramount that the RRF can play a real and important role in tackling next-generation related issues. These countries are both moving away from structural problems in their labour market for young people, and structural gaps with regard to childhood care.

With respect to the labour market, a structural problem for **Italy** is the low participation in the labour market especially by young people and women. In 2019, Italy had the highest NEET rate in the EU, while the female employment rate is far from the EU average and among the lowest among EU MSs (26th out of 27).<sup>32</sup> The pandemic further impacted on the youth NEET rate for people aged 15–29, which reached 23.1 % in 2021 compared to 22.3 % in 2019.

In addition, Italy has one of the highest early school leaving rates in the EU-27, low education attainment rates also among young people and poor coverage of early childcare services. Territorial disparities are also very high with young people and children in southern regions particularly penalised.<sup>33</sup> According to Eurostat data, in 2019 early leavers from education and training were 14.3 % of the school population and, although Italy has slightly improved over the years, the rate remains among the highest in the EU.<sup>34</sup> Men are more likely to be early leavers compared to women (15.4 % versus 11.5 %). Italy also presents the weakest active labour market policies in the EU, with poor public employment services (PES) and lack of training opportunities for the unemployed, underemployed and inactive people.<sup>35</sup>

Concerning **childhood care**, European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) data show that in 2019, only 26.3 % of children aged less than 3 years received formal childcare (at least an hour per week), while 51.5 % were cared for exclusively by their parents.<sup>36</sup> According to the Italian National

<sup>32</sup> Eurostat, employment and activity by sex and age: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

<sup>33</sup> CEPS, Comparing and assessing Recovery and Resilience Plans. Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Portugal, Slovakia, Austria and Belgium, March 2022, available at: <https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/RRRP-No-7-NRRPs-comparison-IT-DE-ES-FR-PT-SK-AT-BE.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg\\_04\\_10/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_04_10/default/table?lang=en)

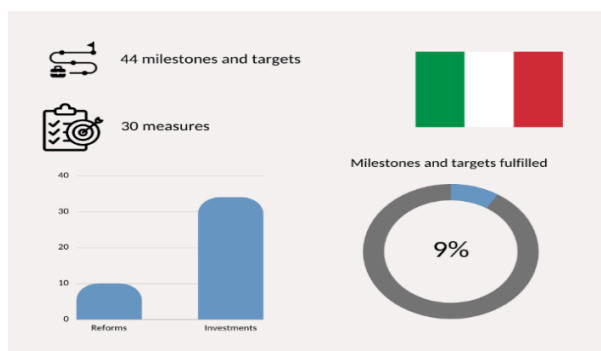
<sup>35</sup> CEPS, Comparing and assessing Recovery and Resilience Plans. Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Portugal and Slovakia, September 2021, available at: <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/comparing-and-assessing-recovery-and-resilience-plans/>

<sup>36</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living\\_conditions\\_in\\_Europe\\_-\\_childcare\\_arrangements#Childcare\\_and\\_education\\_arrangements](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Living_conditions_in_Europe_-_childcare_arrangements#Childcare_and_education_arrangements)

Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), in 2019 available places in public and private early childcare facilities covered only 25.5 % of potential users (children up to 2 years old), below the Barcelona target and with a wide gap between northern and southern regions. While in north-eastern and central Italy the rate is slightly higher than the European target (33.6 % and 33.3 %), and in the north-west it is close to the target (29.9 %), southern regions and the islands are lagging behind (with coverage rates of 13.2 % and 13.8 % respectively).

<sup>37</sup> Regarding children aged 3–5, according to ISTAT in 2019 coverage rates were higher, with 95 % of children enrolled in childhood formal education. <sup>38</sup> Italy is the largest beneficiary of the RRF and will receive a wide range of financial resources to fill the gaps. <sup>39</sup> As regards Pillar 6, Italy has fulfilled 9 % of the milestones and targets relating to all policy areas (early childhood education and care, education, youth employment support) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Italy)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Milestones and targets fulfilled for the policy areas considered in this study at **Q4 2021** are: (i) entry into force of the Operational Plan supporting vulnerable people and preventing institutionalisation (December 2021); <sup>40</sup> (ii) entry into force of the Inter-ministerial Decree establishing a National programme for the Guaranteed Employability of Workers <sup>41</sup> (December 2021) and an Inter-ministerial Decree establishing a National Plan for New Skills (December 2021). <sup>42</sup> The National Plan for New Skills also sets the foundation for the strengthening of the dual system. None of the additional 45 milestones and targets fulfilled between **Q4 2021 and Q2 2022**, for which Italy has recently required a disbursement, refer to Pillar 6. <sup>43</sup>

<sup>37</sup> ISTAT, Offerta di asili nido e servizi integrativi per la prima infanzia. Anno educativo 2018-2019: [https://www.istat.it/it/files//2020/10/REPORT\\_ASILI-NIDO-2018-19.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files//2020/10/REPORT_ASILI-NIDO-2018-19.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> ISTAT, Nidi e servizi educativi per bambini tra 0 e 6 anni: un quadro d'insieme, 2022, available at: [https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/09/Report\\_servizi\\_infanzia.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/09/Report_servizi_infanzia.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> The overall resources allocated to Italy under the RRF amount to EUR 191.5 billion. The European Commission disbursed the first payment of EUR 21 billion in April 2022, after confirming that Italy had fulfilled all the 51 milestones and targets foreseen for the relevant period (Q4 2021). In June 2022, Italy required another payment of EUR 21 billion related to the fulfilment of 45 milestones and targets. According to the European Commission RRS, which updates data following a disbursement, at Q4 2021 Italy had fulfilled 10 % of its milestones and targets. The 45 milestones and targets for which Italy has requested a payment in June 2022 are not included in this figure, as the Economic and Financial Council still need to approve the request.

<sup>40</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Piano operativo per la presentazione da parte degli ambiti sociali territoriali di proposte per l'adesione alle progettualità di cui alla Missione 5 "Inclusione e coesione", Componente 2 "Infrastrutture sociali, famiglie, comunità e Terzo Settore", Sottocomponente 1 "Servizi sociali, disabilità e marginalità sociale" – Investimenti 1.1, 1.2 e 1.3 del Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (PNRR), December 2021, available at: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/normative/Documents/2021/DD-450-del-09122021-PNRR-Adozione-piano-operativo-presentazione-proposte.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Programma di Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori, Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana n. 306, allegato A, 27 December 2021, available at: [https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie\\_generale/caricaPdf?cdimg=21A076460100010110001&dgu=2021-12-27&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-27&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07646&art.num=1&art.tiposerie=SG](https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie_generale/caricaPdf?cdimg=21A076460100010110001&dgu=2021-12-27&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-27&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07646&art.num=1&art.tiposerie=SG)

<sup>42</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Piano Nazionale Nuove Competenze, Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana n. 307, allegato A, 28 December 2021, available at: [https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie\\_generale/caricaPdf?cdimg=21A076490100010110001&dgu=2021-12-28&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-28&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07649&art.num=1&art.tiposerie=SG](https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie_generale/caricaPdf?cdimg=21A076490100010110001&dgu=2021-12-28&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-28&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07649&art.num=1&art.tiposerie=SG)

<sup>43</sup> Data on progress in implementation is available on the NRRP website: <https://italiadomani.gov.it/it/catalogo-op-e-n-data.html?orderby=%40jcr%3Acontent%2FobservationDateInEvidence&sort=desc>

The Commission's country report for the European Semester Spring Package 2022 underlines that, regarding the implementation of the 2019 and 2020 CSRs in the NRRP, Italy is making some progress in relation to 70 % of recommendations. While substantial progress was recorded in 13 % of cases 17 % of recommendations recorded no progress or limited progress. With specific reference to the 2019 CSRs relevant for Pillar 6, the Commission assesses that some progress has been made, with relevant measures of the NRRP to be implemented in the second half of 2022 and in 2023. However, limited progress has been made regarding CSR 2 of 2020 on strengthening distance learning and skills, including digital, although relevant measures are planned for the second half of 2022 and for 2023, therefore leaving room for improvement.

Concerning childhood care, a recent study<sup>44</sup> estimated that Italy is expected to cover the gaps in places available in formal childhood care facilities, estimated at 265,398 units, to achieve the targets of 33 % of public coverage in all regions. With the NRRP, Italy should create around 225 000 new places, which will largely compensate for the places gap. In eleven regions, the 33 % target will be achieved. To compensate for the remaining regions, an additional 67,371 places should be created, with additional infrastructural investments.

The success of the Plan depends however on the capacity to swiftly implement the measures foreseen, not only in terms of adoption of legislation and strategic documents but – more importantly – in terms of the concrete realisation of the investments on the ground, which depends crucially on the implementation capacity and the efficiency of national, regional and local administrations and stakeholders. However, municipalities and regional administrations often do not have adequate human resources to efficiently and promptly implement the measures and investments needed in the required timeframe. As reported in a recent study on the NRRP and the challenges for Italian municipalities<sup>45</sup>, the lack of staff with specific managerial, technical and IT skills, together with the low level of technical training, has negatively affected the ability of municipalities to design and implement public investments, especially in medium and small municipalities<sup>46</sup>. According to an Openpolis report<sup>47</sup>, staff shortages and the lack of adequate skills to carry out complex procedures are particularly present in municipalities in Southern Italy. Therefore, these territories risk to be excluded from the NRRP investments, leading to the violation of the rule reserving 40% of the resources to the South and to the increase in territorial disparities and gaps, in contrast with the Plan's objective to reduce them. For Italy, the main challenge in the implementation of the RRP is therefore to reconcile and balance the need to support marginalised territories and at the same time to reward high-quality projects. To overcome these difficulties, the Government has planned to hire 1,000 experts to support local administrations<sup>48</sup>. The implementation of the plan for ECEC services is an example of the difficulties mentioned above. The first public tender was published on 2 December 2021 and some challenges in the implementation of the measure already emerged. Some municipalities renounced to present projects as they did not have the resources to cope with the high costs of running the infrastructure (e.g., personnel). In addition, the complexity of public tendering and the short timeframe available to present proposals represented a significant problem for

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<sup>44</sup> Corti et. al., 2022.

<sup>45</sup> Fondazione Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, Il PNRR e le sfide per i Comuni italiani, January 2022, available at: <https://www.cdp.it/resources/cms/documents/Il%20PNRR%20e%20le%20sfide%20per%20i%20comuni%20italiani.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> Fondazione Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, Il PNRR e le sfide per i Comuni italiani, January 2022, available at: <https://www.cdp.it/resources/cms/documents/Il%20PNRR%20e%20le%20sfide%20per%20i%20comuni%20italiani.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Openpolis, L'impatto del Pnnr sui territori, January 2022, available at: <https://www.openpolis.it/limpatto-del-pnrr-sui-territori/>

<sup>48</sup> Openpolis, Gli esperti per gli enti locali e il problema delle tempistiche, November 2021, available at: <https://www.openpolis.it/gli-esperti-per-gli-enti-locali-e-il-problema-delle-tempistiche/>



small municipalities. As a result, most of the demands came from larger municipalities and Northern regions, with the risk of benefitting areas with already good levels of childcare services and increasing territorial inequalities<sup>49</sup>.

Another criticality in the implementation of the Plan relates to the guidelines on public tendering published by the Department of Equal Opportunities and the Department for Youth Policies and the incentives to promote youth and female employment<sup>50</sup>. The Inter-ministerial Decree states that contracting authorities shall include specific criteria to promote the recruitment of women and young people in calls for tenders, notices and invitations, in order to ensure that at least 30% of the workers hired for the execution of the contract and the implementation of the project are young people under 36 and women. In a country like Italy with significant gaps in terms of gender and inter-generational equality, this provision risks to have a limited effect, due to the lack of enabling conditions for equality and participation in the labour market (e.g., available places in childcare facilities).

In **Spain**, before the implementation of the Spanish NRRP, despite the positive response to the CSRs in 2019, precarious labour market conditions are also persisting. According to the European Commission estimates,<sup>51</sup> active labour market policies remained limited and were not very effective. With regard to the targets of interest, youth unemployment experienced a steady decline, but 32.5 % of the active population below 25 years old was still unemployed in 2019, compared to the EU average of 15.6 % (Eurostat, 2019). The share of NEET also remained among the highest in the Union (EC, 2020). The high youth unemployment and NEET rates are combined with high levels of labour market segmentation related to the abuse of temporary contracts. Consequently, Spain presents one of the highest rates of in-work poverty in the EU, leading to a significant share of people at risk of social exclusion, especially among children. Concerning this second social group, however, estimates are more positive. As shown in Section 2, Spain presents one of the highest levels of participation in childcare services in the EU (57.4 % compared to 35.3 % in the EU), representing, with Portugal, an exception among southern European countries.<sup>52</sup> This success is jeopardised by the weaknesses of family benefits, leading to a poverty-reduction effect that is particularly low for children, who face one of the highest risks of social exclusion in the EU. The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated Spanish socio-economic deficiencies, highlighting existing challenges for vulnerable groups.

With the NRRP, the Spanish government aims to tackle these structural challenges for the next generations. A variety of milestones and targets were put in place to reform and invest in education, skills, social inclusion and the labour market, meeting the objectives of Pillar 6.

The RRF is expected to enhance the country's recovery with the introduction of the Spanish RRP in April 2021. Some 13 % of the financial allocation was disbursed by the Commission in August 2021 and currently, the country has received 45 % of the resources in pre-financing and the first two grant instalments.<sup>53</sup> Many

<sup>49</sup> Corti F. et al, The role of the recovery and resilience facility in strengthening childcare policies, July 2022, available at: <https://feps-europe.eu/publication/the-role-of-the-recovery-and-resilience-facility-in-strengthening-childcare-policies/>

<sup>50</sup> Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Linee Guida per favorire le pari opportunità di genere e generazionali, nonché l'inclusione lavorativa delle persone con disabilità nei contratti pubblici finanziati con le risorse del PNRR e PNC, Gazzetta ufficiale n. 309 del 21-12-2021, Annex 1, available at: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2021/12/30/21A07771/sg>

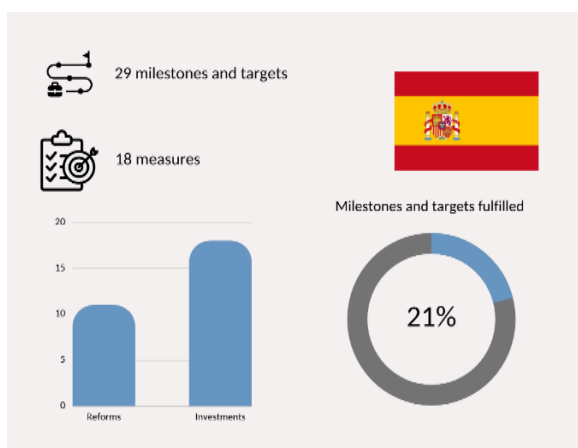
<sup>51</sup> European Commission's Country Report Spain, 2020: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0508&from=GA>

<sup>52</sup> EUROSTAT, *Childcare arrangements in the EU*, 2022: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20220504-2>

<sup>53</sup> Spain's National Recovery and Resilience Plan: Latest State of Play, European Parliament, 2022: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/698878/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)698878\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/698878/EPRS_BRI(2022)698878_EN.pdf)

indicators point to the current unfavourable conditions of both young workers and children.<sup>54</sup> Both social categories receive 13 % each of the expenditure supporting Pillar 6, an amount that is quite low compared to the 74 % of funds in favour of general and higher education. Moreover, as a recent study pointed out,<sup>55</sup> the allocated amount for childhood care remains insufficient to reach the target of 33 % coverage of childcare services. While the national RRF Plan proposes to create 65 382 new places to achieve a coverage of 33 % in all the autonomous communities, Spain should create 141 227 new places.

Figure 2: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Spain)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Nevertheless, the autonomous communities have already launched specific measures supporting youth employment: Galicia with its *Galeuropa* programme; Cantabria with *Escuelas de Talento Joven* and *Jóvenes con Talento*; the Basque Country with its alternative vocational training model; Navarra with integrated training and employment programmes; and Castile and León by offering support for hiring young people.<sup>56</sup> Time is needed to perceive long-term outcomes, although according to the RRS, among the fulfilled milestones and targets (10), only three concern specific measures favouring youth employment and none involve children. Overall, 79 % of milestones and targets concerning pillar 6 has not yet been fulfilled.

A recent European Parliament analysis of Spain's RRP<sup>57</sup> highlights specific gaps in the Plan, such as the lack of prioritisation and specificity of envisaged reforms and investments, their misalignment and expected efficiency. Regarding ECEC facilities, a recent report underlines the insufficient consideration given to digitalisation and infrastructure in childcare facilities, and the lack of concrete responses to the learning ineffectiveness triggered by the coronavirus pandemic<sup>58</sup>.

As for youth employment, one of the most critical challenges of the country's system is the dualism of the Spanish labour market. Nevertheless, the NRRP measures do not address this problem, and are limited to the reduction of the number of contracts, which, may grant higher protection to workers, although they may still be subject to excessive temporary employment. Reducing labour market segmentation would, therefore, significantly reduce inequalities, granting a sustainable and inclusive growth (EC, 2021).

A different situation can be detected with regard to the two continental countries representative of the male breadwinner state-centred regimes.

<sup>54</sup> European Commission's Country Report Spain, 2022: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022SC0610&from=EN>

<sup>55</sup> Corti et. al, 2022.

<sup>56</sup> Spanish National Reform Programme, 2022: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/nationalreformprogramme2022revspain\\_es.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/nationalreformprogramme2022revspain_es.pdf)

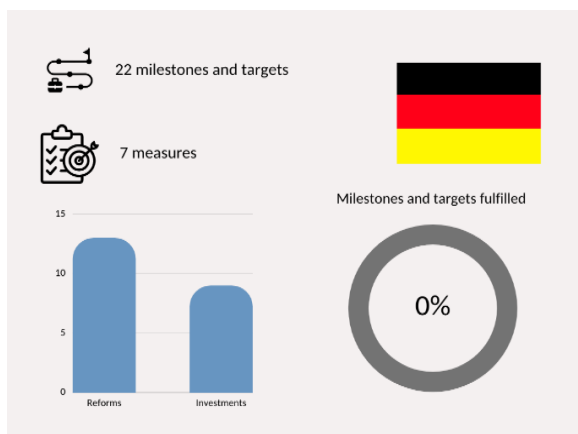
<sup>57</sup> Spain's National Recovery and Resilience Plan: Latest State of Play, European Parliament, 2022: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/698878/EPRS\\_BRI\(2022\)698878\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2022/698878/EPRS_BRI(2022)698878_EN.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> *Reformas, gobernanza y capital humano: las grandes debilidades del plan de recuperación*, EsadeEcPol – Center for Economic Policy, 2021: <https://www.esade.edu/ecpol/en/publications/reformas-gobernanza-capital-humano/>

Before the implementation of its Recovery and Resilience Plan, **Germany** maintained a positive performance on the Social Scoreboard supporting the European Pillar of Social Rights.<sup>59</sup> In 2020, the country was among the best performers for the percentage of youth NEET (6.4 % compared to the EU average of 10.5 %), the employment rate (79.6 % compared to the EU average of 72.7 %) and the advanced level of individuals' digital skills. With regard to young individuals, labour shortages and a skilled workforce remain however structural challenges, exacerbated by the pandemic. Fewer youth enrol in formal vocational education and training (VET) programmes and instead, favour academic education, leading to unfilled training opportunities and regional imbalances in qualifications and jobs.

Concerning children's facilities, the degree of children's participation in formal childcare (29.8 %) is below the EU average (35.1 %) and the Barcelona target (33 %), challenging the equality of opportunities at an early age (European Commission, 2020). Both structural issues for the next generations are addressed by the German's RRP through several milestones and targets, which all contribute to component 4.1. Despite the prompt response of the German government to the pandemic, ensuring limited losses for disadvantaged groups, significant structural challenges were uncovered addressing the country's attention to adopt a strategic response through the NRRP (European Commission, 2021). Policies supporting next generations and specifically children and young workers, have a strong focus on the acquisition of skills from nursery age. The increasing demand of childcare facilities in the country is met by the high attention that the special fund Child Day-care Expansion (C4.1.1) gives to the improvement of childcare availability and quality. It aims to establish an additional 90 000 childcare places in all *Länders*, and the modernisation of existing ones. Under this measure, the first milestone has already been fulfilled, since the intervention was included in the German amendment of the Childcare

Figure 3: Policies for the next generation: financing measures, targets and milestones (Germany)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Financing Act and the Federal Financial Assistance Act, adopted at the end of 2020.<sup>60</sup> This may seem misleading since, according to the European Commission's RRS, no milestones and targets have been fulfilled.

However, both Acts entry into force was deemed as an adequate milestone for the measure envisaged in the RRP. Although Germany is increasing the number of places in early childhood education and care, demand is rising faster and participation rates have declined.<sup>61</sup> According to a recent study,<sup>62</sup> the RRF will increase the number of public places by 13 % on average, with slightly higher percentages in western *Länder*, typically lagging behind in terms of coverage.

<sup>59</sup> European Commission's Country Report Germany, 2020: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0504&from=EN>

<sup>60</sup> Corti et. al, 2022.

