
Agreement reached on the European Social Fund+ for 2021-2027

- Guaranteed investments in countries with many children at high risk of poverty
- At least 3 % of the budget to be spent on food aid and basic material assistance
- A quarter of the funding goes to social inclusion, including integration of third country nationals

On Thursday, Parliament and Council reached a provisional agreement on the EU Social Fund+ that contributes to social inclusion, job opportunities and fighting poverty.

The new ESF +, part of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027, will amount to €87 995 billion in 2018 prices.

Supporting youth and children at risk of poverty

According to the deal, EU countries where the number of children at a high risk of poverty is above the EU average will have to spend a minimum of 5% of the ESF+ resources on actions that contribute to children's equal access to free healthcare, free education, free childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition. Other member states also have to allocate part of their funds to beating child poverty.

All member states will have to address youth unemployment in their spending programmes, a problem that has been aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis. In countries where the number of young people currently not in employment, education or training (NEET-rate) is above the EU average, 12.5% of the fund will be spent on combating youth unemployment. These can be measures such as vocational education and training, in particular apprenticeships, and school-to-work transition.

Helping those who need it most

The Parliament negotiated to have a budget dedicated to combatting extreme poverty in each member state. At least 3% will be spent on those who need it most through food and basic material assistance or by addressing material deprivation, which is defined as an inability to pay for unexpected expenses, adequate heating, nutritious meals or durable goods.

Other measures agreed

- 25% of the funds will be earmarked for social inclusion, including the socio-economic integration of disadvantaged groups;
- Adequate funding for capacity building for social partners in member states;
- Safeguards to ensure that projects funded by EU money fully respect fundamental rights.

Quote

Rapporteur David Casa (EPP, MT): “Today is a good day for Europe. We agreed to support workers, youth, children and students with almost €90 billion.

I am confident that this money will target those who really need it: people without a job, those who want to improve their skills, children in poverty, and youth who should be given all the opportunities to work, train and study. This is a clear example of how the European Union makes a concrete, positive impact in the lives of its citizens.”

Next steps

Both Parliament as a whole and Council now have to endorse the agreement.

Background

The European Social Fund has been investing in citizens for over 60 years. It contributes to social inclusion, job opportunities, fighting poverty, education, skills and the employability of young people, as well as in better living conditions, health and fairer societies. At the same time, the individual projects and programmes developed must contribute to improving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The new ESF+ merges the existing European Social Fund (ESF), the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), the Fund for European Aid to the most Deprived (FEAD) and the Employment and Social Innovation Programme (EaSI).

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Profile of rapporteur David Casa \(EPP, MT\)](#)
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