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# **Projects and organisations funded by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)**

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## Abstract

The [European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \('EaSI'\) 2014-2020](#)<sup>1</sup> is a financing instrument managed directly by the European Commission (EC) to promote high-quality and sustainable employment, adequate and decent social protection, social inclusion and poverty reduction and prevention, and fair working conditions. Following the proclamation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)<sup>2</sup>, which sets out guidelines for the support of fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems, the EaSI programme is an essential tool in assisting the Commission to reinforce the EU's social dimension.

Making the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality for citizens is a joint responsibility. While most of the tools to deliver on the pillar are in the hands of Member States, as well as social partners and civil society, the European Union institutions – and the European Commission in particular – can help by setting the framework and giving the direction, using instruments such as EaSI. Among other initiatives, EaSI co-finances actions of public, private and civil society organisations enabling them to deliver new services, assess existing policies or develop new ones, and exchange good practices in the fields of employment, social protection, working conditions, geographical labour mobility, microfinance and social entrepreneurship.

To facilitate the dissemination of the achieved results, this report presents examples of 22 projects supported by the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). The aims of the presented projects ranged from supporting reforms of national social protection systems, enhancing administrative cooperation on posting of workers, raising awareness on how young people can benefit from the [Youth Guarantee](#)<sup>3</sup> to boosting the social finance market and promoting intra-EU geographical mobility.

Another main part of the report presents the results of 14 EaSI-supported organisations active in the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction and access to finance. The presented organisations aimed to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as Commission initiatives carried out towards policy objectives of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#), [the Social Investment Package](#) and [the Political Guidelines of the Commission](#) at both national and local level. In addition, they contributed to the main EU governance processes such as the [Open Method of Coordination \(OMC\) on social protection and social inclusion](#) and the [European Semester](#).

The report also includes a description of the methodology that was applied to collect information on the presented actions and to analyse their results. The report also seeks to emphasise the European added value of the described actions and to single out potential good practices.

We believe that this report will be beneficial in two major ways. First, it will serve as guidance for public and private institutions and civil society organisations wishing to apply for EU funding. Second, it will provide policymakers with innovative ideas to design and implement new policy interventions to boost employment and ensure adequate social protection across the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en)

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>

## Kurzfassung

Das [Programm für Beschäftigung und soziale Innovation \(EaSI\) 2014-2020](#)<sup>4</sup> ist ein unmittelbar von der Europäischen Kommission verwaltetes Finanzierungsinstrument, mit dem die Kommission hochwertige und nachhaltige Beschäftigung, einen angemessenen und menschenwürdigen Sozialschutz, soziale Eingliederung, Armutsbekämpfung und -prävention und faire Arbeitsbedingungen fördert. Als Teil der [Europäischen Säule der sozialen Rechte](#)<sup>5</sup>, die unter anderem Leitlinien für die Förderung gerechter und gut funktionierender Arbeitsmärkte und Sozialsysteme enthält, dient das Programm EaSI der Kommission als wirksames Instrument, um die soziale Dimension der EU zu stärken.

Damit die Europäische Säule der sozialen Rechte für die Bürger Europas zur Realität wird, müssen alle Ebenen zusammenarbeiten. Zwar liegen die meisten politischen Instrumente, die für die Säule relevant sind, in den Händen der Mitgliedstaaten, der Sozialpartner und der Zivilgesellschaft, dennoch können die Organe der Europäischen Union, und insbesondere die Europäische Kommission, unter anderem mit Hilfe des Programms EaSI günstige Rahmenbedingungen schaffen und Ziele vorgeben. So stellt das Programm EaSI unter anderem eine Kofinanzierung für Maßnahmen staatlicher, privater und zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen bereit, mit denen diese in den Politikfeldern Beschäftigung, Sozialschutz, Arbeitsbedingungen, räumliche Mobilität von Arbeitnehmern, Mikrofinanzierung und soziales Unternehmertum neue Dienstleistungen erbringen, politische Strategien auswerten oder neue politische Ideen entwickeln sowie bewährte Verfahren austauschen können.

Um die Verbreitung der erzielten Ergebnisse zu verbessern, stellt dieser Bericht beispielhaft 22 Projekte vor, die im Rahmen des Programms für Beschäftigung und soziale Innovation (EaSI) gefördert wurden. Die vorgestellten Projekte dienen unter anderem dazu, Reformen der Sozialsysteme in den Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen, die Kooperation von Behörden bei der Vermittlung von Arbeitnehmern zu verbessern, junge Menschen über die Vorteile und Möglichkeiten der [Jugendgarantie](#)<sup>6</sup> zu informieren, den Finanzmarkt für Sozialunternehmen zu verbessern und die geografische Mobilität innerhalb der EU zu erleichtern.