<sup>61</sup> European Commission's Country Report Germany, 2022: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022SC0606&from=EN>

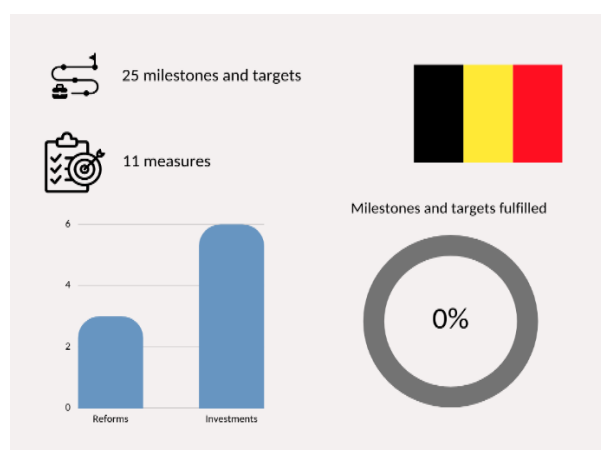
<sup>62</sup> Corti et. al, 2022.

However, it is estimated that the envisaged investment will not be enough to achieve the 33 % Barcelona target in those *Länder* that were already lagging behind.

Concerning young workers, the Apprenticeship Support provided by component 4.1 (C4.1.3) also includes a milestone already achieved with the entry into force of the revised funding guidelines and the *Ausbildungsplätze sichern* programme. At the current state of play, according to the European Commission’s Scoreboard, no other milestone or target has been achieved.

According to a recent report<sup>63</sup>, little effort is provided by the German Plan against territorial imbalances in access to childcare and to increase the number of apprentices enrolled in VET programmes. Its slow progress on the matter is also highlighted by the fact that no expenditure directly supports youth in the labour market and no payment request has been yet submitted by the German government.

Figure 4: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Belgium)



Turning to **Belgium**, according to the Commission Scoreboard, Pillar 6 covers 5.27 % of the total plan measures as primary pillar and the 10 % as secondary pillar. The share of the plan’s social expenditure in education and childcare is 46 % (8 investments and 4 reforms), and 31 % for employment and skills (12 investments and 6 reforms). Overall, the milestones and targets for Pillar 6 are 22 investments and 3 reforms. Concerning the link between the CSR and the NRRP, Belgium has made some progress,<sup>64</sup> especially for skills development and the improvement of the educational system, and relevant reforms and investments are planned up to 2026.

Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission’s Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Similarly, the challenges concerning the labour market seem to be somehow addressed within the plan, despite details on implementation that are still lacking.

Belgium has also reported on some of the common indicators for the adequacy of the measures. With regards to Pillar 6:<sup>65</sup> (i) The share of population participation in education and training due to RRF is around 2 %, with a majority concerning digital skills; (ii) 3.8 % of young people aged 15–29 receive support through the RRF.<sup>66</sup> No data are available on the indicator referring to classroom capacity of new or modernised childcare and education facilities due to RRF support.

In **Ireland**, Eurostat data presented in Section 2 show a better baseline situation in 2019 than the EU average as regards youth employment and the gender employment gap for people under 29 years. NEET rates were also lower than the EU average, especially for young women. The share of early leavers

<sup>63</sup> The European added value of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, EGOV, 2022: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/699513/IPOL\\_STU\(2022\)699513\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/699513/IPOL_STU(2022)699513_EN.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-belgium\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-belgium_en.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> Up to 13 October 2022, [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/RRFC110.html](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/RRFC110.html)

<sup>66</sup> Including monetary and in-kind support, such as education, training and employment support.

from education and training was below the EU average (5.1 % against 10.2 %) and it continue to decrease over time despite the pandemic (3.3 % against 9.7 % in 2021).

Among the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Irish economy, one of particular concern was its disproportionate impact on women, younger people and workers with lower education attainment. According to the Irish Government, the Covid-19 adjusted unemployment rate for people aged 15–24 rose to 46 % in the fourth quarter of 2020, compared with a total unemployment rate of under 20 %.<sup>67</sup> Female participation rate fell in 2020 but, following the reopening of the economy in early 2021 and the shift to remote working, it reached the record level of 72 % in 2021.<sup>68</sup>

In 2020, 23.2 % of children under the age of 3 received at least one hour a week of formal childcare. This was a substantial decrease compared to 2019 (40.8 %) as a consequence of the pandemic and social distancing measures.<sup>69</sup> In 2020, only 11.8 % of children under the age of 3 attended more than 30 hours a week in formal childcare.<sup>70</sup> According to EU-SILC data, in 2020 57.6 % of children aged less than 3 years were cared for only by their parents compared to 29.3 % in 2019.<sup>71</sup>

Figure 5: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Ireland)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

The 2019 CSRs underlined that skills shortages and mismatches in certain sectors were emerging, calling on Ireland to invest in human capital, promote vocational training and align curricula to the needs of the labour market.<sup>72</sup> Concerning implementation, at the moment Ireland has not fulfilled any of its milestones and targets, and it has not yet requested a disbursement from the European Union.<sup>73</sup>

The implementation of the plan is underway. As regards Pillar 6 and the policy areas considered in this study, Ireland started the Work Placement Experience Programme on 12 July 2021.<sup>74</sup> The Recovery Skills Response Programme is currently ongoing and the State Agency for Further Education and Skills Service (SOLAS)<sup>75</sup>, the further education and training authority, has started to provide specific training modules.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Government of Ireland, Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan, available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d4939-national-recovery-and-resilience-plan-2021/>

<sup>68</sup> European Semester 2022 Country Report – Ireland, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-ireland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-ireland_en.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Eurostat data: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tepsr\\_sp210/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tepsr_sp210/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>70</sup> European Semester 2022 country report – Ireland, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-ireland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-ireland_en.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Eurostat data: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_CAPARENTS\\_custom\\_3495346/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_CAPARENTS_custom_3495346/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>72</sup> Country specific recommendations 2019, available at: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10160-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>73</sup> Ireland submitted its NRRP on 28 May 2021. It received the Commission's positive assessment on 16 July 2021 and the Council's positive assessment on 8 September 2021. The total allocation for the Irish Plan amounts to EUR 989 million in grants. The plan is organised in three priorities and foresees 16 investments and 9 reforms, for a total of 109 milestones and targets to be achieved.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/95fe1-work-placement-experience-programme/>

<sup>75</sup> The acronym refers to the Gaelic: An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna which means 'Further Education and Skills Service.

<sup>76</sup> Green skills: <https://www.solas.ie/programmes/green-skills/> Skills to compete: <https://www.solas.ie/programmes/skills-to-compete/>

On the other hand, concerning childcare, the Irish Plan does not foresee any investments in this field. Ireland has already reached the Barcelona targets. National strategies, beyond the RRF Plan, are focused on making childcare structures more accessible through economic aid and subsidies for families. This is the case of the Irish childcare scheme introduced in 2019<sup>77</sup> and the 'First 5' strategy that commits to increasing public funding for childcare providers and providing care and work–life balance for families<sup>78</sup>.

Also the Commission, in its European Semester 2022 country report underlines that substantial progress has been made with regards to early childhood education and care, and some progress has been made with regards to the provision of active integration support and upskilling services for vulnerable workers and on skills development. With this regard, the Irish plan envisages specific measures to support the development of skills and increase the employability of workers in sectors linked to the digital and green transition. The Plan itself is however quite vague as regards the description of the interventions and it often does not explain how Ireland intends to target specific categories of workers such as young people and women. Indeed, labour market measures are aimed at a wide range of recipients and there is no specific provision targeted at young people and women, although they are surely among the beneficiaries. The only explicit reference is a target referring to the Skills to Compete Initiative which aims at increasing the participation rate of low-skilled young women to the programme.

Turning to **Finland**, it can be said that the situation of young people is positive overall, with employment rates above the EU average and, although the Finnish labour market is also gender-segregated and still presents gender pay gaps, only very small differences among employment levels of men and women can be detected.<sup>79</sup> NEET rates are below the EU average for both men and women.

Finland is also one of the EU Member States that experienced the mildest recession during the Covid-19 crisis. Emergency measures taken by the government reduced the impact of the crisis, although young people are among those who have been affected the most. In 2020, the NEET rate for people aged 15–29 slightly increased, as well as youth unemployment (from 12.5 % to 15.1 % for people aged 15–29).

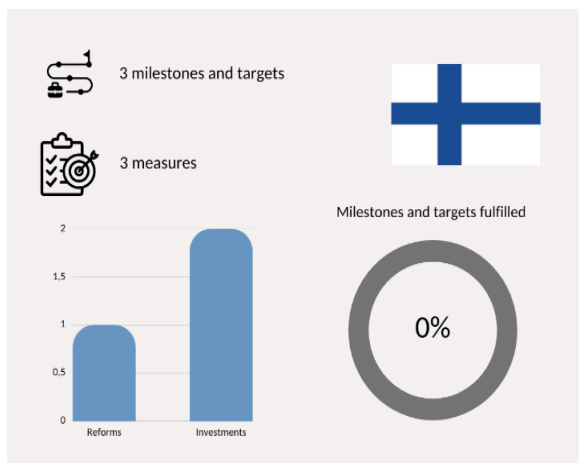
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<sup>77</sup> Official website of National Childcare Scheme, provided by the Irish Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/f8319-national-childcare-scheme/#>

<sup>78</sup> Official website of First 5 Strategy 2021–2028, provided by the Irish Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth: <https://first5.gov.ie/>

<sup>79</sup> In 2019, the employment rate (of people aged 20–64) is 75 % for women and 78 % for men. <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/domain/work/FI>

Figure 6: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Finland)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

In 2019, 38.2% of children less than 3 years old were in formal childcare (slightly above the EU average of 35.3%). According to the European Commission working document however, the impact of the Child Homecare Allowance – paid to parents (predominantly women) when a child is under 3 years old – is estimated to have some negative impact on the employment of women and hinder enrolment into formal childcare.<sup>80</sup> According to the European Commission's RRS, Finland has not currently fulfilled any of the investments and reforms related to Pillar 6. As regards the youth employment support, from 1 Sept. 2021 until the end of 2024 municipalities can apply to receive grants to strengthen multidisciplinary services such as, for example, those provided by the One-Stop Guidance Center Ohjaamo<sup>81</sup>.

The grant can only be used for personnel costs, which involve the improvement of expertise in social, health or education services at the Ohjaamo service points.<sup>82</sup>

Although the baseline situation is quite different from the one of Finland, **Poland** currently has also not requested any disbursement so far and, based on the Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard, no milestones and targets have been fulfilled yet.

Figure 7: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Poland)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Poland submitted its NRRP on 3 May 2021. The assessment and approval procedure by European institutions took much longer than intended. The Commission gave its positive assessment of the plan only on 1 June 2022 and the Council's approval came on 14 June 2022. As declared by the President of the European Commission, the endorsement of the Plan is linked to commitments on the independence of the judiciary system. Poland did not receive any pre-financing, and disbursements will be conditional on the implementation of reforms of the judicial system.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Commission Staff Working Document. Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan for Finland accompanying the document 'Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Finland', 4 October 2021, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/commission-staff-working-document-analysis-recovery-and-resilience-plan-finland\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/commission-staff-working-document-analysis-recovery-and-resilience-plan-finland_en)

<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, New incentives to develop the Ohjaamo low-threshold service for young people: <https://tem.fi/en/-/new-incentive-to-develop-the-ohjaamo-low-threshold-services-for-young-people>

<sup>82</sup> Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, New incentives to develop the Ohjaamo low-threshold service for young people: <https://tem.fi/en/-/new-incentive-to-develop-the-ohjaamo-low-threshold-services-for-young-people>

<sup>83</sup> NextGenerationEU: European Commission endorses Poland's €35.4 billion recovery and resilience plan, press release, 1 June 2022: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_3375](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3375)

According to the European Commission,<sup>84</sup> Poland has made significant improvements in recent years and employment rates have continued to increase. However, the labour market participation of certain groups, including women, has remained low and the social benefit system does not provide sufficient incentives for women to work. In most cases, care duties are the main barrier preventing women from participating in the labour market and the gender employment gap in 2020 reached 15.7%.<sup>85</sup>

The child benefit, for instance, has reduced poverty and inequality, but it has had a negative effect on the participation of parents in the labour market due to its amount and design.<sup>86</sup> The enrolment rate for children under the age of three in formal childcare remains among the lowest in the EU: in 2019, only 10.2% of children under the age of three attended at least one hour a week of formal childcare<sup>87</sup> while 57.6% of children under three were cared for by their parents only.<sup>88</sup> When looking to the numbers of structures and places, it is worth underlining that there are currently 6800 childcare structures that provide around 200 000 places for children under three years old.<sup>89</sup> The Polish NRRP plans to create 47 500 additional places through the construction of new facilities and the expansion of existing ones with a total investment of approximately EUR 363 million.<sup>90</sup> Considering that Poland has one of the lowest shares of enrolment in formal childcare (10.2% – Annex 2 Figure A1), it might be difficult for the country to reach the Barcelona target.<sup>91</sup>

Skill shortages represent another significant issue for the Polish labour market. In 2019, only 43% of people had basic digital skills (EU average: 54%) and the share of graduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) was 20.8% as opposed to 26% at EU level. For young people, according to the European Semester 2022 country report, more than half of young workers are employed under temporary contracts.<sup>92</sup>

In the Polish case the main challenge and risk is that of not receiving sufficient funding to implement the reforms and investments foreseen by the Plan, as funding is conditional to the realisation of the reform of the judiciary and the respect of its independence.

**Croatia** has already started to implement its milestones and targets with regard to Pillar 6, especially considering that its education system faces a number of significant challenges. With specific regard to childhood care, attendance in formal ECEC is among the lowest in the EU and there is a lack of ECEC infrastructures and a shortage of teachers, together with wide regional disparities. These issues are being addressed by the structural reform of the education system, to provide additional teachers specifically trained for ECEC and to contribute to ensuring an adequate number of teachers in the medium term. By Q2 2026, the investment related to the reform will support the creation of at least 22

<sup>84</sup> European Semester 2022 country report – Poland: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-poland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-poland_en.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> European Semester 2022 country report – Poland: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-poland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-poland_en.pdf)

<sup>86</sup> Country specific recommendations 2019 – Poland, p. 4: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0521&from=EN>

<sup>87</sup> Eurostat data: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tepsr\\_sp210/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tepsr_sp210/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>88</sup> Eurostat data: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC\\_CAPARENTS\\_custom\\_3495346/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ILC_CAPARENTS_custom_3495346/default/table?lang=en)

<sup>89</sup> Polish Ministry of Family and Social Policy, 2021: <https://www.gov.pl/web/family/polish-deal-for-families>

<sup>90</sup> Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, 2022: <https://www.gov.pl/web/fundusze-regiony/kpo-inwestycje-i-reformy-obejma-wszystkie-dziedziny-zycia-spolecznego>

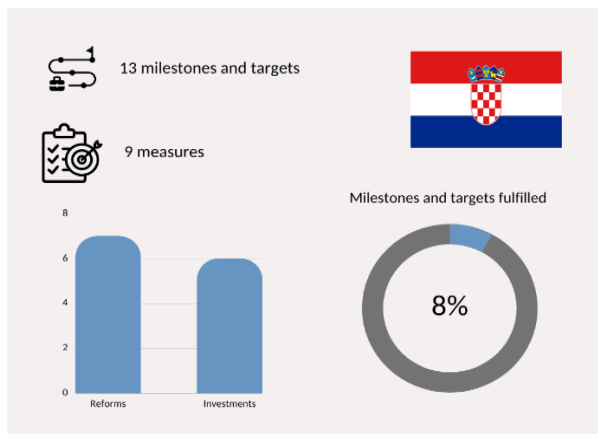
<sup>91</sup> On the basis of own calculations, a Polish investment of around EUR 7600 for each place created in childcare infrastructures and, consequently, an achievement of almost 250 000 new places, would not be enough for the country to reach the Barcelona target

<sup>92</sup> European Semester 2022 country report – Poland: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-poland\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-poland_en.pdf)



500 new places in ECEC through infrastructure investments in the construction, upgrade and reconstruction of ECEC facilities.

Figure 8: Policies for the next generation: measures, targets and milestones (Croatia)



Source: IRS elaboration on data from the European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Although labour market conditions continue to improve, employment levels remain low in Croatia, with the outreach capacity towards the unemployed and inactive youth still underdeveloped.<sup>93</sup> The rate of young NEETs and the youth unemployment rate – although decreasing over time – remain well above the EU average and gender inequality is among the highest in Europe. These are all aspects that should have received more careful attention within the NRRP.

At this stage of the implementation of the RRF, the main gaps and risks regard the implementation of the national plans, and particularly: the lack of technical support to providers and/or local authorities; the lack of funding to cover running costs; the lack of time to present and implement good quality projects. These implementation risks may hamper the effectiveness of the RRF investments in ECEC and youth employment support.

### 3.2 An analysis of coherence with EU CSRs

For coherence, the analysis is focused on the extent to which the measures addressing early childhood care, education and youth employment in the eight selected countries meet the specifications. These are set out in the Council Implementing Decisions and in related Commission documents on NRRPs. The first step was to identify the measures (in terms of reforms and investments) in the eight NRRPs under analysis related to Pillar 6, and specifically those designed to support early childhood education and care and youth employment support and job creation.<sup>94</sup> The second step was to identify among the 2019 and 2020 CSRs, those related to the identified measures to assess the extent of the coherence of the NRRPs' measures with the selected CSRs.

While the paragraph below briefly presents main findings, Annex 4 presents detailed information for all eight countries. It lists the identified measures together with the indication and the explanation of the degree of coherence with the identified CSRs, showing differences among the eight selected countries.

<sup>93</sup> European Semester 2022 country report – Croatia: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-croatia\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2022-european-semester-country-report-croatia_en.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> This first step was not immediately straightforward as national RRF Plans distribute measures related to Pillar 6 (as for all the other pillars) across their own structure.

### 3.2.1 Early childhood education and care

Although the RRF represents a unique opportunity for Member States to expand the offer of early childhood education and care services, **not all eight countries under analysis received a specific CSR relating to early childhood education and care.** While Italy, Spain, Poland and Croatia received CSRs on this issue, Belgium, Germany, Finland and Ireland did not.

The four MSs that received a CSR on childhood care are those that scored lower on the EIGE gender index (except Spain) and that show the lowest share of children in formal child care. These countries are (i) Mediterranean countries representative of male breadwinner family-centred regimes (Italy and Spain) in which family still plays an important role as a welfare pillar. Families are still, in most cases, the main providers of income support and services in almost all fields, including child care; (ii) eastern European countries (Poland and Croatia) representative of gender regimes that, after the transition from the communist era, were characterised by domestic inequality together with reductions in the provision of public services. (See Annex 1 on gender welfare regimes.)

**For all of these four countries, reforms and investments in childcare are strongly coherent with the CSRs, even if with some differences.** For example, for **Spain** and **Croatia** the CSRs related to childhood education and care are rather general. They simply recommend to ‘improve support for families’ for Spain (CSR 2, 2019) and ‘to deliver on the education reform and improve access to education and training at all levels, their quality and labour market relevance’ for Croatia (CSR 2.1, 2019). Instead, for Italy and Poland, the CSRs are more specific and related to the possible impact that childcare can have for women’s labour market participation. For **Italy** CSR 2, 2019 underlines the need to ‘support women’s participation in the labour market through a comprehensive strategy, including access to quality childcare. For **Poland**, the CSR stresses the need to ‘take steps to increase labour market participation, by improving access to childcare and long-term care’. In line with the respective CSRs, these four countries include specific measures on childhood care in their NRRPs. For two of them, the RRF Plans intervene by supporting national laws and reforms issued during the pandemic. In **Spain**, the government adopted a new organic law in December 2020 on education targeted at the entire education system, including early child care. At the same time, amendments to the legislative provision on parental leave were adopted to extend the duration to 12 weeks for each parent. To be effective, both these measures have to be accompanied by an extension and strengthening of the childcare system, which remains affected by persistent territorial challenges. The national RRF in this respect intervenes by financially supporting the increase in supply of public places. In a similar way, **Italy** recently adopted two important structural reforms in the field of childcare services and work–life balance policies: the implementation of the reform on the Integrated System 0–6 provided for by Decree No. 65/2017, and the Family Act. Both of these set the stage for a coherent ECEC system in Italy that needs to be supported by an increase of places in childhood care services.

**Among the four countries without CSRs on childhood care, Belgium and Germany** (both selected as continental countries representative for the male breadwinner state-centred regimes) **include specific measures on childhood care in their NRRPs.**

As for **Germany**, among the CSRs highlighting specific challenges of the German context, no CSRs were identified as significant for next generations. Only in the ‘whereas’ section of the 2019 CSRs<sup>95</sup> does the Commission address its attention to childhood education and care. Appropriate financing must be

<sup>95</sup> European Commission’s recommendation for a Council Recommendation, 2019: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0505&from=EN>

provided for childcare facilities, which also represent key drivers for women's employment. In this sense, in its 2020 Country Report, the Commission recognises the high rate of women who work part-time due to care responsibilities, as well as the increasing demand for childcare services. The quality of childcare provision, as well, remains a significant issue.

In **Belgium**, Axis 4 (*Social et vivre ensemble*) of the NRRP aims at strengthening social cohesion by ensuring effective and inclusive education systems and the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. This is to ensure that the competences taught better match those required in the labour market. Within this axis, a specific component is focused on childhood care.

**Finland** and **Ireland** are the only **two countries out of the eight analysed that do not envisage measures for childhood care**. For **Finland** no references are made, not even in the Commission working documents. Finland is representative of the universalistic welfare regimes of Nordic countries where public care services (including those for childhood) are widespread and the dual-breadwinner model is predominant. It has high full-time employment rates among both men and women. Ireland instead is a representative of liberal universalistic welfare regimes, providing minimal social benefits and subsidising private welfare schemes and social services. These regimes ignore women's family role except in the case of extreme poverty and offer meagre social and care services endowments. A large proportion of women work, but receive very little protection from the state. For **Ireland** it is worth mentioning that although the NRRP does not contain any investment referring to the CSR on childcare, the Commission notes that the Irish Government has adequately addressed the issue outside the Plan.<sup>96</sup> The share of children under the age of 3 in formal childcare in Ireland is higher than the EU average and the Barcelona target.

### 3.2.2 Youth employment support

Differences among the eight NRRPs can be detected, including with specific regard to **CSRs relating to youth employment support**.

In **Finland**, the only measure referring to youth employment support (out of the three measures related to Pillar 6<sup>97</sup>) are contained in Pillar 3 of the Plan, Component 1: Employment and labour market. This measure is highly coherent with the CSR 2, 2019 (improve incentives to accept work and enhance skills and active inclusion, notably through well-integrated services for the unemployed and the inactive) although not specifically directed to young people.

Similarly in **Ireland**, no CSR specifically addresses youth employment support. However, CSR 2, 2019 is aimed at fostering reskilling and upskilling for all and personalised support for vulnerable groups, and CSR 2 2020 at supporting employment through developing skills. In both cases, the recommendations can significantly address young people in their access to the labour market. The Plan does not envisage specific investments to support youth employment and the CSRs do not ask for it. Despite this, the investments foreseen in the area of job support, training and skills development can benefit young people and increase their employment opportunities. The plan recognises that the Covid-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on younger workers. As underlined by the Commission, young unemployed people are particularly likely to benefit from the work placement and training

<sup>96</sup> European Commission, Analysis of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Ireland, Commission Staff Working Document, July 2021, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0205&from=EN>

<sup>97</sup> European Commission's Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard: [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/policies.html](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/policies.html)

opportunities envisaged in the Work Placement Experience programme<sup>98</sup> and by the SOLAS Recovery Skills Response Programme.<sup>99</sup>

In **Germany**, despite the outstanding youth employment conditions compared to the other considered countries, regional imbalances in qualifications and jobs remain substantial.<sup>100</sup> For this reason, the Plan has a focus on the acquisition and improvement of young workers' skills through SMEs financial support, and the facilitation of labour market entry for young people with a specific measure supporting young apprenticeship (C4.1.3).

In **Belgium** too, the assessment of CSR for 2019 highlighted the need for intervention in the field of youth employment, especially with respect to regional disparities. Another critical issue concerns the low educational outcomes, especially for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Commission recommended implementing reforms and measures to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the school system, and its capacity to deliver future-oriented and labour market relevant competences. The entire Axis 4 (*Social et vivre ensemble*) of the NRRP aims at strengthening social cohesion by ensuring effective and inclusive education systems and the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. This is to ensure that the competences taught better match those required in the labour market.

Also in the case of Spain and Italy, RRF Plans also focus on the need for digital skills for young people.

In **Spain**, although the European Commission highlights significant challenges for the Spanish economy that may influence youth unemployment and child poverty, the CSRs only indirectly address youth and children policies. Through the NRRP, the Spanish government launched a detailed agenda of structural investments and reforms for the 2021–2023 term. The components of interest here (19, 20 and 21), are strongly oriented to the modernisation and digitisation of workers' competences as well as the educational system, comprising our two main targets – youth and children.<sup>101</sup> In addition, the plan devotes component 23 to the Spanish labour market including, among its objectives, the promotion of youth employment.

According to the Plan's assessment from the European Commission<sup>102</sup> and the Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of RRP for **Italy**,<sup>103</sup> the Italian Plan was expected to address a significant subset of CSRs for Italy (2019 and 2020). The Plan includes measures contributing to improve the efficiency and inclusiveness of the labour market, promoting the participation of young people to the labour market with specific investments. Reforms and investments to improve the educational outcomes and to boost upskilling and reskilling are also foreseen, addressing the CSRs related to educational outcomes and the development of skills (including digital skills).

<sup>98</sup> European Commission, Analysis of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Ireland, Commission Staff Working Document, July 2021, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0205&from=EN>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/f7c87-minister-harris-announces-225-million-investment-in-further-and-higher-education-and-research-under-national-recovery-and-resilience-plan/>

<sup>100</sup> European Commission's Country Report Germany, 2020: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0504&from=EN>

<sup>101</sup> Although not being considered as a component that contributes to Pillar 6, Component 22 and, more specifically, C22.I2, may support children and families through its milestone, which aims at technological transformation of social services and modernisation of infrastructure of child and adolescent care centres.

<sup>102</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0165&from=EN>

<sup>103</sup> <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10160-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

In the case of **Croatia**, the CSRs 2019 and 2020 identify its most critical imbalances in employment even if do not explicitly mention specific direct recommendations for Croatia considering next generations. In 2019 the Commission, recognising significant deficiencies in employment, specifies that attention must also be given to youth employment opportunities and skills<sup>104</sup>, while in 2020 the Commission only underlines the need to enhance participation in active labour market policy strategies without any reference to youth employment and to childhood education<sup>105</sup>. However, component 4 aims to tackle challenges concerning the Croatian labour market – also in relation to young people, especially NEETs.

Finally, in **Poland**, no CSR is specifically addressing youth employment support; however, CSR2 2019 is aimed at fostering re-upskilling for all. According to the Commission working document, the plan partially addresses recommendations in the areas of labour market and education.

### 3.3 An analysis of coherence from a gender perspective

The European Commission's proposal for Next Generation EU focuses on the transition towards a green and digital economy, while the well-documented gender impacts of the Covid-19 crisis are mostly sidelined.

The analysis in Chapter 2 clearly points out the need to invest in children and youth with a gender perspective. However, it is significant that only in the case of **Italy** do the CSRs explicitly make the linkage between 'access to quality childcare' and 'support of women's participation'. As can be seen in Annex 4, the measure 'Plan for nurseries and preschools and early childhood education and care services' presents a high indirect gender impact. Increasing the share of children enrolled in early childhood education and care services reduces the burden of care work on women, and promotes their participation in the labour market. The measure benefits all women, and particularly young mothers with small children. Women working in childcare can also benefit from the measure, as the creation of new facilities and the increase of places in existing facilities should increase staff demand in a sector characterised by a high rate of female employment.

An *ex ante* gender impact assessment of the reforms and investments was included in the Italian NRRP carried out by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF).<sup>106</sup> According to this, interventions targeted at women account for about 1.6% of the total (5 measures, EUR 3.1 billion), while measures that could have indirect positive implications in reducing gender inequalities account for about 18.5% of total resources (23 measures, EUR 35.4 billion). For the remaining 130 measures, amounting to 77.9% of the total resources (EUR 153 billion), the gender impact and potential effects on reducing gaps and inequalities will depend on the implementation details and capacity. Concerning the estimated occupational effects of the Plan on female employment, the MEF analysis shows that male and female employment will evolve similarly in the first two years of implementation (2022–2023). In the following three years (2024–2026), the Plan's investments will stimulate a higher growth in female employment with a differential of about 1.2 percentage points compared to male employment.

Regarding youth employment support, the different needs of young girls and boys are not clearly identified in the active labour market measures aimed at facilitating the school-to-work transition, in

<sup>104</sup> 2019 CSRs for Croatia: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0511&from=EN>

<sup>105</sup> 2020 CSRs for Croatia: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0511&from=EN>

<sup>106</sup> Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze, Le disuguaglianze di genere in Italia e il potenziale contributo del Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza per ridurle, 2021, available at: <https://www.rqs.mef.gov.it/Documenti/VERSIONE-I/Comunicazione/Workshop-e-convegni/Seminario-Il-Piano-Nazionale-di-Ripresa-e-Resilienza-e-le-disuguaglianze-di-genere/PNRR-GM-ex-ante.pdf>

the investments for promoting digital skills and the dual system. However, although not specifically covered by Pillar 6, the measure 'Investment in university scholarships' aims at increasing the number and value of scholarships to ensure access to tertiary education for all students. This is supported by a Ministerial Decree <sup>107</sup> that stipulates that the value of the scholarship will be **20 % higher for girls** pursuing STEM degree programmes.

**In a similar way, in the Spanish RRF Plan measures for youth are not mainstreamed by gender.** The plan however contains strategies that are expected to effectively address the country's challenges in terms of gender equality, gender pay gap, and transparency between men and women in the labour market. To this end, **direct** actions targeted to women, to improve women's employment, increase female presence in traditionally male sectors such as transport and sport, and support women victims of gender-based violence <sup>108</sup> are also included.

When looking at the continental countries, in Germany and Belgium the situation is similar. **Germany** presents a strong labour market, with one of the highest employment rates among Member States (79.6 %) and well above the European average (72.7 %) (Eurostat, 2019). However, as highlighted by the European Commission <sup>109</sup>, the labour market potential of specific groups, such as women, remains underused. Enhancing women's representation in the labour market is therefore one of the main challenges of the country, which is adequately and directly addressed by modifying the fiscal system and by increasing childcare facilities <sup>110</sup>. Women's participation in the labour market is negatively influenced by a high taxation system that discourages individuals from working more hours and by an insufficient offer of all-day childcare structures <sup>111</sup>. Within the framework of pillar 6, both measures analysed here provide a high to medium impact in favour of women, facilitating their entry and permanence in employment. With regard to **Belgium**, the Belgian Institute for the Equality of Women and Men reported that 18 % of investments under the NRRP will have a positive impact on gender equality and about 52 % will have a potential positive impact on gender equality. In addition, the first sections of the Plan offer a general overview on the measures that will contribute to structurally increase gender equality, along the implementation of reforms and investments.

The **Croatian** labour market is characterised by one of the lowest shares of the working age population in employment or looking for it. Among the main reasons, besides early retirement and low skills, care responsibilities play a significant role. <sup>112</sup> Further pressure on women's conditions results from a high rate of gender inequality in the country, among the highest in Europe. However, reference to gender inequalities are only included in the measure for childhood care. This is also the case of **Poland** where a specific reform to improve the labour market situation of parents by increasing access to high-quality childcare for children up to the age of three was put in place (see more details in Annex 3).

<sup>107</sup> Ministero dell'Università e della Ricerca, Incremento del valore delle borse di studio e requisiti di eleggibilità ai benefici per il diritto allo studio di cui al d.lgs. n.68/2012 in applicazione dell'art. 12 del d.l. 6.11.2021 n.152, Ministerial Decree n. 1320 of 17 December 2021, available at: <https://www.mur.gov.it/sites/default/files/2022-01/Decreto%20Ministeriale%20n.%201320%20del%2017-12-2021.pdf>

<sup>108</sup> European Commission, 2021: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0147&from=EN>

<sup>109</sup> European Commission's Country Report Germany, 2020: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0504&from=EN>

<sup>110</sup> MEF, *Uguaglianza di genere e intergenerazionale nei Piani nazionali per la ripresa e resilienza dei Paesi europei*, 2022: <https://www.rgs.mef.gov.it/Documenti/VERSIONE-I/Pubblicazioni/Uguaglianza-di-genere-e-intergenerazionale-nei-PNRR-dei-Paesi-europei.pdf>

<sup>111</sup> European Commission, Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan of Germany, 2021: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0163R\(01\)&from=FR](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0163R(01)&from=FR)

<sup>112</sup> European Commission's Country Report Croatia, 2020: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0510&from=EN>

The **Finnish** Plan contains a section on gender equality and equal opportunities, which describes the impact of the Covid-19 crisis and in particular the challenges related to gender equality. Covid-19 related restrictions have particularly affected the service sectors dominated by women and as a result, the employment of women declined more than that of men in 2020.<sup>113</sup> The Finnish labour market is also gender-segregated and the average gross pay for men is 17.1 % higher than the average comparable pay for women.<sup>114</sup> The plan underlines that its implementation will promote gender equality and prevent gender-based discrimination.<sup>115</sup> However, the only measure considered to support youth employment does not consider gender differences.

Finally, in **Ireland**, the SOLAS Recovery Skills Response Programme explicitly foresees women as a target of the Skills to Compete Initiative.

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<sup>113</sup> Finnish Government, Sustainable Growth Programme for Finland. Recovery and Resilience Plan, available at: [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163363/VN\\_2021\\_69.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163363/VN_2021_69.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>114</sup> Finnish Government, Sustainable Growth Programme for Finland. Recovery and Resilience Plan, available at: [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163363/VN\\_2021\\_69.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163363/VN_2021_69.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>115</sup> Finnish Government, Sustainable Growth Programme for Finland. Recovery and Resilience Plan, available at: [https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163363/VN\\_2021\\_69.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/163363/VN_2021_69.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

## 4 MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Investing in children and youth is crucial for ensuring a strong, inclusive and sustainable growth. The two policy domains considered in this report, early childcare and education, and youth employment support, are particularly relevant in this respect as well as in supporting gender equality in the labour market.

It is now well acknowledged in the scientific literature that participation in early education and care is beneficial to children's cognitive, language and social development. This is especially the case for children from poor households, or migrant and ethnic backgrounds, and for children with disabilities. Similarly, effective youth employment support, facilitating the transition from school to good quality employment, is crucial. This needs to address the risks of social exclusion and the scarring effects related to long periods out of employment, education and training early in adult life, breaking the circle of disadvantage.

Investing in these two policy domains is also relevant from a gender equality perspective. Expanding the availability of accessible, affordable, good quality and inclusive ECEC is crucial to support the labour participation, employment and earnings of young mothers. Targeted employment support for young women is particularly necessary to reduce gender inequalities in the school-to-work transition and in the labour market. To these ends, it is however necessary that the specific needs of disadvantaged children, youth and young women are addressed, with targeted measures and attention to the affordability, accessibility, quality and continuity of ECEC and employment support services.

As described in Section 2, parents' exclusive childcare and youth difficulties in the school-to-work transition resulted in high youth NEET rates, and precarious employment and working conditions. These are still structural features in many EU Member States that were aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly affecting young women and mothers.

The RRF could represent a unique opportunity for Member States to expand and upgrade their offer of ECEC services and youth employment support from a gender perspective.

However, the data and information presented in the report show that **overall in the RRF and in NRRPs attention to the Pillar 6 – policies for the next generation – is still limited compared to that of the other RRF Pillars and policy domains. This is particularly the case in the two policy domains under analysis, and often attention to the gender dimension is lacking.**

The facility does not provide for earmarked funds for Pillar 6, and specific common indicators are lacking for ECEC investments and reforms. In addition, differently from the policy domains of the green and digital transitions, the Commission Guidelines for Member States<sup>116</sup> do not emphasise enough children and young people's concerns, or address them in some more general objectives<sup>117</sup>.

Concerning gender equality, the RRF regulation clearly promotes gender equality as a horizontal objective, asking Member States to demonstrate that the gender equality objectives are mainstreamed in all the pillars of their national plans. It also invites them to disaggregate the data they present by

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<sup>116</sup> European Commission (2020), Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans, Staff Working Document, Brussels, SWD(2020) 205 final and European Commission (2021), Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans, Staff Working Document, Brussels SWD (2021) 12 final.

<sup>117</sup> Berhofer M. (2021), Does the EU's recovery package actually include the next generation?, European Policy Centre Commentary, available at: <https://epc.eu/en/Publications/Does-the-EUs-recovery-package-actually-include-the-next-generation~3cc88c>



gender wherever possible, but this principle is not mentioned among the formal criteria for the Commission's assessment of national plans<sup>118</sup>.

As a consequence, although many NRRPs include some form of support for children and families, and youth employment, the NRRPs often lack precise indications on the measures and funding earmarked for supporting children and youth. Coordination with the implementation of the national Youth Guarantee and Child Guarantee often appears rather weak. In addition, both at EU and national level, attention to the specific needs of mothers and young women is still lacking.

As underlined in Section 2, the share of planned expenditure targeted to Pillar 6 are equivalent to only 11.3 % of the total NRRPs estimated expenditure. This compares to 50 % of expenditure going to the green transition and 28 % to the digital transformation. Within Pillar 6, the two considered policy areas account for only a quarter (25 %) of the pillar's expenditure with only 14 % referring to ECEC, and even less to youth employment support.

The eight country cases analysed in Section 3 differ significantly in terms of their initial conditions regarding ECEC coverage, youth employment, gender equality and policy approaches. Therefore, the measures envisaged in their NRRPs are quite different in terms of size and type of investments and reforms, as well as the attention to vulnerable and disadvantaged children and youth, and to gender equality. However, all country cases well represent the above-mentioned gaps that at risk of remaining unaddressed in the considered policy areas.

The in-depth analysis of the NRRPs of the selected countries shows that child and youth-oriented objectives are often formulated in general terms, with little attention to the specific needs of disadvantaged children and youth, and to gender differences. The general indications provided in NRRPs often do not allow a prediction of how the envisaged investments will be translated into concrete actions on the ground. In addition, the implementation of the plans in some countries may be constrained by the lack of regular funds to cover running costs of the newly created or renovated infrastructure. Small providers and local institutions have limited programming and implementation capacity, so needing support and technical assistance to develop good quality and sustainable projects' proposals in the short timeframe available. Implementation risks may also hamper the effectiveness of the RRF investments in ECEC and youth employment support particularly in some countries. This is due to (i) the lack of time to present and implement good quality projects, (ii) the lack of capacity and of technical support to providers and local authorities, and (iii) the lack of funding to cover running costs.

For example, as seen in Section 3 and 4 the **Italian, Spanish and Croatian** NRRPs address all the CRSs relevant for Pillar 6 and show the highest share of fulfilled milestones among the eight countries considered. However, the envisaged measures and allocations in the two considered policy domains are not sufficient to address the needs in terms of lack of sufficient places in ECEC facilities and services, and critical youth and women's labour market conditions. The success of the national plans also depends on the capacity to swiftly implement the measures foreseen in terms of adoption of legislation and strategic documents. Also – and more importantly – in terms of the concrete realisation of the investments on the ground, which depends crucially on the implementation capacity and the efficiency of national, regional or local administrations and stakeholders. In these countries,

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<sup>118</sup> Annex V 'Assessment Guidelines for the Facility', of the Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of 12 February 2021 establishing the RRF, and art. 19 of the RRF Regulation.

municipalities and regional administrations often do not have adequate human resources to efficiently implement the measures and investments needed in the required timeframe.

In the case of Italy, criticalities also relate to the wide territorial socio-economic inequalities and to the difficult application of national guidelines on public tendering and the incentives to promote youth and female employment<sup>119</sup>. This is due to the lack of enabling conditions for gender equality in the labour market particularly in southern regions (e.g. lack of childcare facilities, gender segregation in education and employment, low economic activity and labour demand).

In the case of Spain, the plan lacks prioritisation and there is insufficient consideration of digitisation and infrastructure in childcare facilities. In addition, the measures envisaged to reduce labour market segmentation and dualism are considered not sufficient to reduce the high share of temporary employment among young workers.

As for Croatia, the national RRF provides for the construction, extension, reconstruction and equipping of preschool institutions, primary schools and secondary schools. This is to increase the capacity and coverage of early childhood education and care and the introduction of full-time teaching in primary schools. This should also increase the inclusion of marginalised children in all levels of education, recognising the huge negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the Croatian education system. Furthermore, structural regional differences exist over financing, and therefore, affects both coverage and quality of education. With this in mind, the NRRP provides reforms and investments focused on the enhancement of highly-quality education for all educational levels, including childhood care.

The Polish Recovery and Resilience Plan has also been considered rather generic by the European Parliament as regards gender equality commitments. Although Poland underlined that the implementation of the plan will take into account equality criteria in all its phases, specific references to women and gender equality in milestone and targets are scarce. Low female participation in the labour market is a major problem, as underlined by the CSRs to Poland. The plan addresses the issue by improving the availability of early childhood services; however, the measures of the plan aimed at improving employability and responding to skills shortages do not contain any specific provision aimed at supporting women. In addition, in the Polish case the main risk is not receiving sufficient funding to implement the reforms and investments foreseen in the plan. Funding is conditional on the realisation of the reform of the judiciary system and the respect of its independence.

The other four considered countries, **Belgium, Finland, Germany and Ireland**, present better performances compared to the previously mentioned countries, particularly in relation to youth employment conditions, and lower investments in the considered policy domains. Implementation progress is however very slow, with all of them not reporting any fulfilled milestone in Pillar 6 until June 2022.

**Germany** presents a relatively good performance in the two considered policy fields. The NRRP gaps relate mainly to the little attention to existing territorial imbalances in access to childcare, and the need to reduce gender inequalities in apprenticeships and increase the number of apprentices (particularly young women) enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes.

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<sup>119</sup> Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Linee Guida per favorire le pari opportunità di genere e generazionali, nonché l'inclusione lavorativa delle persone con disabilità nei contratti pubblici finanziati con le risorse del PNRR e PNC, Gazzetta ufficiale n. 309 del 21-12-2021, Annex 1, available at: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2021/12/30/21A07771/sg>

**Belgium** shows a limited progress in implementation, although the plan appears complete and ambitious, addressing all the challenges identified in the CSRs and other structural inefficiencies and inequalities related to ECEC facilities and youth employment support.

**Ireland** has made substantial progress with early childhood education and care. This is mainly based on private and third-sector provision, and some progress in active integration support and upskilling services for vulnerable workers and skills development linked to the digital and green transition. The plan itself is, however, rather generic in the description of the interventions. It often does not explain how Ireland intends to target specific categories of workers such as young people and women, given that there is no specific provision targeted at them. The only explicit reference regards the Skills to Compete Initiative, which aims at increasing the participation rate of low-skilled young women to the programme.