In einem weiteren Hauptteil des Berichts werden die Ergebnisse von 14 EaSI-unterstützten Organisationen vorgestellt, die sich für die Förderung der sozialen Eingliederung, die Armutsbekämpfung und den Zugang zu Finanzmitteln einsetzen. Die Maßnahmen der vorgestellten Organisationen hatten das Ziel, die Umsetzung der Europäischen Säule der sozialen Rechte und anderer Initiative der Kommission, mit deren Hilfe diese die im Rahmen der [Strategie Europa 2020, des Sozialinvestitionspakets](#) und der [politischen Leitlinien der Kommission](#) definierten politischen Ziele fördert, auf nationaler und lokaler Ebene zu unterstützen. Außerdem tragen sie zu den wichtigsten Verfahren des Europäischen Regierens bei, das heißt zu der [offenen Koordinierungsmethode für Sozialschutz und soziale Eingliederung \(OKM\)](#) und zum [Europäischen Semester](#).

Ferner enthält der Bericht eine Beschreibung der Methoden, die angewendet wurden, um Daten über die vorgestellten Maßnahmen zu erfassen und deren Ergebnisse zu analysieren. Unter anderem möchte der Bericht den europäischen Mehrwert der untersuchten Maßnahmen betonen und bewährten Verfahren vorstellen.

<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=de>

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_de](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_de)

<sup>6</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=de>



Wir hoffen, dass sich dieser Bericht als hilfreich erweist, indem er erstens öffentlichen und privaten Institutionen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen, die Fördermittel der EU beantragen möchten, als Leitfaden dient und zweitens politischen Entscheidungsträgern innovative Ideen zur Entwicklung und Umsetzung neuer politischer Maßnahmen vorstellt, mit denen Arbeitsplätze geschaffen und europaweit ein angemessener Sozialschutz gewährleistet werden können.

## Résumé

[Le programme européen pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale \(« EaSI »\) 2014-2020<sup>7</sup>](#) est un instrument de financement géré directement par la Commission européenne visant à promouvoir des emplois durables et de haute qualité, une protection sociale décente et adaptée, l'inclusion sociale, la prévention et la réduction de la pauvreté, et des conditions de travail justes. Après [la proclamation du socle européen<sup>8</sup>](#) des droits sociaux qui fixe les lignes directrices pour soutenir des marchés du travail et systèmes de protection sociale équitables et performants, le programme EaSI représente un outil essentiel pour aider la Commission à renforcer la dimension sociale de l'UE.

Faire du socle européen pour les droits sociaux une réalité pour les citoyens est une responsabilité commune. La plupart des outils nécessaires à la mise en œuvre de ce socle sont dans les mains des États membres et dans celles des partenaires sociaux et de la société civile ; néanmoins, les institutions européennes, et notamment la Commission européenne, peuvent aider en fixant le cadre et en donnant des orientations, à l'aide d'instruments comme le programme EaSI. Entre autres initiatives, le programme EaSI cofinance les actions des organisations publiques, privées ou de la société civile pour leur permettre de proposer de nouveaux services, d'évaluer les politiques existantes ou d'en proposer de nouvelles et de procéder à des échanges de bonnes pratiques dans les domaines de l'emploi, de la protection sociale, des conditions de travail, de la mobilité professionnelle géographique, du microfinancement et de l'entrepreneuriat social.

Afin de faciliter la diffusion des résultats obtenus, le présent rapport présente des exemples de 22 projets qui ont été financés par le programme pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale (EaSI). Les projets présentés avaient des objectifs variés, comme le soutien aux réformes des systèmes nationaux de protection sociale, le renforcement de la coopération administrative relative au placement des travailleurs, le renforcement de la sensibilisation des jeunes aux avantages de la [Garantie pour la jeunesse<sup>9</sup>](#) ou encore la dynamisation du marché du financement social ou la promotion de la mobilité géographique intraeuropéenne.

Une autre grande partie du rapport présente les résultats de 14 organisations soutenues par EaSI et actives dans le domaine de la promotion de l'inclusion sociale, la réduction de la pauvreté et l'accès au financement. Les organisations présentées avaient pour objectifs de soutenir la mise en œuvre du pilier européen des droits sociaux, ainsi que les initiatives de la Commission visant à atteindre les objectifs politiques tant au niveau national que local de [la Stratégie Europe 2020, du train de mesures sur les investissements sociaux et des orientations politiques de la Commission](#). Elles ont par ailleurs contribué aux principaux procédés de gouvernance européens comme [la méthode ouverte de coordination pour la protection et l'inclusion sociales](#) ou [le semestre européen](#).

Le rapport comporte également une description de la méthodologie utilisée pour collecter les informations sur les actions présentées et pour analyser leurs résultats. Le rapport cherche en outre à mettre l'accent sur la valeur ajoutée européenne des actions décrites, et à faire ressortir d'éventuelles bonnes pratiques.

<sup>7</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=fr>

<sup>8</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_fr)

<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=fr>

Nous pensons que ce rapport présentera deux grands avantages. Tout d'abord, il pourra servir de guide aux institutions privées et publiques et aux organisations de la société civile qui souhaitent demander un financement européen. Ensuite, il proposera des idées innovantes aux responsables politiques pour la conception et la mise en œuvre de nouvelles interventions politiques visant à dynamiser l'emploi et à garantir une protection sociale adaptée dans toute l'UE.