In **Finland**, although youth labour market conditions, ECEC services and gender gaps are better than the EU average. However, the complex benefits system and the combination of several types of allowances is expected to reduce incentives to take up work and hinder the labour participation of women with care responsibilities, reducing enrolment into formal childcare. As shown in Section 2, compared to other Nordic countries Finland incentivises parental care rather than formal childcare for children under 3 years old. The Finnish Plan does not address these issues, nor does it include specific measures to increase women's participation in the labour market and reduce the gender employment gap. Measures relevant for Pillar 6 focus mainly on general, higher and vocational education, and – to a lesser extent – on youth employment support.

To conclude, the data and information presented above show that overall in the RRF attention to the two policy domains under analysis is still limited compared to that of the other RRF Pillars and policy domains. Gaps in relation to the specific needs of young women and mothers are relevant, as are implementation risks. It is therefore necessary to **address these gaps and risks at EU and national level**.

**At EU level**, EU institutions could better support and monitor the implementation of the measures envisaged in the national plans for the two considered policy fields through the following:

- Greater attention is needed to the issues related to childhood care and youth employment support within the next CSRs, underlying the importance of addressing specific gender-related challenges or targeting young women among the main beneficiaries in the measures under Pillar 6.
- A stronger promotion is needed of the complementarity of the NRRPs with other European and national initiatives and measures supporting youth employment (including the Youth Guarantee Programme) and early child education and care (including the Child Guarantee and national plans).
- A stronger and more accurate monitoring and evaluation is needed.
  - ✓ The measures flagged as gender equality in Pillar 6 should pay attention to the potential impact on young children, girls and boys. This will require a systematic gender impact assessment across countries.
  - ✓ The respect of the principles of gender equality and territorial and social cohesion should ensure that the specific needs of vulnerable children and youth, and disadvantaged territories (across and within Member States and regions) are accounted for. This requires the definition of territorial targets and milestones, and specific indicators for ECEC and youth employment

support provisions (for example, disaggregating the common indicators 10 and 13 by International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels, besides age and gender).

- ✓ Support to Member States should include the collection of data and indicators disaggregated by sex for the two policy fields of interest.
- ✓ Mutual learning initiatives should be supported, and the exchange of experience and good practices on the implementation of ECEC and youth employment support from a gender perspective.

**Member States should pay greater attention to the implementation of the measures** envisaged in national plans for ECEC and youth employment from a gender equality perspective, ensuring:

- that the specific needs of young women (with or without small children) are addressed;
- the sustainability of the NRRP investments over time, through fiscal rules that support the coverage of the costs for running ECEC facilities and services, and youth employment support measures and services, financed through the RRF;
- the provision of technical assistance to small local authorities and operators (in many cases in charge of social infrastructures for childhood care) in disadvantaged territories, also through mutual learning programmes;
- the collection of monitoring data disaggregated by gender whenever feasible and the implementation of thematic evaluations on the effects of measures implemented to support ECEC and youth employment from a gender perspective.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1 – Gendered policy regimes and the selected Member States

As indicated in the introductory chapter of this briefing report, the selection of the eight country cases is based on a classification of EU Member States according to their **gender policy regimes**<sup>120</sup>. Central to the gendered approach is the analysis of the role of women and men in the provision of care within the family and in the labour market, and of how social arrangements and welfare systems affect these roles. Therefore, the classification of gender policy regimes considers family, fiscal and social policies supporting women's employment and the work–life balance. It covers the availability of social care services and the de-familialisation in the provision of care, policy support for dual-earner, dual-carer families and changes in gender roles. Based on this approach, five gender policy regimes can be outlined, as illustrated in Box 1 below.

#### Box A 1: Gender revised typology of welfare models

**Universalistic welfare regimes of Nordic countries** are based on individual rights to equal opportunities. Social protection policies are targeted on individual needs rather than family entitlements. Citizenship rights available to all and extensive public care services support women's participation in the labour market according to the dual-earner households model, and individual fragilities are addressed through generous income safety nets. In these countries the dual-breadwinner model is predominant, with women's full-time paid or long part-time work supported by the state through public care services. Care years are considered for pension entitlements in both public and compulsory private schemes, whatever the career status. Minimum pensions are available to those who do not have access to other types of pension's benefits and extensive and generous care leave is available for both parents, including measures to encourage fathers' leave-taking. The main shortcoming of these regimes is occupational segregation, with women largely employed in the public sector. These countries present lower gender gaps and greater equality in both the labour market and within households compared to other EU countries, even if recent debate in these countries underlines the persistence of an unequal division of unpaid work.

**Liberal universalistic welfare regimes**, typical of the Anglo-Saxon countries (Ireland and the UK), are considered residual welfare regimes, providing minimal social benefits and subsidising private welfare schemes and social services. In these countries, social benefits are usually means-tested and poverty-related, and social services are largely market-based and privately provided. These regimes ignore the women's family role except in the case of extreme poverty and offer meagre social and care services endowments. A large proportion of women work, but receive very little protection from the state. As for single mothers, liberal welfare regimes support them in gaining access to the labour market.

**Male breadwinner state-centred regimes** include continental countries, where women are usually treated on the basis of their family role and are protected in the labour market when they are the family breadwinner (as in the case of lone mothers). These welfare states offer a contradictory set of policies and provisions in relation to women and the family<sup>121</sup>. On the one hand, they offer some of the best provisions for women (e.g. generous and

<sup>120</sup> Lewis J. (1993), *Women and Social Policies in Europe*, Aldershot; Lewis J. (ed.) (1997), *Lone Mothers in European Welfare Regimes, Shifting Policy Logics*, London; Trifiletti R. (1999), *Southern European Welfare Regimes and the Worsening Position of Women*, *Journal of European Social Policy*, Vol. 9, No 1, p. 49–64, London. Bergqvist C. (2016), *The Welfare State and Gender Equality*, in Jon Pierre (ed.), *The Oxford Book of Swedish Politics*, Oxford University Press 2016. Ferrera (1996); Neyer (2021).

<sup>121</sup> Bamba C. *Defamilialisation and welfare state regimes: a cluster analysis*. *Intl J Soc Welfare* 2007;16:326–38; Esping-Andersen G. *Social foundations of post-industrial economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. Korpi W, Palme K. *Faces of inequality: gender, class, and patterns of inequality in different types of welfare states*. *Soc Polit* 2000, Vol. 7, pp.127–91; . Siaroff A. *Work, welfare and gender equality: a new typology*. In: Sainsbury D, ed. *Gendering welfare states*. London: Sage, 1994. 59. Bamba C. *The worlds of welfare: Illusory and*

extensive maternity leave) whereas on the other hand, they have lower levels of labour market participation by women compared to the previous regimes. In these regimes women mostly work part-time. This model is characterised by a generous welfare state with a strong emphasis on insurance-based benefits. Access to social protection largely depends on the length of employment careers, and employment support and public social assistance is rather generous. Women's unpaid work in households provides the main care services, although in recent years these countries register a growing provision of care services by public, private or third-sector operators.

**Male breadwinner family-centred regimes** include Mediterranean countries (with the exception of Portugal<sup>122</sup>). In these countries, the family still plays an important role as a welfare pillar and families are expected to support each other across a broad range of relationships. People in need are expected to turn first to their family for support, so that the lack of, or ruptures in, family relations significantly increases the risk of economic and social exclusion. The family is the main provider of income support and services in almost all fields, including child and elderly care, housing and social protection. Women are less supported in the labour market compared to the previous regimes due to the lack of individualised income support and public care services. Only when working full-time do they have access to full benefits and social care services, which are often based on their employment status. No specific social protection is available for single parents, while socio-economic conditions in old age largely depend on past family roles and on access to derived pension benefits.

**Eastern European countries** have gone through major processes of reform and redesign of their welfare regimes since transition from the previous communist system. This is based on the dual-earner household model with high female full-time employment rates, with different approaches ranging from the welfare regimes of western continental countries to the Anglo-Saxon regime. The welfare regimes of eastern European countries are therefore rather diverse. Some authors (Manabu, 2015) group them into two sub-clusters with an eastern Europe welfare model including Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria and Romania. The central Europe welfare model includes the Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Hungary. Other authors (Toots and Bachmann, 2010) distinguish Baltic countries from Balkan ones.

These gender regimes have changed since the second half of the twentieth century, when European countries gradually moved away from the 'pure' male breadwinner model (Lewis, 2001; Daly, 2011)<sup>123</sup> Women's engagement in paid work has increased under the pressure of social and economic trends and challenges. These include the educational upgrading of women, the tertiarisation of economies, increasing flexibility of working patterns and employment arrangements, the changing structure of families and changing gender roles. EU-level legislation and programmes<sup>124</sup> have also supported a movement of national gender regimes towards a greater attention to gender equality within households and in the labour market and society. Family policies are shifting away from providing cash benefits and income supplements, incentivising stay-at-home women towards facilitating work-family reconciliation and providing care services. These trends are reflected in the upward trend of the Gender Equality Index (GEI) calculated every year by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for European Member States<sup>125</sup>.

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gender blind? Soc Policy Society 2004;3:201–12. 60. Sainsbury D. Gendering welfare states. London: Sage, 1994. 61. Sainsbury D. Gender, policy regimes and politics. In: Sainsbury D, ed. Gender and welfare state regimes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999

<sup>122</sup> Portugal does not fully belong to the Mediterranean model of a welfare state, due to its high level of women's inclusion in the labour market.

<sup>123</sup> Lewis J. (2001), The Decline of the Male Breadwinner Model: Implications for Work and Care, Social Politics Summer 2001, Oxford University Press; Daly M. (2011), Neyer G. (2021), Welfare state regimes, family policies, and family behaviour, in Schneider N.F and M. Kreyenfeld (eds.), [Research Handbook on the Sociology of the Family](#)

<sup>124</sup> Examples are the Directives on Part time Work, Working Time Parental Leave and Work-Life Balance, as well as the EU Strategies for gender equality and programmes promoted by the EU over the years.

<sup>125</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/about>



These developments have not been uniform across Europe (see, e.g. Daly and Ferragina 2018; Ferrarini 2006; Gauthier 2002; Gornick and Meyers 2003; Morgan 2012) and the extent to which the dual earners model has been implemented is still very different across EU countries. National differences are frequently explained by prevailing social norms. Other differences relate to the institutional setting of labour markets, and welfare and family policies, their capacity to face the consequences of the economic and pandemic crises, and to adapt to changing social and economic conditions. For example, Pascall and Lewis (2004)<sup>126</sup> underline the challenges to the male breadwinner model at the basis of many western European welfare models, as well as the less widely discussed challenges to the dual-earner households' model of eastern European countries since the collapse of communism.

In *Western Europe*, until recently the transition of women towards paid work has not been accompanied by social and fiscal support and adequate childcare services, therefore women still perform the bulk of unpaid work within families. In recent years there has been, in all EU countries, a greater attention to women's labour market participation as a way to face the ageing challenge. However, the focus on fiscal consolidation measures has penalised women both in paid and unpaid work. An example in this respect is the recent trend in pension reforms that are penalising women with care responsibilities<sup>127</sup>.

In *eastern European countries* the gender regimes of the communist era were characterised by women's high labour market participation and low gender pay gaps, but also extreme domestic inequality (Gershuny, 2000). After transition, increasing economic insecurity and unemployment, together with reductions in the provision of public services, increased women's dependence on men's incomes.

The eight countries considered in the analysis well represent the different gender regimes present in the EU27 and their dynamics over time. This is shown by the evolution of the EIGE GEI overall and in the six gender equality dimensions that compose the overall index, in Table A1.

Table A 1: Evolution of the Gender Equality Index overall and by policy domain in 2005, 2015 and 2020 in the selected EU countries and the EU average

		EU*	Belgium	Croatia	Finland	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Poland	Spain
<b>Gender Equality Index</b>	2005	62.0	66.0	50.3	72.0	60.0	61.9	49.2	52.4	62.2
	2015	66.2	70.5	53.1	73.0	65.5	69.5	62.1	56.8	68.3
	2020	68.6	74.2	60.7	75.4	68.7	73.3	65.0	57.7	74.6
<b>Work</b>	2005	70.0	71.0	67.5	74.2	68.1	71.1	60.8	65.2	68.1
	2015	71.5	73.8	69.4	74.7	71.4	73.9	62.4	66.8	72.4
	2020	71.7	75.5	69.7	75.4	72.9	76.5	63.2	67.3	73.6
<b>Money</b>	2005	73.0	81.3	68.6	80.1	83.3	79.5	76.2	61.4	73.6
	2015	79.6	87.5	69.9	86.4	84.2	84.7	78.6	73.3	75.9
	2020	82.6	89.8	74.1	87.5	83.5	87.5	80.5	78.1	78.7

<sup>126</sup> G. Pascall and J. Lewis (2004), *Emerging Gender Regimes and Policies for Gender Equality in a Wider Europe*, Jnl Soc. Pol., 33, 3, 373–394 C. 2004 Cambridge University Press [http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/797/1/Emerging\\_gender\\_regimes.pdf](http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/797/1/Emerging_gender_regimes.pdf).

<sup>127</sup> M. Corsi, C. Crepaldi and M. Samek Lodovici (2011), The socio-economic impact of pension systems on the respective situations of women and men and the effects of recent trends in pension reforms, November 2011, [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/equal\\_economic\\_independence/pensions\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/equal_economic_independence/pensions_report_en.pdf).

		EU*	Belgium	Croatia	Finland	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Poland	Spain
<b>Knowledge</b>	2005	60.8	68.1	43.6	56.6	55.3	60.8	54.1	56.7	59.3
	2015	63.4	71.1	49.8	61.3	52.9	66.4	61.4	56.0	65.3
	2020	62.5	70.1	53.4	61.5	54.7	68.1	59.5	57.5	68.3
<b>Time</b>	2005	66.7	74.3	48.3	81.6	66.6	74.2	60.1	54.6	58.0
	2015	75.7	65.3	51.0	77.4	65.0	74.2	59.3	52.5	64.0
	2020	64.9	65.3	51.0	77.4	65.0	74.2	59.3	52.5	64.0
<b>Power</b>	2005	38.9	39.8	27.4	68.4	34.0	32.1	16.1	23.6	45.9
	2015	48.5	53.4	28.5	65.3	53.0	48.6	45.3	35.1	57.0
	2020	57.2	67.0	49.7	74.3	64.8	61.7	56.9	34.4	80.6
<b>Health</b>	2005	85.9	86.3	81.4	89.2	86.6	90.4	85.8	80.6	88.1
	2015	87.4	86.3	83.3	89.7	90.5	90.6	86.3	82.2	89.6
	2020	88.7	88.5	85.1	92.6	90.0	95.0	89.0	83.6	91.7

Source: ELGE

Note: EU average is at EU28 for years 2005 and 2015, at EU27 for 2020.

The table shows the following by country.

- Finland**, representative of the universalistic welfare regimes of Nordic countries, presents the highest GEI among the eight selected countries, and a value higher than the EU average in the entire considered period. In 2020, GEI reaches 75.4 compared to 68.6 for the EU27 average. In addition to the power dimension, GEI is particularly high compared to the EU average and the other considered countries in relation to the work, money and time dimensions. This reflects the importance of policies supporting women's employment and the work-life balance.
- Ireland**, representative of the liberal universalistic welfare regimes, shows a strong increase in the GEI, going from 61.9 in 2005 (similar to the EU average) to 73.3 in 2020, almost 5 points higher than the EU average. Ireland registers a high GEI index for the work dimension, which reaches the highest value in 2020 among the considered countries. This is also the case in the dimensions of money and time, with a strong upward trend of the Gender Equality Index in the last period.
- Germany** and **Belgium** are representative of the male breadwinner state-centred regimes of continental western European countries. This large group of countries is rather diverse in the extent to which welfare systems support gender equality in the labour market and society. The two selected countries represent this diversity well. Both countries show a strong improvement in their overall GEI since 2005, although **Belgium** registers a much higher GEI than Germany for the entire considered period. The 2020 GEI reaches 74.2 in Belgium and 68.7 in Germany. Belgium registers higher gender equality scores than Germany in the domains of work, money and knowledge, thanks to a policy approach more oriented towards gender equality in the labour market, access to social protection and education. Germany shows a stronger GEI increase than Belgium in the domains of power and a higher GEI in the domain of health. Both countries show a decline in the domain of time compared to 2005.
- Italy** and **Spain** are representative of a different form of the male breadwinner family-centred regimes. The two selected countries also present different trends in policy approaches and performance in terms of gender equality, although both show the highest increases in the GEI

between 2005 and 2015 among the eight countries considered in this report. **Spain** registers a much stronger commitment to women's empowerment in the labour market and society compared to **Italy** in the considered period, with the 2020 GEI reaching 74.6 (6 points higher than the EU average) and only 65.0 in Italy (3.6 points below the EU average). In Spain, all policy domains show higher gender equality scores compared to Italy except for money, indicative of a worse financial and economic situation for women compared to Italy, also due to higher gender pay gaps for employed women.

- **Croatia** and **Poland**, representative of eastern EU countries, have gone through major processes of reform and redesign of their welfare regimes since joining the EU. Both countries show a GEI much lower than the EU average, although **Croatia** is progressing much more rapidly than **Poland**. In 2020 the GEI of the two countries was 60.7 for Croatia and 57.7 for Poland. Croatia shows higher gender equality indexes than Poland in the work, power and health domains.

#### Box A 2: The Gender Equality Index and its components

The Gender Equality Index is a composite indicator developed by EIGE. It synthesises several dimensions into one indicator that measures how far or how close the EU and each Member State are to achieving gender equality. The index ranges from 1, meaning total inequality, to 100, meaning full equality. Results are also provided for every sub-dimension of the index – work, money, knowledge, time, power and health.

The GEI and its sub-dimensions are obtained by computing indicators referring to the following gender equality dimensions:

- **Work**: based on indicators of gender differences in labour market participation (e.g. full-time equivalent employment, duration of working life), gender segregation and quality of work (e.g. sectoral segregation, flexibility of working time, health and safety, training at work);
- **Money**: indicators of gender differences in financial resources (e.g. earnings and income), economic situation (e.g. poverty and income distribution);
- **Knowledge**: indicators of gender differences in educational attainment and segregation – tertiary education and segregation, lifelong learning;
- **Time**: indicators of gender differences in time spent in care activities (childcare activities and domestic activities), social activities (sport, culture and leisure activities, volunteering and charitable activities);
- **Power**: indicators of gender differences in political representation (ministerial representation, parliamentary representation, regional assembly representation), social representation, economic representation (members of boards, members of central banks);
- **Health**: indicators of gender differences in health conditions (self-perceived health, life expectancy, healthy life years), access to health care (unmet medical needs, unmet dental needs).

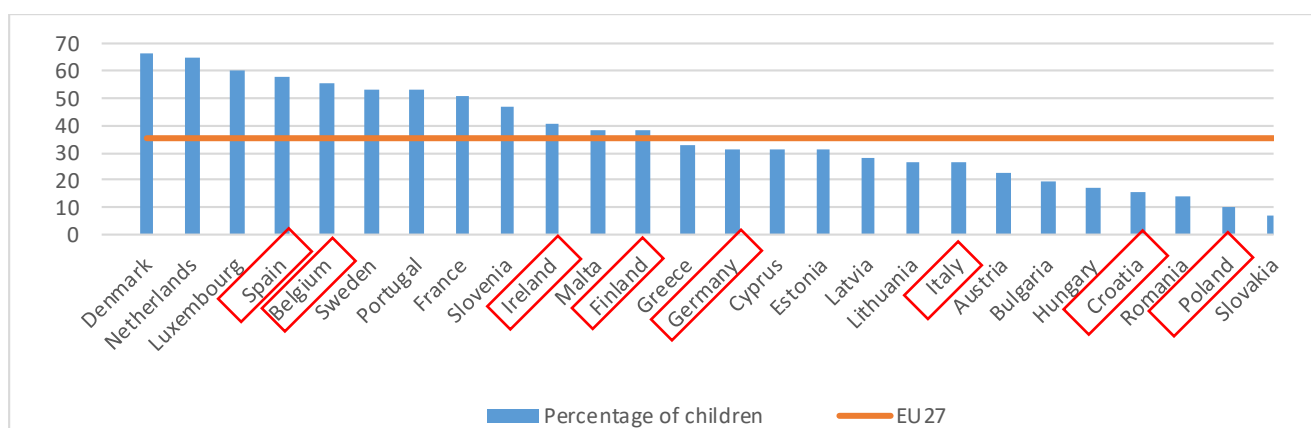
Source: EIGE (2013), Gender Equality Index report.

## Annex 2 – Additional information and data of baseline conditions, and Pillar 6 policy domains

### Early childhood education and care

Eurostat data reported in Figure 1 show the **share of children under three years of age enrolled in formal care for at least one hour per week**. This is higher than the Barcelona target of 33 % of children below the age of 3, in only 12 EU Member States. Enrolment rates range from 66 % in Denmark to only 6.6 % in Slovakia. Among the countries considered in this briefing, **Spain** and **Belgium** show coverage rates above 50 %, followed by **Ireland** and **Finland**, while **Croatia** and **Poland** show much lower coverage rates, at 15.7 % and 10.2 % respectively.

Figure A 1: Share of children under 3 years in formal childcare (at least 1 hour a week – 2019) by country



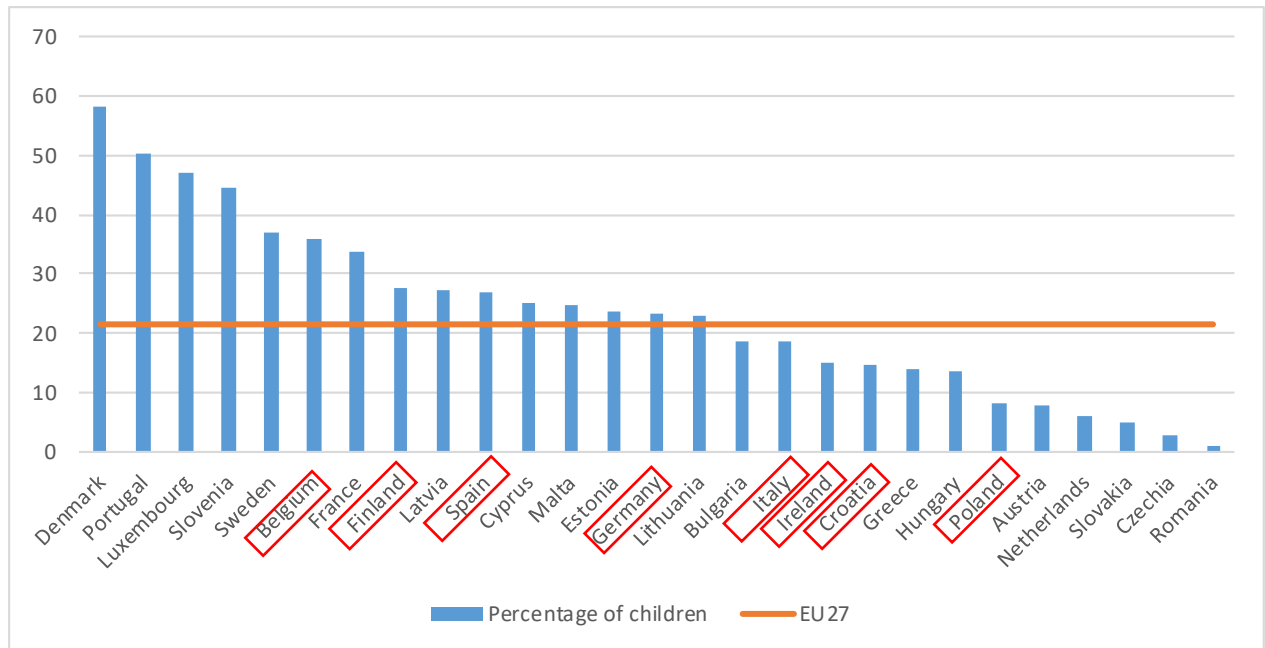
Source: Eurostat (2019)

Eurostat <sup>128</sup> data for 2019 also show that only a little more than one-fifth of children under 3 years (21.5 %) were **in formal care for more than 30 hours per week (Figure 2)**. This proportion ranged from below 3 % in Romania and the Czech Republic to above 50 % in Portugal and Denmark. The eight country cases considered in Section 3 present values that go from 36 % in Belgium to 8.3 % in Poland (see Figure 2 below).

The Covid-19 pandemic reduced the share of children receiving formal care in 2020 to 32.3 %, while those cared for exclusively by their parents increased to 53.4 %.

<sup>128</sup> Eurostat (2021), *How do parents organise childcare in the EU?* Products Eurostat News – Eurostat March 2021 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210330-1>

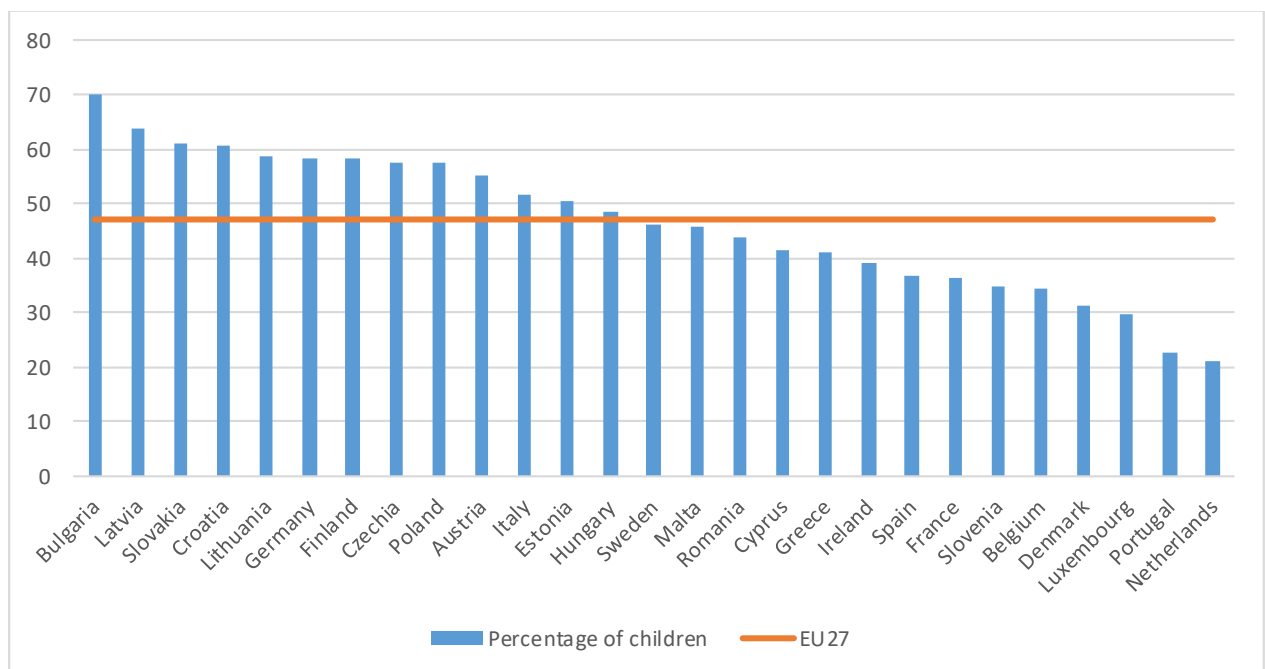
Figure A 2: Share of children under 3 years in formal childcare (more than 30 hours a week – 2019) by country



Source: Eurostat (2019)

The share of children under three years of age **cared for only by their parents** ranged from only 21.2 % in the Netherlands to 69.9% in Bulgaria. Among the eight country cases analysed in depth in Section 3, this share ranged from 60.8% in Croatia to 34.5 % in Belgium (see Figure 3).

Figure A 3: Share of children under 3 years old cared for only by their parents (2019)

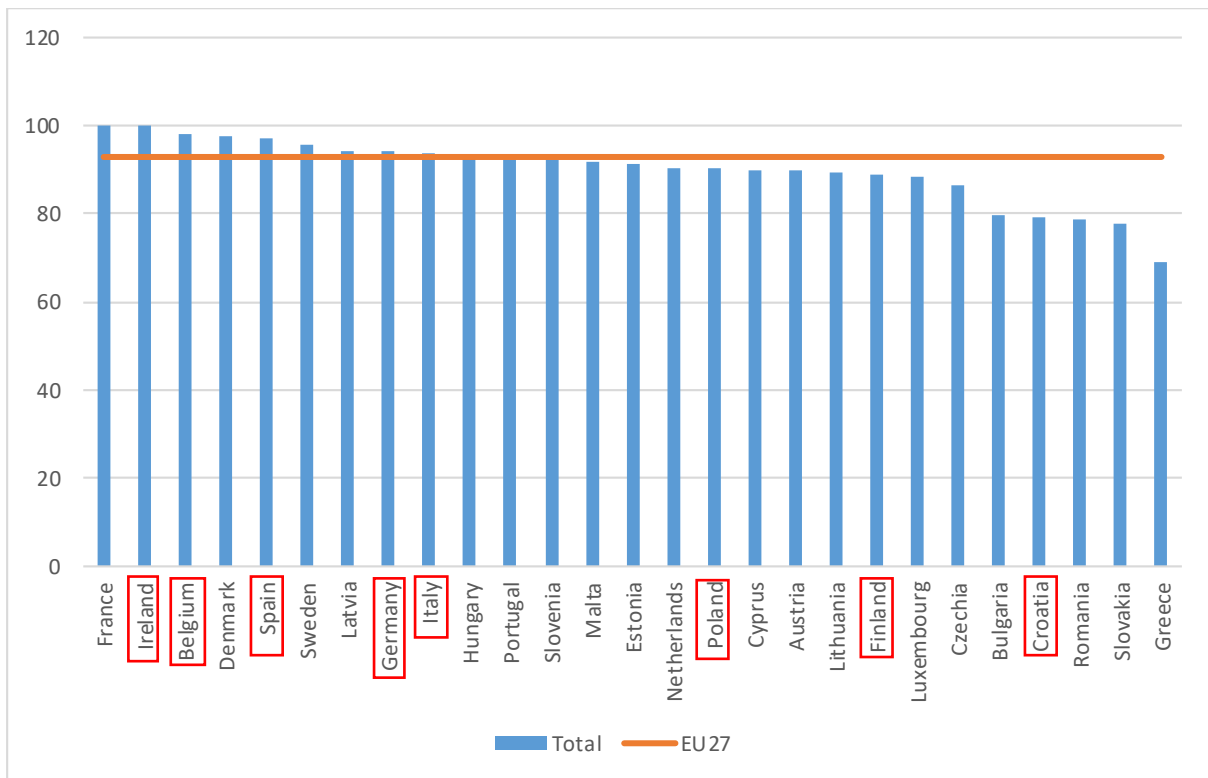


Source: Eurostat (2019)

Figure 4 shows that the **share of children over three years old in formal ECEC** is much higher in all EU Member States, being often compulsory and directed at preparation for primary education. Seventeen Member States are above the Barcelona target of 90 % of children between 3 and

mandatory school age cared for in formal ECEC, with only one country showing a coverage rate below 70 % (Greece with 68.8 %).

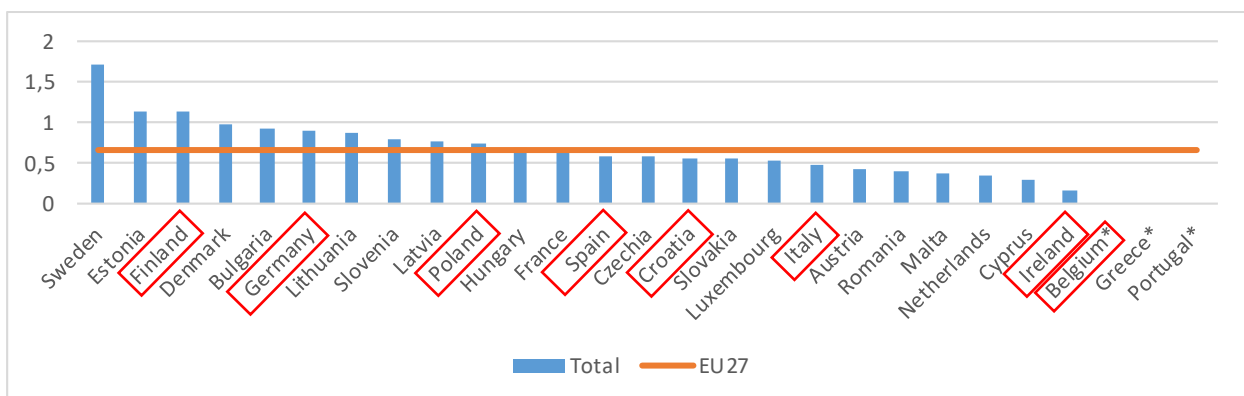
Figure A 4: Participation in early education of children over 3 years (percentage) – 2019



Source: Eurostat (2019)

**Public expenditure in ECEC as a share of GDP** is an indicator of public investments in ECEC facilities, services and cost abatements. As shown in Figure 5, there are wide variations across EU Member States, reflecting the prevalent gendered welfare model. Public expenditure goes from 1.7 % in Sweden to only 0.17 % in Ireland. The countries considered in this briefing represent the national distribution well, with Finland registering the highest share (1.1 %) and Ireland the lowest (0.17 %), where childcare services are largely provided by private operators.

Figure A 5: Public expenditure in early childhood education as a share of GDP (2019)



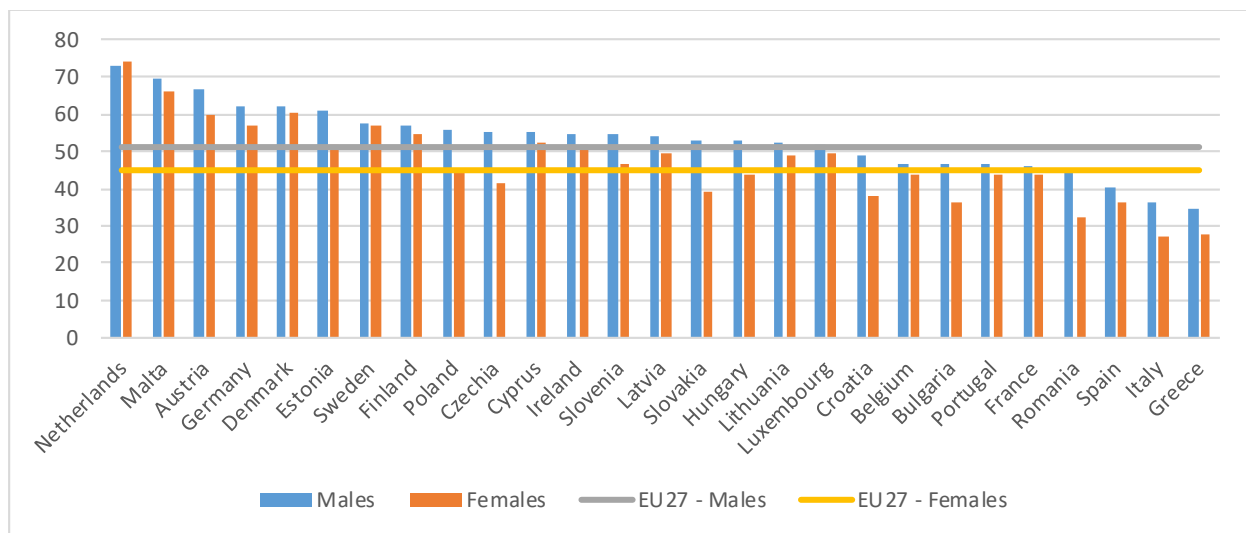
Source: Eurostat (2019)

Note: No data available for Belgium, Greece and Portugal. For Latvia and Slovakia, data refers to 2018.

## Youth employment

In many EU Member States young workers are more likely than adults to be out of employment or to be employed with temporary and/or part-time contracts with little or no access to employment and social protection measures. Figure 6 below shows that in 2019, **youth employment rates** were highest in continental and Nordic countries, and lowest in some southern European countries (Italy, Greece and Spain). Young workers were particularly hit by firms' closures related to the pandemic and less covered by income support measures, while for many young people entering the labour market Covid-19 delayed the start of their working life. In 2020 the employment rate for people aged 15–29 fell by 2.2 percentage points (pp) compared to a decline of 1.1 pp for the overall 15–64 age group.

Figure A 6: Youth Employment rate 15–29 (2019)

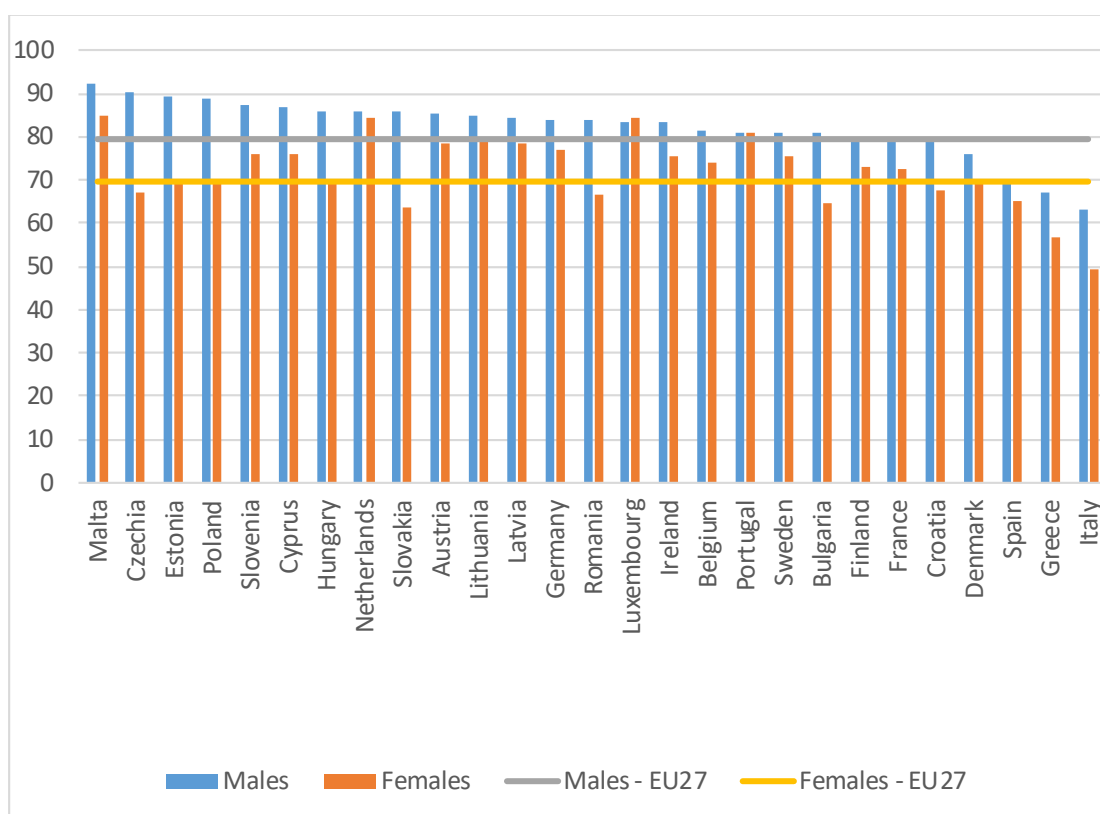


Source: Eurostat (2019)

With the exception of the Netherlands, in all Member States the employment rates of **young women** is lower compared to young men. There is a wide variation though, as the gender gap goes from 14.1 pp in Slovakia to 0.7 pp in Sweden. Among the eight country cases considered in Section 3, the gender gap goes from 11.1 pp in Croatia, followed by Poland with 11 pp and Italy with 8.9 pp, to Belgium with 1.8 pp and Finland with 2.6 pp.

The gender gap in employment rates increases with age. Among **young people aged 25–29** it reached 10 pp on average in the EU in 2019 (compared to 6.2 pp for the age group 15–24), with higher gender gaps in almost all countries (with the exception of Luxembourg and Portugal). Figure 7 shows that for this age group, the gender gap in the considered countries ranges from 19.1 pp in Poland to 4.4 pp in Spain.

Figure A 7: Employment rate age 25–29 (2019)



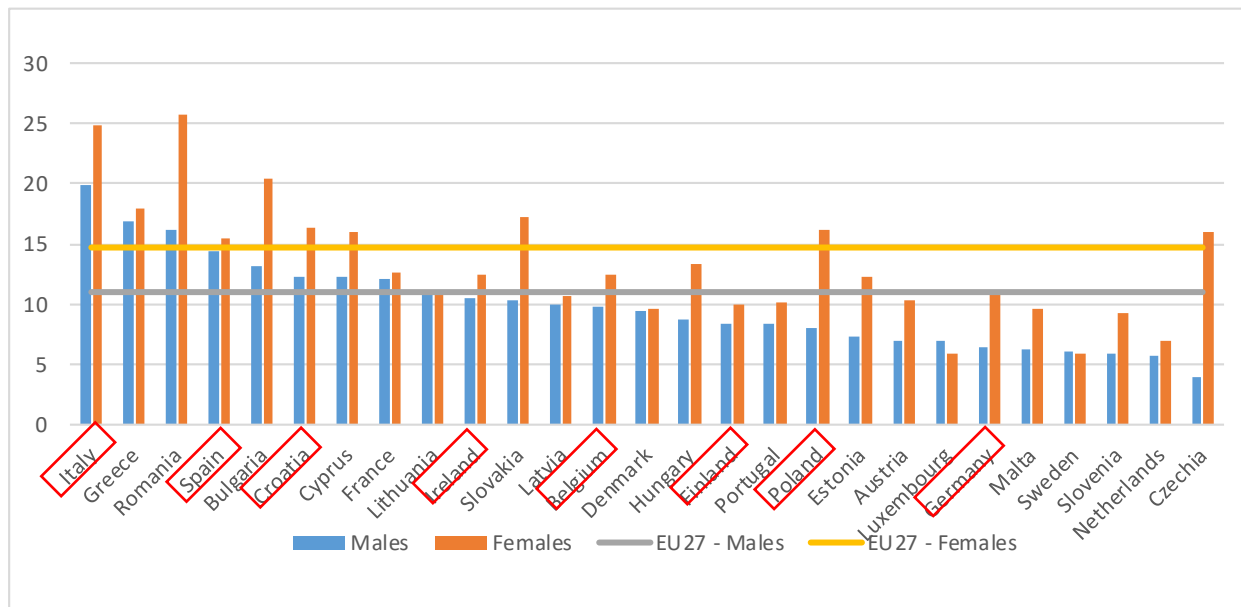
Source: Eurostat (2019)

An indicator of the difficult youth labour market conditions other than the youth employment rate is the **NEET rate** (measuring the share of young people not in employment, education or training). NEET rates are highest in some southern (especially Italy, Greece and Spain) and eastern (especially Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia) EU Member States, as illustrated in Figure 8 below.

In almost all the EU27 Member States **young women** are more likely to present higher NEET rates than their male counterparts, with the gender gap particularly high in some eastern European countries (i.e. the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Poland), and in Italy and Germany. Gender gaps in NEET rates increase drastically for those in their late 20s, especially in the case of young women with family responsibilities. In 2019, the gender gap in NEET rates at EU level for young people aged 15–24 was only 0.6 pp, but it increased to 9.4 pp when considering the age group 25–29 years.



Figure A 8: Youth NEET rate 15–29 (2019)



Source: Eurostat (2019)

Low employment rates and high NEET rates among young women are related to a number of factors including gender segregation in education and employment. Other factors are lack of affordable and accessible childcare services allowing young mothers to participate in the labour market or to maintain their job, social conventions or pressures on women's roles in the family. These factors affect not only young women's labour participation, but also the employers' behaviour, when they tend to prefer to hire young men over young women. The Covid pandemic and the associated lockdowns worsened this situation.

### Scoreboard data on Pillar 6: measures, funding and implementation

The RRS data on the 25 national RRP adopted by the Council as of 25 November 2022<sup>129</sup> show that planned expenditure targeted to Pillar 6 amounts to EUR 49 billion. This is equivalent to only 11.3 % of the total NRRPs estimated expenditure, compared to 50 % of expenditure going to the green transition and 28 % to the digital transformation<sup>130</sup>.

The **two policy areas considered in this briefing account for only a quarter (25 % overall) of the pillar's expenditure**, although they are relevant from a gender equality perspective. The majority of the pillar's expenditure (75 %) is meant to support general, vocational and higher education. However, only 14 % (equivalent to approximately EUR 6.9 billion) refers to early childhood education and care, and even less (11 %, approximately EUR 5.4 billion) to youth employment support.

The RRS also reports the **share of measures supporting young generations and gender equality across the 25 Member States** for which an RRP has been endorsed by the Commission and the Council

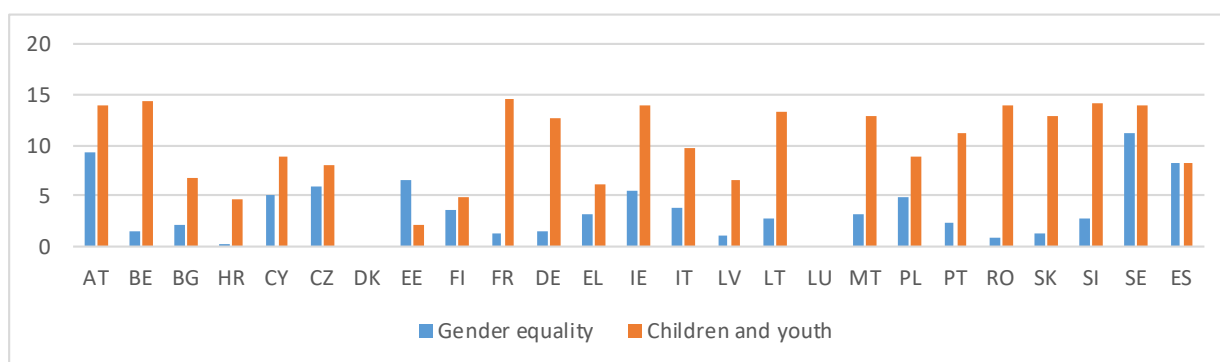
<sup>129</sup> Data refer to the 25 NRRPs endorsed until June 2022 by the European Commission and the Council. The NRRPs not yet adopted were those of Hungary and the Netherlands

<sup>130</sup> Data provided in the Commission's report on the implementation of the RRF COM(2022)383 final. As indicated in the RRF Regulation, each measure contributes to two of the six policy pillars. The total amount of RRF contribution to Pillar 6 considering both contribution towards the first and the second pillar is 11.29 %, of which 7.2 % is for the first pillar and 4.1 % is for the second pillar.

as of 25 November 2022 (see Figure 9). This share is based on the Commission assessment and flagging, in consultation with Member States, of NRRPs measures considered to have a focus on children and youth and/or on gender equality.

Although these data have to be considered only as illustrative<sup>131</sup>, according to the Commission’s assessment France (14.6 %) and Belgium (14.3 %) present the highest share of RRP **measures targeted to children and youth**. The lowest share is to be found in Denmark (no measures, as this country presents already high investments in ECEC and high youth employment rates), Estonia (2.2 %), Croatia (4.6 %) and Finland (4.9 %). The eight country cases considered in this briefing represent this distribution well, with Belgium (14.3 %) and Germany (12.7 %) among the countries with the highest shares at one end, and Croatia and Finland with the lowest at the other. However, this distribution does not appear to take into account the country-specific ranking in the use of formal childcare and public spending.

Figure A 9: Share of RRP measures with a focus on gender equality, and children and youth



Source: European Commission’s Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard

Concerning **gender equality**, according to the Commission’s assessment, only 129 measures in the 25 plans adopted as of 30 June 2022 have a focus on gender equality. The highest shares of gender equality measures are to be found in the Swedish (11.1 %) and Austrian plans (9.3 %), while the lowest are in the plans of Luxembourg, Denmark (both with no measures), and Croatia (0.3 %).

Turning to the **RRPs implementation**, the RRS data for milestones and targets<sup>132</sup> for Pillar 6 show that out of the overall 583 milestones and targets, 362 refer to investments and 221 to reforms. Out of these, 31 were fulfilled by 8 November 2022 with an expenditure of about EUR 3.64 billion, equivalent to around 7 % of the total budget for this pillar<sup>133</sup> – a fulfilment rate in line with other pillars, which go from 3 % for Pillar 2, to 4 % for Pillars 1, 4 and 5, and 5 % for Pillar 3.

The Commission’s Scoreboard indicates fulfilment level for Pillar 6 disaggregated by country. At the moment, only eight countries have already fulfilled some of the milestones and targets related to Pillar

<sup>131</sup> As underlined in the scoreboard: *Figures are illustrative, meant to be used for qualitative analysis, and do not constitute a comparative assessment of Member States’ RRP. The number and structure of the measures in each national plan vary greatly, as well as the approach to reflect commitments to gender equality or contributions to children and the youth.* For a more detailed analysis, please refer to the Staff Working Documents adopted by the European Commission for each endorsed plan.

<sup>132</sup> The RRF is performance-based, and funds are disbursed when Member States have satisfactorily fulfilled key steps in the implementation of the reforms and investments included in the NRRPs. These key implementation steps are referred to as milestones and targets, which represent respectively qualitative and quantitative implementation steps.

<sup>133</sup> Data available on the European Commission’s Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard: [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/milestones\\_and\\_targets.html?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/milestones_and_targets.html?lang=en)

6: France 32 %, Spain 21 %, Latvia 13 %, Italy 16 %, Croatia 8 %, Portugal 8 %, Slovakia 7 % and Romania 3 %.

The RRS does not provide data disaggregated by type of policy, therefore it is not possible to assess the milestones and targets associated with the two policy domains considered in this briefing. The Commission Review report on the implementation of the RRF <sup>134</sup> underlines that the fulfilled milestones and targets are associated with active labour market policies, support to digital transformation in education and training, hiring subsidies for apprenticeships, and support for youth higher education.

The RRS also includes a set of **common indicators** related to the objectives of the RRF <sup>135</sup>. Only one of the three common indicators identified by the Commission for this pillar provides detailed information for the policy fields considered in this briefing.

The two common indicators on education and training, indicators 10 and 13, **do not allow any specific information on ECEC to be derived. Indicator 10** measures the number of participants in education or training (ISCED 0–6, and adult education and training) due to support received through RRF measures. This is disaggregated by gender but not by level of education, therefore it is not possible to assess the number of participants in ECEC. **Indicator 13**, measuring classroom capacity of new or modernised childcare and education facilities (ISCED 0–6) <sup>136</sup> due for support by measures under the facility, also does not allow to disaggregate ECEC from other education facilities.

The common indicators on the employment outcomes of RRF support provide **more detailed information for the policy dimension related to youth employment**. In particular, **Indicator 14** <sup>137</sup>, measuring the number of young people (aged 15–29) receiving monetary and in-kind support (such as education, training and employment support) through the RRF, is useful to assess the results of interventions in support to youth employment.

Scoreboard data for Indicator 14 show that the **total number of young people receiving monitoring and in-kind support** at the EU27 level is a little above EUR 2 million (EUR 2 011 164). There is a slightly higher share for young women (51 % compared to 49 % for young men). As shown in Figure 10, among the nine Member States that have already provided the indicator, France shows the highest coverage rate (i.e. share of population aged 15–29 receiving support under the RRF) at 13.9 %, followed by Greece (9.5 %), and at distance by Belgium (3.8 %) and Spain (2.4 %).

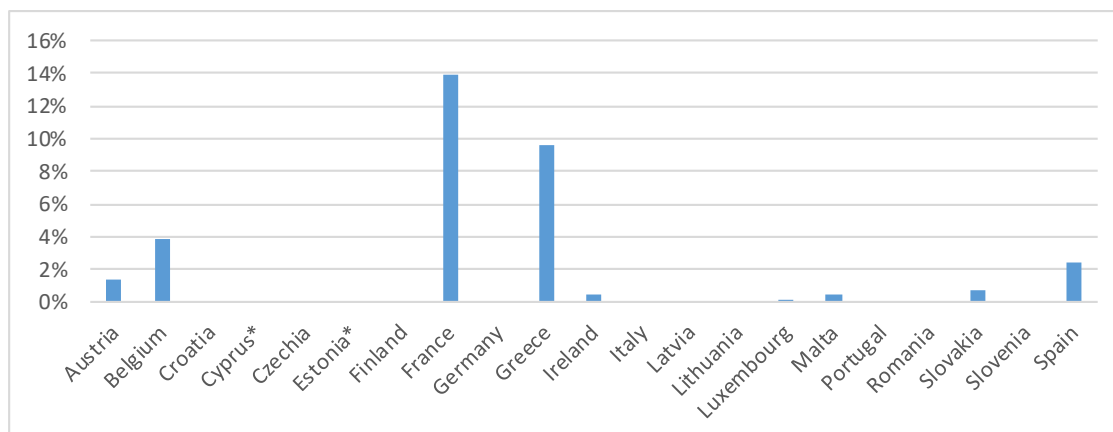
<sup>134</sup> European Commission (2022), REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Review report on the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Brussels, 29.7.2022 COM(2022) 383 final.

<sup>135</sup> The common indicators show the progress of the implementation of the NRRPs and the overall performance of the RRF. Common indicators data are collected by Member States and reported to the European Commission twice a year.

<sup>136</sup> According to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2106 of 28 September 2021. Classroom capacity will be calculated in accordance with national legislation, but it will not include teachers, parents, auxiliary personnel or any other persons who may also use the facilities. Early childhood education and care facilities such as crèches and pre-schools will refer to those designed for children from birth to the start of primary education (ISCED 0). Education facilities will include schools (ISCED 1–3, ISCED 4) and higher education (ISCED 5–6). The indicator will cover childcare or education facilities that are newly built or modernised (for example, for increasing hygiene and safety standards), and modernisation will not include energy renovation or maintenance and repairs.

<sup>137</sup> According to the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2106 of 28 September 2021: The number of participants aged 15–29 years old upon receiving monetary or in-kind support by measures under the facility. The indicator will be disaggregated by gender.

Figure A 10: Share of people aged 15–29 receiving monetary and in-kind support as a percentage of total population aged 15–29



Source: European Commission’s Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard.

Note: Countries marked with (\*) have reported that data for this indicator are not yet available.

Additional information may be derived from **Indicator 11**, on the number of people in employment or engaged in job searching activities, who have received support under the RRF. Such people are those who are in employment, including self-employment, or who were inactive when receiving that support and who are newly engaged in job searching activities, immediately after receiving that support. This indicator, that has to be disaggregated by gender and age, could allow us to consider young people in the two age groups up to 17 years old, and 18–29. RRS data on this indicator show that overall, almost 67 000 people have been supported as of June 2022; of these, 26000 (38.7 %) are young people below 30 years old, young women are 17 % of the total and young men 22 %.

### Annex 3 – Selected Pillar 6 measures: adequacy in terms of milestones and targets

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
<b>Belgium</b>			
Early childhood care	I – ‘Creation and renovation of early childcare infrastructure’ of the Walloon region	EUR 61.4 million	TARGET: Award of works contracts by operators (crèches) for 15 % of the newly created childcare places, i.e. 255. By Q3 2023. New childcare places (1 700) created as part of the early childcare infrastructure in Wallonia. By Q3 2026.
Youth employment support	I – ‘Digital skills’ of the Flemish region	EUR 43.21 million	TARGET: Some 70 e-learning projects are approved, launched and completed following a call for project. By Q4 2022
<b>Croatia</b>			
Early childhood care	<b>C3.1.R1</b> : structural reform of the education system	KN 5 100 000 000	MILESTONE: adoption of a model for financing the ECEC facilities for municipalities and local government units with less financial capacity. By Q1 2023. TARGET: increase of the coverage of children aged 3 up to school age attending ECEC to 90 % (compared to 2018). By Q2 2026.
Early childhood care	<b>C3.1.R1-I1</b> : construction, upgrading, reconstruction and equipping of ECEC facilities	KN 1 620 000 000	TARGET: creation of at least 22 500 new places in ECEC through the infrastructure investments in construction, upgrade and reconstruction of ECEC facilities. By Q2 2026.
<b>Finland</b>			
Youth employment support	<b>P3C1</b> : Reform 4 – strengthening the multidisciplinary services for young people	EUR 13 million	TARGET: increase the share of <i>Ohjaamo</i> service points that offer integrated health and social services, and educational expertise. From 33 % in 2019 to 60 % by Q4 2024.

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
<b>Germany</b>			
Childhood education	<b>C4.1.1:</b> Investment programme Childcare-financing 2020/21: special fund Child Day-care Expansion	EUR 500 million	<p>MILESTONE: provision of amendments to the Childcare Financing Act and the Federal Financial Assistance Act (KitaFinHG) for the extension of day care for children. Adoption of the federal rules by the Länder, making them more specific in their Länder regulations. By Q4 2020.</p> <p>MILESTONE: publication of interim report in compliance with KitaFinHG on approved and created childcare places and investments in equipment. By Q4 2023.</p> <p>TARGET: completion of all measures by the Länder, confirming that 90 000 newly funded childcare places for children prior to school entry have been created in child daycare facilities (Kindertageseinrichtungen) and child daycare services (Kindertagespflege) throughout Germany. By Q4 2025.</p>
Youth employment support	<b>C4.1.3:</b> Apprenticeship support	EUR 725 million	<p>MILESTONE: entry into force of the revised funding guidelines for the federal programme <i>Ausbildungsplätze sichern</i>. By Q2 2021.</p> <p>TARGET: of the EUR 725 million allocated to the measure, at least EUR 652.5 million is disbursed under the programme. By Q4 2022.</p> <p>TARGET: at least 70 000 eligible applications are awarded funding under the programme. Q4 2022.</p>

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
<b>Ireland</b>			
Youth employment support	SOLAS Recovery Skills Response Programme	EUR 114 million <sup>138</sup>	<p>MILESTONE: full range of skills provision opportunities published and available for learners to book their place via the national course booking website. By Q3 2021.</p> <p>MILESTONE: green skills modules and provision opportunities are published and available for enrolment on the national course booking website for further education and training. By Q4 2021.</p> <p>TARGET: participants in the Green Skills Action Programme and Skills to Compete Participation. Goal: at least 81 250 additional participants by Q4 2022.</p> <p>TARGET: increase in the share of women under the age of 30 with a level of education attainment at level 5 or lower enrolled in the Skills to Compete Initiative. Goal: 20% of participants enrolled by Q4 2022 (compared to 14 % before 2020).</p>
<b>Italy</b>			
Early childhood education and care	Plan for nurseries and preschools, and early childhood education and care services	EUR 4.60 billion	<p>MILESTONE: award of contracts for building, renovating and ensuring the safety of nurseries, preschools and early childhood education and care services. By Q2 2023.</p> <p>TARGET: new places activated for educational and early childhood care services (from zero to six years old). Goal: 264 480 by Q4 2025.</p>

<sup>138</sup> [https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2021-10-21/257/#spk\\_642](https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2021-10-21/257/#spk_642)

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
Early childhood education and care	Supporting vulnerable people and preventing institutionalisation	EUR 0.50 billion Budget available for the first area of intervention 'support to parents of children aged 0 to 17': EUR 84.6 million <sup>139</sup>	MILESTONE: Entry into force of the Operational Plan.  TARGET: social districts involved in projects in at least one of the following areas: (i) support to parents of children aged 0 to 17 years, (ii) elderly autonomy, (iii) home services to elderly or (iv) favour social workers to prevent burnout.  Goal: 85 % of territorial social services to be involved in projects financed by the investment by Q1 2026.
Early childhood education and care	Structured socio-educational interventions to combat educational poverty in the south supporting the third sector	EUR 0.22 billion	No milestone indicated in the NRRP for this measure.  TARGET: number of minors who receive support.  Goal: 20 000 by Q2 2023; 44 000 by Q2 2026.
Youth employment support	Active labour policies and employment	EUR 4.4 billion	MILESTONE: Entry into force of the Inter-Ministerial Decree establishing a National Programme for the Guaranteed Employability of Workers (GOL) and an Inter-Ministerial Decree establishing a National Plan for New Skills. By Q4 2021.  TARGET: at least 3 million beneficiaries by 2025, 75 % of which will be women, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, young people under 30 or workers over 55.

<sup>139</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Piano operativo per la presentazione da parte degli ambiti sociali territoriali di proposte per l'adesione alle progettualità di cui alla Missione 5 "Inclusione e coesione", Componente 2 "Infrastrutture sociali, famiglie, comunità e Terzo Settore", Sottocomponente 1 "Servizi sociali, disabilità e marginalità sociale" – Investimenti 1.1, 1.2 e 1.3 del Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (PNRR), December 2021, available at: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/normative/Documents/2021/DD-450-del-09122021-PNRR-Adozione-piano-operativo-presentazione-proposte.pdf>



Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
			TARGET: at least 800 000 beneficiaries involved in training activities, including 300 000 involved in activities to develop digital skills.
Youth employment support	Strengthening the dual system	EUR 0.60 billion	No milestone indicated in the NRRP for this measure.  TARGET: People that have participated in the dual system and obtained the relevant certification in the five-year period 2021–2025.  Goal: at least 135 000 additional people by Q4 2025.
Youth employment support	Strengthening the Universal Civil Service	EUR 0.65 billion	No milestone indicated in the NRRP for this measure.  TARGET: People have participated in the Universal Civil Service programme and obtained the relevant certification in the three-year period 2021–2023.  Goal: at least 120 000 additional people by Q4 2023.
<b>Poland</b>			
Youth employment support/general, vocational and higher education	Workforce for the modern economy: improving the matching of skills and qualifications with labour market requirements	Having as main aim the entry into force of acts, there are no expenditures envisaged.	MILESTONE: entry into force of the act amending the Education Law, establishing the legal framework for the Network of Sectoral Skills Centres. By Q3 2023.  MILESTONE: entry into force of the acts amending the act on regional self-government, the act on labour market institutions, the act on county self-government and other relevant acts for the coordination of vocational education and training, and lifelong learning in the regions. By Q3 2023.  MILESTONE: entry into force of the acts amending the act on regional self-government, the act on labour market institutions, the act on county self-government and other relevant acts for the coordination of vocational education and training and lifelong learning in the regions. By Q1 2025.

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
Youth employment support/general, vocational and higher education	Investments in modern vocational training, higher education and lifelong learning	EUR 400 million	<p>TARGET: establishing a network of functioning Sectoral Skills Centres providing targeted upskilling and reskilling highly relevant for the labour market needs.</p> <p>Goal: 20 by Q1 2024 and 120 by Q3 2025</p> <p>TARGET: skills provision to learners in the Sectoral Skills Centres including certification of learning outcomes (skills), issued and recognised by the sector.</p> <p>Goal: 2000 by Q3 2024; 16 000 by Q3 2025; 24 000 by Q2 2026.</p> <p>Of these learners at least 60 % will be adults (25 years or older), <u>at least 20 % will be young people (14–24 years old)</u>, at least 10 % will be vocational education and training teachers.</p> <p>TARGET: setting up of functioning regional coordination teams, coordinating the policy in vocational education and training, and lifelong learning.</p> <p>Goal: 14 by Q3 2022.</p> <p>TARGET: development of operationalised implementation programmes for the Integrated Skills Strategy at regional level by the established Regional Coordination Groups for vocational education and training, and lifelong learning.</p> <p>Goal: 14 by Q3 2023.</p>
Early childhood education and care	Reform to improve the labour market situation of parents by increasing access to high-quality childcare for children up to the age of three	Having as main aim the entry into force of acts, there are no expenditures envisaged.	<p>MILESTONE: entry into force of an act amending the act on the care of children up to three years of age aimed at changing the organisation of the system of financing care for children up to the age of three. This is with a view to implementing a single coherent financing management system for creation and functioning of the childcare services for children up to the age of three.</p> <p>By Q2 2022.</p>

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
			<p>MILESTONE: adoption of quality standards for childcare, including educational guidelines and standards of care services for children under three years of age, ensuring high quality, including education and care. By Q3 2023.</p> <p>MILESTONE: entry into force of an act amending the act on the care of children up to three years of age ensuring a stable long- term domestic financing of the childcare services for children up to the age of three. By Q2 2024.</p>
Early childhood education and care	Support for childcare facilities for children up to three years of age under Maluch+	EUR 381 million	<p>MILESTONE: creation of an IT system to manage the financing and creation of childcare facilities for children up to the age of three that will combine different sources of financing childcare. By Q2 2022.</p> <p>TARGET: creation of new places in childcare facilities (nurseries, children's clubs) for children up to three years of age. Goal: 47 500 by Q2 2026.</p>
<b>Spain</b>			
Youth employment support	<b>C19.11:</b> transversal digital skills	EUR 735 million	<p>MILESTONE: creation of a national network of digital skills (including the reform of 1 500 centres of professional training), and implementation of awareness campaigns and communication plans. By Q4 2024.</p> <p>TARGET: at least 75 % of the budget will have been committed for actions under the investment to train citizens on digital skills. By Q4 2023.</p> <p>TARGET: 2 600 000 citizens trained on digital skills, according to the actions under the measure. The training will be at least 10 ECTS. By Q4 2025.</p>

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
Youth employment support	<b>C19.I3:</b> digital skills for employment	EUR 1.256 million	TARGET: at least 450 000 people participated in training on digital skills. Each training course must have a minimum of 15 ECTS. By Q4 2025.
Youth employment support	<b>C20.R1:</b> Vocational Training Modernisation Plan	EUR 600 million	MILESTONE: presentation by the prime minister of the Plan of the Modernisation of Vocational Training and publication in the Official Journal of eight royal decree laws to implement the plan. These will correspond to five specialist, two middle degree and one higher degree curricula. By Q4 2020.
Youth employment support	<b>C20.I3:</b> innovation and internationalisation of vocational training	EUR 598.998 million	TARGET: creation of at least 50 000 new VET places compared to the end of 2020. Their territorial distribution should be based on a needs assessment and follow-on discussions with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the offer effectively responds to regional and local gaps. By Q4 2022.  TARGET: at least 3 700 vocational training cycles (middle and high). By Q4 2024.  TARGET: at least 135 000 new VET places compared to the end of 2020. By Q4 2024.
Childhood education	<b>C21.R2:</b> design and application of a new curricular model based on key competences	EUR 2.4 million	MILESTONE: the royal decree on minimum teaching requirements for education must include the introduction of methodological guidelines for teaching and learning based on a competence-based curriculum. It should incorporate 'soft skills'; an evaluation framework for the acquisition of competences; the design of a model that is more flexible and open; and the preparation of teaching materials, guidance and training for teachers to ensure that they may effectively implement the new curriculum. By Q1 2022.  MILESTONE: completed preparation of support guide and teaching material. All material must be published online for use by 100% of

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
			teachers. At least 4000 teachers will have completed training for the application of the new curriculum. At least 100 external experts will have participated in the elaboration of the curriculum of the educational stages and the evaluation frameworks. These must provide the basis for the drafting of the royal decrees of the new curriculum and the common evaluation framework. By Q3 2024.
Childhood education	<b>C21.I1:</b> creation of publicly owned places of the first cycle of childhood education (primarily 1 and 2 years old)	EUR 670.99 million	TARGET: budget award to regional and local entities of EUR 670.99 million for the Promotion of First Cycle of Early Childhood Education through the creation of new publicly owned places. By Q4 2023.  TARGET: promotion of First Cycle of Early Childhood Education schooling through the creation of new publicly owned places (new construction or reform/rehabilitation and equipment in at least 60 000 places compared with at the end of 2020, and of these operating expenditure for up to 40 000 places up until 2024). By Q4 2024.
Youth employment support	<b>C23.R4:</b> simplification of contracts: generalisation of the indefinite contract, causality and simplification of temporary contracting	Having as main aim the entry into force of an amendment, there are no expenditures envisaged	MILESTONE: entry into force of the amendment of provisions of Legislative Decree 2/2015 of 23 October approving the recast text of the Workers' Statute to support the reduction of temporary employment by streamlining the number of contract types. By Q4 2021.
Youth employment support	<b>C23.R5:</b> modernisation of active employment policies	Having as main aim the entry into force of an amendment and Royal Decree, there are no expenditures envisaged	MILESTONE: the Action Plan must tackle youth unemployment at the occasion of the implementation of the EU Youth Guarantee Plus. By Q2 2021.  MILESTONE: approval by the Council of Ministers and entry into force of a royal decree for a new Spanish Employment Activation Strategy 2021–2024. By Q4 2021.

Policy area	Measure	Amount of the investment	Milestone/target
			<p>MILESTONE: entry into force of the amendment of the Employment Law (Royal Legislative Decree 3/2015). By Q4 2022.</p>
Youth employment support	<b>C23.I1:</b> youth employment	EUR 765 million	<p>TARGET: at least 18 300 people having completed the youth programmes, considering 21 900 people enrolled. By Q4 2025.</p>
Youth employment support	<b>C23.I6:</b> comprehensive plan to promote the social economy for the generation of an inclusive and sustainable economic fabric	EUR 100 million	<p>TARGET: at least 30 social economy projects have been completed supporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the creation and maintenance of employment of enterprises in difficulty;</li> <li>- creation and consolidation of innovative social economy entities, with an impact on generational renewal and youth entrepreneurship;</li> <li>- digitisation of social economy enterprises;</li> <li>- networking of cooperative and other forms of social economy accompanied by training measures;</li> <li>- fostering sustainable and inclusive transitions of vulnerable companies and groups.</li> </ul> <p>By Q4 2023.</p>

## Annex 4 – Selected Pillar 6 measures: coherence with CSRs

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
<b>Belgium</b>		
<b>Component 4.1</b>		
R and I – ‘Digisprong’ of the Flemish community R and I – ‘Higher education advancement fund’ of the Flemish community I – ‘Digital strategy for higher education and adult learning’ of the French community I – ‘Digital transformation of education’ of the German-speaking community	No CSR on youth employment support. However, the measure presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSRs below that may also cover young people: <b>CSR 2 2019</b> Remove disincentives to work and strengthen the effectiveness of active labour market policies, in particular for the low-skilled, older workers and people with a migrant background. Improve the performance and inclusiveness of the education and training systems and address skills mismatches. <b>CSR 1 2020</b> Mitigate the employment and social impact of the Covid-19 crisis, notably by promoting effective active labour market measures and fostering skills development.	Component 4.1 (Enseignement 2.0), financed by EUR 450 million (EUR 442 million by RRF), includes three reforms and six investments. Its main objectives are to enhance the competences and skills during compulsory education, especially for ICT subjects (Digisprong reform and investment), and to fight the educational drop-out (Réforme de lutte contre le décrochage). It shows a high level of coherence with what was specified in the CSR 2019 about the improvement of the school system and educational outcomes.
<b>Component 4.2</b>		
R – ‘Tackling discrimination at the labour market’ of the Federal State R and I – ‘Re-qualification strategy’ of the Brussels capital region R – ‘An inclusive labour market’ of the Flemish community I – ‘E-inclusion for Belgium’ of the Federal State I – ‘Gender and work’ of the Federal State	No CSR on youth employment support. However, the measure presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSRs below that may also cover young people: <b>CSR 2 2019</b> Remove disincentives to work and strengthen the effectiveness of active labour market policies, in particular for the low-skilled, older workers and people with a migrant background. Improve the performance and inclusiveness of the education and training systems, and address skills mismatches.	Component 4.2 (Formation et emploi pour les groupes vulnérables), with the full EUR 166 million funding covered by the RRF, consists of three reforms and five investments. The main objective of this component is to foster the labour market participation of vulnerable groups, such as low-skilled workers, women, people with a migratory background and people with disabilities. The core issues of these components are the promotion of continuous training and support in skills acquisition, with a specific focus on digital skills, as well the improvement of a non-discrimination policy within the labour market.

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
	<p><b>CSR 1 2020</b> Mitigate the employment and social impact of the Covid-19 crisis, notably by promoting effective active labour market measures and fostering skills development.</p>	
<b>Component 4.3</b>		
<p>I – ‘Creation and renovation of early childcare infrastructure’ of the Walloon region</p>	<p>No CSR on childhood care</p>	<p>Component 4.3 (Infrastructure sociale) of the axes focuses on the offering of infrastructures for vulnerable categories, especially for housing provision and early childcare services. It consists of two investments, financed through EUR 398 million (EUR 227 million from RRF). Increasing the offer and the accessibility of childcare services is a crucial point for fostering the labour market inclusion of the vulnerable categories, especially for the single-parent families.</p> <p>Although no specific CSR on childhood care is provided, this investment consists of renovating the buildings and improving the existing offer of childcare facilities (concerning 5879 existing places), as well as to open new structures to increase the services coverage (target of 3505 subsidised places and 1960 non-subsidised). These actions will take place up to the third semester of 2026. A detailed analysis on the priorities and needs of different territories is available within the plan, specifying the female unemployment rate, the percentage of single-parent families and the average yearly salary. This component is highly relevant in terms of supporting female employment, coherently with the CSR contents.</p>
<b>Component 5.1</b>		
<p>I – ‘Digital skills’ of the Flemish region</p>	<p>No CSR on youth employment support. However, the investment presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSRs below that may cover also young people:</p> <p><b>CSR 2 2019</b> Improve the performance and inclusiveness of the education and training systems, and address skills mismatches.</p>	<p>The measure implements the agreement concluded between the Flemish government and social partners, which includes the objective of the ‘digital transformation of Flanders’. The project consists of separate initiatives: (i) ‘e-learning action plan’, with calls for public training providers to develop their online training offer, (ii) ‘career digital tools and services’, with the development of individual training.</p>



Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
	<p><b>CSR 1 2020</b></p> <p>Mitigate the employment and social impact of the Covid-19 crisis, notably by promoting effective active labour market measures and fostering skills development.</p>	
<b>Croatia</b>		
<b>Component 3</b>		
<p><b>C3.1. R1 (R):</b> structural reform of the education system</p> <p><b>C3.1. R1-I1 (I):</b> construction, upgrading, reconstruction and equipping of ECEC facilities.</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Deliver on the education reform and improve both access to education and training at all levels (including childhood care) and their quality and labour market relevance.</p>	<p>In the context of policies that favour early childhood education and care, the 'Structural Reform of the Education System' (C3.1. R1), provided by this component, supports access to education at all its levels. As regards early childhood education and care, the main objective is to guarantee and improve access to all children from the age of three until primary education. With this intent, this reform introduces the investment 'construction, upgrading, reconstruction and equipping of ECEC facilities' (C3.1. R1-I1), exclusively concerning children. National authorities highlight through the RRP <sup>140</sup> the low coverage for children in education (76.3 %) compared to the EU's objective (96 %). To tackle this challenge, this strategy aims at guaranteeing equal opportunities for all children and their inclusiveness in the education system through the construction of new ECEC facilities and the renovation of existing ones. In particular, the objective is to create 22 500 new places in ECEC. Further, the implementation of investments is expected to take place at local level, while cities and municipalities are expected to participate in calls for infrastructure projects in their territories.</p> <p>Component 3 as a whole recognises the huge impacts that the coronavirus pandemic has had on the Croatian education system. Further, structural regional differences exist regarding financing and, therefore, the coverage and quality of education. With this in mind,</p>

<sup>140</sup> Nacionalni plan oporavka i otpornosti 2021-2026: <https://planoporavka.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Plan%20oporavka%20i%20otpornosti%2C%20srpanj%202021..pdf?vel=13435491>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
		through this component the RRP provides reforms and investments focused on the enhancement of high-quality education for all educational levels, including childhood care.
<b>Component 4</b>		
<p><b>C4.1. R1 (R):</b> development and implementation of new targeted active labour market policies for the purposes of green and digital transitions of the labour market;</p> <p><b>C4.1. R2 (R):</b> strengthening of the system of inclusion and monitoring of vulnerable groups in the labour market through improvements of the employment service processes;</p> <p><b>C4.1. R3-I1 (I):</b> implementation of vouchers for adult education, training and upskilling</p>	<p>No CSR on youth employment support. However, the component presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSRs below that may also cover young people:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Deliver on the education reform and improve both access to education and training at all levels, and their quality and labour market relevance.</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2020</b></p> <p>Promote the acquisition of skills.</p>	<p>Component 4 supports policy measures to enhance the Croatian labour market while facilitating the inclusion of vulnerable groups. In the Croatian RRP, young NEETs are considered within this target<sup>141</sup>. Among the measures provided by this component, two reforms and one investment give particular attention to young individuals through the objectives foreseen by them. The reform ‘development and implementation of new targeted active labour market policies for the purposes of green and digital transitions of the labour market’ (C4.1. R1) aims to adopt new active labour market policies. Also, to increase the coverage, this will provide benefits from the new active labour market policy to at least 13 000 long-term unemployed, inactive and young NEETs. The reform ‘strengthening of the system of inclusion and monitoring of vulnerable groups in the labour market through improvements of the employment service processes’ (C4.1. R2) supports young individuals through the expansion of career orientation centres (CISOK), focusing on attracting NEETs. The investment ‘implementation of vouchers for adult education, training and upskilling’ (C4.1. R3-I1) supports the acquisition of new skills and lifelong learning by providing a voucher system to finance participation in educational programmes. In doing so, a particular focus is addressed to young NEETs, the long-term unemployed and inactive, from which at least 12 000 will benefit from the vouchers provided.</p>

<sup>141</sup> No strategy of component 4 is directly foreseen to youth workers but to overall employment.

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
<b>Finland</b>		
P3C1: Reform 4 – Strengthening the multidisciplinary services for young people	<p>No CSR on youth employment support. However, the investment presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSR below that may also cover young people:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Improve incentives to accept work and enhance skills and active inclusion, notably through well-integrated services for the unemployed and the inactive.</p>	The objective of the reform is to strengthen the multidisciplinary character of one-stop shop youth centres ( <i>Ohjaamo</i> ) and address the needs of NEETs to improve their employment prospects. This will be achieved through a temporary incentive for municipalities to attract or adjust resources to <i>Ohjaamo</i> services, improving the response to young people's needs by offering combined educational, health, social and employment services.
<b>Germany</b>		
<b>Component 4.1</b>		
<p><b>C4.1.1 (I):</b> Investment programme 'Childcare-financing' 2020/21: special fund 'Child Day-care Expansion'</p>	<p>No CSR on childhood care.</p> <p>However, the German RRP specifies that this component implements key CSRs such as the improvement of educational outcomes and skills levels of disadvantaged groups (CSR 2, 2019). Such CSR, even if general, may be suitable for both children and youth.</p>	<p>Through this measure the country aims to respond to the increasing demand for childcare facilities by granting adequate infrastructures. With this intent, Länder and local authorities receive grants for investments by the federal government, which support them in the establishment of new buildings, expansion, renovations and equipment. The management of the grants lies with the Länder, which defines their own guidelines, specific details and the conditions under which the funds are used, provided that the ultimate goal remains the efficient creation and maintenance of childcare facilities. As the main target group the plan indicates children, whose participation to childcare provisions under aged 3 (31.3 %) remains below the EU average (35.3 %) (Eurostat, 2019). In particular, socially disadvantaged children may benefit from this strategy through the high quality facilities that the plan aims to provide through digitisation and specific equipment investments such as kitchens, sport facilities and extensions for full day care. With respect to the latter, C.4.1.1 transversely contributes to families and, in particular, single-parent households, facilitating their participation in the labour market.</p>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
<p><b>C4.1.3 (I):</b> Apprenticeship support.</p>	<p>No CSR on youth employment support.</p>	<p>During the pandemic, both the demand for apprentices and apprenticeships was significantly reduced, leading to a negative impact on the level of labour shortage and skills. Under this framework, this measure aims at the recovery of the vocational training market, on which the German dual system is based. By obtaining recognised professional qualifications, younger workers enhance their job opportunities. With this intent, the federal government provides financial support for SMEs that are capable of maintaining their current level of training and that constantly improve apprentices’ capabilities and conditions, by allowing additional opportunities and by avoiding short-time working. Further, trainees that are temporarily unable to continue their training at the company will have the opportunity to receive transitional, funded in-house, collaborative training (Verbundausbildung)<sup>142</sup> or contract training (Auftragsausbildung)<sup>143</sup>. Through this strategy, three objectives are reached by supporting companies with up to 499 employees: high quality employment opportunities, a sufficient number of apprenticeship positions for younger individuals entering the labour market, and a solid vocational training mechanism.</p>

<sup>142</sup> *Verbundausbildung* indicates the creation of collaborative training networks for apprenticeships. If a company is not able to provide certain training practices due to its business processes, other companies will provide the necessary support.

<sup>143</sup> In the case of contract training, the apprentice concludes a training contract with other company, so that some parts of their apprenticeship will be passed to other companies which will be compensated for the costs.

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
<b>Ireland</b>		
SOLAS Recovery Skills Response Programme <sup>144</sup>	<p>No CSR on youth employment support. However, the measure presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSR below that may cover also young people:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Provide personalised active integration support and facilitate upskilling, in particular for vulnerable groups and people living in households with low work intensity.</p> <p><b>CSR 2 2020</b></p> <p>Support employment through developing skills.</p>	<p>The programme aims at promoting the upskilling and reskilling of workers. The investment foreseen by the NRRP aims at establishing additional educational and training programmes in the context of the existing Skills to Compete programme and to establish the new SOLAS Green Skills Action Programme.</p> <p>The Skills to compete programme is targeted at people who have lost their job due to the pandemic and whose jobs are unlikely to return. The programme focuses on the development of new skills in sectors with high job opportunities such as ICT, software and web development, healthcare and logistics.</p> <p>The Green Skills Action Programme focuses on the development of skills linked to the green transition.</p> <p>According to the plan, at least 20 % of the participants enrolled in the training modules under the Skills to Compete Initiative will be women under the age of 30 with a level of education attainment of 5 or lower under the National Qualification Framework.</p>
Work Placement Experience programme	<p>No CSR on youth employment support. However, although the programme is not specifically targeted at supporting youth employment nor does it include specific provisions for younger workers or women, the measure presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSRs below that may also cover young people:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p>	<p>The Work Placement Experience programme is a voluntary programme targeted at people outside the labour market or are long-term unemployed, that aims at providing them work and training opportunities. The programme offers participants a work placement in host organisations for six months. The host organisation will also provide or facilitate access to training opportunities for at least 60 hours for each participant. The programme is accessible to all jobseekers aged 18–65, therefore it could still contribute to supporting youth employment.</p>

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/f7c87-minister-harris-announces-225-million-investment-in-further-and-higher-education-and-research-under-national-recovery-and-resilience-plan/>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
	<p>Provide personalised active integration support and facilitate upskilling, in particular for vulnerable groups and people living in households with low work intensity.</p> <p><b>CSR 2 2020</b></p> <p>Support employment through developing skills.</p>	
<b>Italy</b>		
<p><b>M4C1.1, Investment 1.1:</b> Plan for nurseries and preschools, and early childhood education and care services</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Support women’s participation in the labour market through a comprehensive strategy, including access to quality childcare.</p>	<p>The plan foresees to increase the number of available places in early childhood education and care facilities by building new facilities and renovating existing ones.</p>
<p><b>M4C2.1, Investment 1.3:</b> Partnerships among universities, research centres and companies to fund research projects</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSRs below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Support women’s participation in the labour market through a comprehensive strategy, including through access to quality childcare.</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Improve educational outcomes.</p>	<p>The investment aims to fund up to 15 research and innovation programmes jointly carried out by universities, research centres and businesses. The amount invested in each programme will include a contribution for the recruitment of fixed-term researchers (EUR 15 m and EUR 25 m for each programme). One of the objectives of the investment is to increase the share of female researchers employed with fixed-term contracts (from 34 % to 40 %).</p>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
<p><b>M5C2.1, Investment 1.1:</b> Supporting vulnerable people and preventing institutionalisation</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Support women’s participation in the labour market through a comprehensive strategy, including through access to quality childcare.</p>	<p>The investment aims at strengthening social services and supporting the implementation of different types of intervention, including interventions aimed at supporting parents of young children and vulnerable families. The investment includes the adoption of an operational plan <sup>145</sup> for the submission of project proposals by territorial social services and the subsequent publication of tenders to finance the interventions. As regards the first line of intervention, the operational plan mentions that the goal is to strengthen social services to support parenting capacity and children and families living in fragile and vulnerable conditions. This should ensure a stronger connection between the social welfare, health and education systems. These investments may therefore finance projects to facilitate access to childcare facilities for children from low-income families. The effective impact of the intervention on children and their involvement in early childhood education and care, however, depends on each municipal social service or territorial social district priorities and how they decide to use the funding available.</p>
<p><b>M5C3, Investment 3:</b> Structured socio-educational interventions to combat educational poverty in the south provided by the third sector</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSRs below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Support women’s participation in the labour market through a comprehensive strategy, including through access to quality childcare.</p>	<p>The investment aims at combating education poverty in the southern regions of Italy by financing and strengthening socio-educational activities carried out by third-sector entities. The plan intends to support intervention for children aged 0–6, with a specific focus on assistance and early childhood care, while for the age groups 5–10 and 11–17, the focus is on improving the educational offer and reducing early school leaving.</p>

<sup>145</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Piano operativo per la presentazione da parte degli ambiti sociali territoriali di proposte per l’adesione alle progettualità di cui alla Missione 5 “Inclusione e coesione”, Componente 2 “Infrastrutture sociali, famiglie, comunità e Terzo Settore”, Sottocomponente 1 “Servizi sociali, disabilità e marginalità sociale” – Investimenti 1.1, 1.2 e 1.3 del Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza (PNRR), December 2021, available at: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/documenti-e-norme/normative/Documents/2021/DD-450-del-09122021-PNRR-Adozione-piano-operativo-presentazione-proposte.pdf>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
	<p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Improve educational outcomes.</p>	
<p><b>M5C1.1, Reform 1.1:</b> Active labour policies and employment</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning youth employment support:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Ensure that active labour market and social policies are effectively integrated and reach out particularly to young people</p>	<p>The measure aims at reforming active labour policies and the vocational training system. The reform foresees two main interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of a <u>National Programme for a Guaranteed Employability of Workers</u> (GOL) <sup>146</sup>, which aims at integrating territorial services to support the unemployed with specific reference to the long-term unemployed, women, <b>NEETs</b> and vulnerable categories. The programme includes support in job placement, the integration of employment and social inclusion services, and the provision of vocational training services.</li> <li>- Adoption of a <u>National Plan for New Skills</u><sup>147</sup>, which aims at promoting the upskilling and reskilling of workers, <b>NEETs</b> and the unemployed. This is to increase their employment opportunities and ensure that their skills match the needs of the labour market, with a specific focus on digital skills. The plan includes a reform of the dual system (see investment 1.4 below).</li> </ul>
<p><b>M5C1.1, Investment 1.4:</b> Strengthening the dual system</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSRs below concerning youth employment support:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Ensure that active labour market and social policies are effectively integrated and reach out particularly to young people</p>	<p>The investment aims to strengthen the dual system by adapting training programmes to the skill needs of the labour market and by promoting a learning-by-doing approach through dual apprenticeship contracts. The investment, implemented through the New Skills Plan, aims at a stronger involvement of companies in identifying the skills needs and at facilitating the school-to-work transition of young people.</p>

<sup>146</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Programma di Garanzia di Occupabilità dei Lavoratori, Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana n. 306, allegato A, 27 December 2021, available at: [https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie\\_generale/caricaPdf?cdiimg=21A076460100010110001&dgu=2021-12-27&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-27&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07646&art.num=1&art.tipose rie=SG](https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie_generale/caricaPdf?cdiimg=21A076460100010110001&dgu=2021-12-27&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-27&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07646&art.num=1&art.tipose rie=SG)

<sup>147</sup> Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, Piano Nazionale Nuove Competenze, Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana n. 307, allegato A, 28 December 2021, available at: [https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie\\_generale/caricaPdf?cdiimg=21A076490100010110001&dgu=2021-12-28&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-28&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07649&art.num=1&art.tipose rie=SG](https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/do/atto/serie_generale/caricaPdf?cdiimg=21A076490100010110001&dgu=2021-12-28&art.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=2021-12-28&art.codiceRedazionale=21A07649&art.num=1&art.tipose rie=SG)



Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
	<p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Improve educational outcomes</p>	
<p><b>M5C1.2, Investment 2.1:</b> Strengthening the Universal Civil Service</p>	<p><b>Medium</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning youth employment support:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Ensure that active labour market and social policies are effectively integrated and reach out notably to young people</p>	<p>The investment aims at increasing the number of young people aged 18–28 who participate in the volunteer <u>Universal Civil Service</u>. <b>The Universal Civil Service is considered a non-formal learning tool</b>, which allows young people to develop soft skills and have a first working experience, potentially reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training.</p>
<b>Poland</b>		
<p>Investments in modern vocational training, higher education and lifelong learning</p>	<p>No CSR on youth employment support. However, the measure presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSR below that may cover also young people:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Foster quality education and skills relevant to the labour market, especially through adult learning</p>	<p>The investments relate to the creation and functioning of the Sectoral Skills Centres, the provision of upskilling and reskilling courses and curricula for adult learners, students, young people and employees. Upskilling programmes financed by the investment will include a focus on digital skills and green skills.</p> <p>The investment also aims at setting up 16 regional coordination teams that will coordinate vocational training policies at regional level.</p> <p><b>Young people and students are one of the target beneficiaries of the investment.</b></p>
<p>Reform to improve the labour market situation of parents by increasing access to high-quality childcare for children up to the age of three</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Take steps to increase labour market participation, by improving access to childcare and long-term care</p>	<p>The reform aims at improving access to early childhood education and care facilities by streamlining the management of domestic and external funds for the <b>creation and functioning of childcare facilities, implementing a long-term domestic financing for childcare and adopting a binding set of minimum education and quality standards.</b></p> <p>The reform therefore will simplify the management of administrative and bureaucratic procedures to facilitate the financing of childcare</p>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
		facilities for children up to three years, and to ensure national minimum education and quality standards.
Support for childcare facilities for children up to three years of age under Maluch+	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSR below concerning childhood care:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Take steps to increase labour market participation, by improving access to childcare and long-term care</p>	The investment is linked to the above-mentioned reform and aims at increasing the availability of childcare facilities and creating new places in nurseries and children’s clubs. The investment will increase funds available to the Maluch+ (Toddler+) programme, which was created in 2011 to support the creation of childcare services for children under 3. The investments aim to subsidise the costs of construction of new childcare facilities and the refurbishment of existing ones, implement an IT system to manage the financing and setting up of facilities, and create 47 500 new places for children under the age of three.
<b>Spain</b>		
<b>Component 19</b>		
<p><b>C19.I1:</b> transversal digital skills;  <b>C19.I3:</b> digital skills for employment.</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSRs below concerning youth employment support:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Increase cooperation between education and businesses with a view to improving the provision of labour market relevant skills and qualifications.</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2020</b></p> <p>Support employment through arrangements to preserve jobs, and produce effective hiring incentives and skills development.                      Improve access to digital learning.</p>	Component 19’s main objective is to guarantee competences and inclusion of all citizens and workers in digitisation. The strategy succeeds in meeting both CSRs on the matter and next generations’ needs by including specific measures for younger individuals. This component has as its main aim to enhance the digital training and inclusion of all citizens, reducing the share of individuals without basic digital competences. More specifically, the final goal is to guarantee training in digital skills to 80 % of the Spanish population. In the context of policies in favour of youth employment and children, the first investment, ‘transversal digital skills’, provides for specific digital training programmes addressed to both social groups. This type of investment is key to foster opportunities for younger generations in the labour market <sup>148</sup> , seeking to invest in digital training through scholarships and online open courses. In this sense, Component 19 supports access to digital learning. More precisely, C19.I3, ‘digital skills for employment’, adopts specific actions aimed at reinforcing the existing active employment policies. In particular, Programa Futur@,

<sup>148</sup> European Commission, 2021: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0147&from=EN>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
		Plan de Choque jóvenes 4.0, a policy programme introduced by this component, has as its main target the unemployed youth with the intent of fostering their employment through training in digital skills. Further, another programme established concerns training young experts in digital transformation of SMEs, increasing the number of ICT professionals and adapting the VET offer to labour market needs. In such a way, a bridge of cooperation between education and SMEs is created. The investment has as one of the main targets the unemployed youths from 16 to 30 years old.
<b>Component 20</b>		
<p><b>C20.R1:</b> Vocational Training Modernisation Plan</p> <p><b>C20.I3:</b> innovation and internationalisation of vocational training</p>	<p><b>Medium/high</b> coherence with the CSRs below concerning youth employment support:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Increase cooperation between education and businesses with a view to improving the provision of labour market relevant skills and qualifications</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2020</b></p> <p>Support employment through arrangements to preserve jobs, effective hiring incentives and skills development</p> <p>Improve access to digital learning</p>	<p>Component 20 aims to increase individuals' competences and their employability, in particular in technical and digital skills, taking into consideration the continuous development of the labour market. With this intent, the combination of training courses and modules allows personalised upskilling and reskilling paths that lead to certified qualifications. Within the framework of youth employment, these measures intend to enhance youth integration into the labour market by training them towards future sectors and professions. More specifically, C20. R1, Vocational Training Modernisation Plan, launches a public-private partnership with the intent of granting the inclusion of individuals in the labour market while meeting the needs of the production sector. Whereas the reform does not specify young individuals as main target, among all the strategies of Component 20, significant spillover effects may derive from this one. According to the European's Commission Scoreboard <sup>149</sup>, the plan for the modernisation of vocational training represents one of the fulfilled milestones by Spain contributing to Pillar 6. An investment that contributes to youth employment is C20.I3, 'innovation and internationalisation of vocational training'. Among the three measures supported by it, the second one aims to develop partnerships between enterprises and</p>

<sup>149</sup> Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard – Milestones and Targets: [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/milestones\\_and\\_targets.html?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/milestones_and_targets.html?lang=en)

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
		<p>professional training centres with the intent of fostering transference of knowledge.</p> <p>While Component 20 transversely contributes to employability and job mobility of young workers, the programme is not explicitly targeted to youth unemployment, but rather to the overall population.</p>
<b>Component 21</b>		
<p><b>C21.R2:</b> design and application of a new curricular model based on key competences</p> <p><b>C21.I1:</b> creation of publicly owned places of the first cycle of childhood education (primarily 1 and 2 years old).</p>	<p>No CSR on childhood care. However, the measure presents a <b>high</b> coherence with the CSR below that may cover childcare:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b> Improve support for families</p>	<p>Early childhood education and care as a target of Pillar 6 is one of the main subjects in Component 21, which seeks the modernisation and digitisation of the educational system according to the needs of each type of student. In this sense, it includes early childhood education from 0 to 3 years old. Specific strategies for children are envisaged in C21.R2 and C21.I1. The former, 'design and application of a new curricular model based on key competences', aims at contextualising and personalising different curricula and developing digital competences relying on the different levels of education, from early childhood to high school. The latter, on the other hand, is an investment for the creation of publicly owned places of the first cycle of childhood education (primarily 1 and 2 years old). This measure grants accessibility, affordability and inclusiveness, with a stated focus on children at higher risk of poverty, social exclusion and those living in rural areas. The aim is to create and provide equipment for more than 65 000 new places for childhood education, enhancing both digitisation and infrastructures.</p> <p>Component 21 then aims at progressively increasing enrolment in early childhood education and care, investing significantly in childhood and providing support for families in this field.</p>

Type of measure: investment (I) or reform (R)	Degree of coherence with CSRs	Notes
<b>Component 23</b>		
<p><b>C23.R4:</b> simplification of contracts: generalisation of the indefinite contract, causality and simplification of temporary contracting</p> <p><b>C23.R5:</b> modernisation of active employment policies</p> <p><b>C23.I1:</b> youth employment</p> <p><b>C23.I6:</b> comprehensive plan to promote the social economy for the generation of an inclusive and sustainable economic fabric</p>	<p><b>High</b> coherence with the CSRs below concerning youth employment support:</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2019</b></p> <p>Increase cooperation between education and businesses with a view to improving the provision of labour market relevant skills and qualification</p> <p><b>CSR 2, 2020</b></p> <p>Support employment through arrangements to preserve jobs, effective hiring incentives and skills development</p> <p>Improve access to digital learning</p>	<p>Youth unemployment is one of the main concerns of Component 23. By recognising the high share of structural unemployment, this component aims at empowering the Spanish labour market reform by adapting it to the main weaknesses of the system. Direct measures addressed to younger individuals are represented by C23.R4, C23.R5, C23.I1 and C23.I6. The fourth reform, 'simplification of contracts', is challenging the excessive use of temporary contracts by employers, while establishing as main target younger employees, the main subjects of this type of contract. The reduction of the number of contracts available to three (stable, temporary and for training) seeks to generalise open-ended contracts by making them a common practice. The fifth reform (modernisation of active employment policies), on the other hand, has been recognised by the Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard as one of the fulfilled milestones in favour of the next generations. In particular, hiring incentives, upskilling and reskilling, and work-based training, aim to enhance youth opportunities in the labour market. Furthermore, the promotion of specific employment windows for young people and a personalised monitoring procedure of youth until their definitive integration in the labour market further enhance their opportunities. One of the most explicit supports for younger individuals in the Spanish plan is the first investment provided by Component 23, 'youth employment', which identifies as main target unemployed individuals from 16 to 29 years old. On their behalf, three specific programmes are established <sup>150</sup>: EMPLEO JOVEN-TánDEM, First Professional Experience in Public Administrations, and Investigo. To conclude, C23.I6, among its objectives, supports a specific programme for the creation and consolidation of entities that enhance youth entrepreneurship.</p> <p>In Component 23, targeted investments and reforms seek to improve young workers' conditions and to fight possible situations of precariousness. Employment, hence, is widely supported for younger generations.</p>

<sup>150</sup> All three programmes aim at reinforcing youth experience in specific sectors and competences: green economy and services' digitisation areas, 'soft' and socio-professional competences, and young researchers' recruitment.

## Annex 5 – Selected Pillar 6 measures: potential impact on gender equality

Measure	Direct/indirect impact – high/medium/low impact	Notes
<b>Belgium</b>		
<b>Component 4.3</b>		
I – ‘Creation and renovation of early childcare infrastructure’ of the Walloon region	Indirect; high	The measure will fund EUR 61.4 million for the renovation and expansion of childcare services, with the objective of supporting parents’ employment. The needs analysis, at territorial level, took into account many parameters including the female unemployment rate and the share of single-parent families. This investment is expected to increase the provision of childcare services significantly and, consequently, foster the female entrance to the labour market.
<b>Component 5.1</b>		
I – ‘Digital skills’ of the Flemish region	Indirect; medium	The plan presents an ambitious and open programme for skills acquisition. Even if the actions are not specifically addressing women, the gender gap in education and employment (especially in STEM sectors) of young females can be positively affected.
<b>Croatia</b>		
<b>C3.1.R1 (R):</b> structural reform of the education system  <b>C3.1.R1-I1 (I):</b> construction, upgrading, reconstruction and equipping of ECEC facilities	Indirect; high	The reform and consequent investment of Component 3 regarding early childhood education and care are expected to promote inclusion and gender equality by encouraging female labour market participation through the implementation of care facilities.
<b>Finland</b>		
<b>P3C1:</b> Reform 4 – strengthening the multidisciplinary services for young people	Indirect; high	The reform does not include direct provisions to support young women. However, considering that the NEET rate for women is higher than for men (9.9 % against 8.3 %), the strengthening of one-stop shop multidisciplinary services may be particularly beneficial for young women not in education, employment or training.

Measure	Direct/indirect impact – high/medium/low impact	Notes
<b>Germany</b>		
<b>C4.1.1:</b> Investment programme Childcare-financing 2020/21: special fund Child Day-care Expansion	Indirect; high	Germany presents one of the highest rates in the EU of women working part-time due to caring responsibilities. This investment plays a key role in mitigating these disadvantages through the expansion of early childhood education and care places, with the intent to foster equal access in the labour market. The German RRP confirms its objective of creating an adequate framework of reconciliation for women between family, care and career.
<b>C4.1.3:</b> Apprenticeship support	Direct; medium impact	This investment takes into consideration the inclusion of measures that prioritise the participation of young women without, nevertheless, specifying which they will be. In any case, measures can promote young women's participation in apprenticeship programmes.
<b>Ireland</b>		
SOLAS Recovery Skills Response Programme	Direct; medium	The programme explicitly includes women as a target of the Skills to Compete Initiative. At least 20 % of the participants in the training modules under the initiative will be young women under 30 with a level of education attainment of 5 or lower under the National Qualification Framework. The programme aims at providing workers, including young women with low skills levels, with adequate competences to meet the needs of the labour market, particularly in sectors linked to the digital and green transition. However, no such target is established for the Green Skills Action Programme.
<b>Italy</b>		
Plan for nurseries and preschools and early childhood education and care services	Indirect; medium-high impact	The measure aims directly at increasing the share of children enrolled in early childhood education and care services to reduce the burden of care work on women and promote their participation in the labour market. The measure benefits all women, and particularly young mothers. Women working in childcare can also benefit from the measure, as the creation of new facilities and the increase of places in existing facilities should increase staff demand in a sector characterised by a high rate of female employment. However, the investment does not envisage the adoption of a reform aimed at guaranteeing access to early childcare services (0–3) either through the provision of a legal entitlement to a ECEC place or by making attendance compulsory. No measure aimed at ensuring a high level of financing of such services after the end of the NRRP is foreseen either <sup>151</sup> . In addition,

<sup>151</sup> CEPS, Assessing reforms in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. Italy, June 2021, available at: <https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/RRRP-No-3-Assessing-reforms-in-the-national-recovery-and-resilience-plans-italy.pdf>

Measure	Direct/indirect impact – high/medium/low impact	Notes
		the investment is not accompanied by an increase in resources to recruit staff for childcare facilities, nor does the NRRP say anything on improving the quality of early childhood education. The long-term effects of the investments on female participation in the labour market, however, will ultimately depend on the accessibility of such services.
Supporting vulnerable people and preventing institutionalisation	Indirect; high impact	The measure aims at providing services for children and families, as well as for older people. The measure could reduce the burden of care duties on women and promote their participation in the labour market. The measure could also create a demand for specialised staff in social services, a domain traditionally with a high rate of female workers.
Structured socio-educational interventions to combat educational poverty in the south supporting the third sector	Indirect; medium-high impact	The measure could create a demand for specialised staff in social services and in the third sector, where traditionally the share of female workers is higher than the share of male workers. The provision of socio-educational measures could also reduce the burden of care duties on women, promoting their participation in the labour market. The investment could also improve the educational and skill levels of young women.
Active labour policies and employment	Direct; medium impact	The National Programme for the Guaranteed Employability of Workers (GOL Programme) includes women among its target beneficiaries, particularly in the groups of vulnerable workers and people with fewer employment opportunities. The programme aims at supporting at least 3 million people by 2025, 75 % of which will be women, long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, young people under 30 years and people over 55.
Strengthening the dual system	Indirect; low impact	The measure strengthens the skills of participants in relation to key sectors of the economy and may incentivise female participation in such sectors, which is currently lower than that of males. However, the NRRP does not provide any specific indication on how to support gender equality in the dual system.
Strengthening the Universal Civil Service	Indirect; low impact	The measure may have an impact in reducing the number of young women not in employment, education or training, and support them in developing skills needed to access the labour market. However, there are no specific measures for young women



Measure	Direct/indirect impact – high/medium/low impact	Notes
<b>Poland</b>		
Workforce for the modern economy: improving the matching of skills and qualifications with labour market requirements	Indirect impact; low	No specific reference to the gender dimension. The reform could, however, indirectly benefit women as it sets the foundation for the creation of specific upskilling and reskilling courses which could increase women's employability and support them in entering or improving their position in the labour market.
Investments in modern vocational training, higher education and lifelong learning	Indirect impact; medium/low	No specific reference to the gender dimension. Although they are not a specific target of the intervention, women can benefit from the investment as the learning and training opportunities provided by Sectoral Skills Centres could increase their employability and support them in entering or improving their position in the labour market. The requirement to include digital and green skills modules in upskilling programmes may increase women's participation in sectors traditionally more male-dominated.
Reform to improve the labour market situation of parents by increasing access to high-quality childcare for children up to the age of three	Indirect impact; medium/high	The reform will set the legal base for an improvement of the quality and availability of early childhood education and care services in Poland, with the overall objective of promoting labour market participation of parents and women in particular. The reform will therefore have an indirect impact on women.
Support for childcare facilities for children up to three years of age under Maluch+	Indirect and direct; high	The measure aims at increasing the share of children enrolled in early childhood education and care services, to reduce the burden of care work on women and promote their participation in the labour market. The measure will indirectly benefit women with children, especially young mothers, and ensure that they remain in, or re-enter the labour market. Women working in childcare can also benefit from the measure, as the creation of new facilities and new places in existing ones should increase staff demand in a sector that is typically female dominated.
<b>Spain</b>		
<b>C19.I1:</b> transversal digital skills	Direct and high impact	This investment provides digital training programmes primarily addressed to specific social groups, among which there are women, including students and adults. Further, the plan foresees that unemployed women of more than 45 years old and mothers will be subject to special measures.
<b>C19.I3:</b> digital skills for employment	Direct and medium impact	The strategy is expected to reduce the digital gap due to gender by increasing the number of women managers and workers in ICT sectors. However, no specific targets to be achieved relating to women/girls are envisaged.
<b>C20.R1:</b> Vocational Training Modernisation Plan	Indirect and low impact	The Vocational Training Modernisation Plan does not provide specific measures in support of women.

Measure	Direct/indirect impact – high/medium/low impact	Notes
<b>C20.I3:</b> innovation and internationalisation of vocational training	Indirect and medium impact	The projects of this programme will take into consideration the inclusion of measures that support the reduction of gender inequality and the empowerment of women without, nevertheless, specifying which these will be.
<b>C21.R2:</b> design and application of a new curricular model based on key competences	Indirect and low impact	The design of a new curricular model for all education levels does not specify explicit measures for female students.
<b>C21.I1:</b> creation of publicly owned places of the first cycle of childhood education (primarily 1 and 2 years old)	Indirect and medium impact	This investment does not provide specific strategies in favour of girls, but it is expected that it will facilitate women’s participation in the labour market.
<b>C23.R4:</b> simplification of contracts: generalisation of the indefinite contract, causality and simplification of temporary contracting	Indirect and low impact	The reform aiming at the simplification of contracts, even if it recognises the higher representation of young women with fixed-term contracts, does not establish specific measures against it.
<b>C23.R5:</b> modernisation of active employment policies	Indirect and low impact	The strategy is addressed to all workers and unemployed, without distinctions by gender.
<b>C23.I1:</b> youth employment	Indirect and low impact	Its indirect and low impact in gender may be justified by the subsequent investment, <b>C23.I2</b> , ‘women’s employment’, exclusively addressed to women.
<b>C23.I6:</b> comprehensive plan to promote the social economy for the generation of an inclusive and sustainable economic fabric	Indirect and medium impact	Measures aimed at enhancing youth entrepreneurship will address special attention to women with entrepreneurial initiative.

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This briefing paper is aimed at analysing the measures addressing Pillar 6—next generation, children and the youth in National Recovery and Resilience Plans, with a focus on two policy domains: early childhood education and care, and youth employment support. Moving from a general overview across the 27 European Union Member States, the analysis is focused on eight Member States (Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland and Spain).

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