## 1. Introduction

The [EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \(EaSI\)](#)<sup>10</sup> is one of the four EU financing instruments in the area of employment and social affairs for the period 2014-2020, together with the [European Social Fund](#)<sup>11</sup> (ESF), the [Fund for European Aid for the most Deprived](#)<sup>12</sup> (FEAD) and the [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund](#)<sup>13</sup> (EGF). EaSI provides support to promote high-quality and sustainable employment, adequate and decent social protection, social inclusion and the prevention and reduction of poverty, and fair working conditions. It is an essential tool in assisting the European Commission to reinforce the EU's social dimension as affirmed by the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)<sup>14</sup>.

The pillar contains a number of principles that promote well-functioning and fair labour markets, as well as social protection systems. These are structured around three dimensions:

- ensuring equal opportunities and equal access to the labour market;
- fair working conditions; and
- social protection and inclusion.

Alongside other financial instruments, EaSI plays a key supporting role in the implementation of the pillar and its follow-up initiatives. With the pillar directly feeding into the annual cycle of assessing economic and social challenges across the EU, the EaSI programme remains central to supporting the achievement of the EU's political goals in the area of employment and social affairs.

EaSI is structured according to the following three axes:

- **Progress – focusing on providing support to the policymaking and implementation process** through the production of policy evidence, the organisation of information sharing and mutual learning, funding of social policy experimentation projects and providing capacity building to EU and national organisations;
- **EURES – aiming to improve geographical labour mobility** in the EU by making information about placements more transparent and accessible, as well as funding actual services for jobseekers and employers;
- **Microfinance and social entrepreneurship (MF/SE) axis – supporting access to finance for vulnerable people, as well as micro- and social enterprises**, by providing funding for financial intermediaries and capacity building of relevant actors.

In particular, EaSI aims to act as **a catalyst for innovative solutions through social policy experimentation**, by assisting Member States in improving their policies on employment and social affairs to better respond to social needs and challenges. Furthermore, it **fosters transnational partnerships and networking between public, private and third-sector actors**. Lastly, it supports involvement in designing and implementing new approaches to cope with pressing social and economic trends.

The total budget for 2014-2020 is EUR 919,469,000 (in 2013 prices). On 18 July 2018, the so-called *Omnibus Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union* provided that the allocation of funding was

<sup>10</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp>

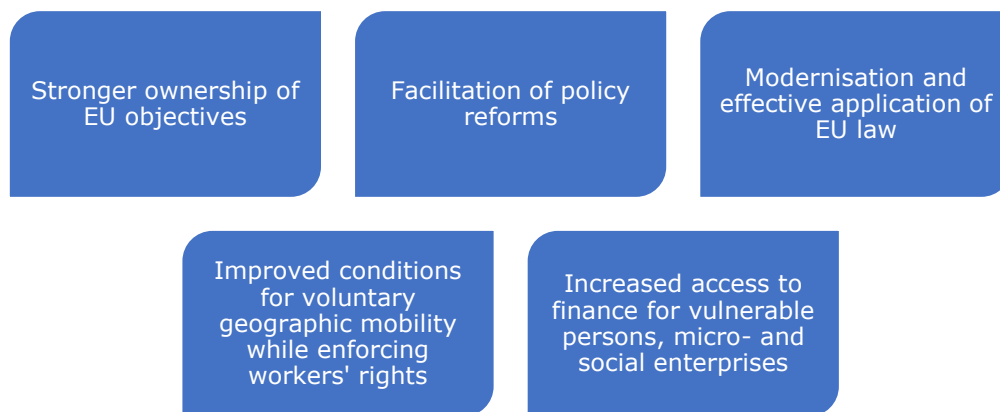
<sup>12</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

<sup>13</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=326&langId=en>

<sup>14</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1310&langId=en>

indicative and not binding, thereby allowing EaSI to 'swiftly provide adequate resources to support changing political priorities. It also updated the indicative percentages applicable on average over the whole period of the programme to each axis, setting these to at least 55 % for Progress, at least 18 % for EURES, and at least 18 % for MF/SE.

*Figure 1: EaSI long-term outcomes*



*Source: European Commission.*

The programme pays particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people, and to promoting equality between women and men. Combatting discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation is another cross-cutting concern. Likewise, EaSI works to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection, combat long-term unemployment, and fight poverty and social exclusion.

Since EaSI fosters social policy innovation, a significant amount of funding is also devoted to this, notably through calls for proposals for social experimentation projects.

Specifically, EaSI supports the maintenance and development of the necessary evidence base for EU employment and social policies and legislation by financing, for example, the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS); the European Skills, Competences and Qualifications (ESCO) database; European statistics on accidents at work (ESAW), the Database on Labour Market Policies (LMP); the tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union (EUROMOD); and the Social Situation Monitor. Other analytical outputs financed by EaSI are a result of cooperation with international organisations carrying out research in the relevant fields (e.g. the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and International Labour Organization) or developed by the networks of independent experts such as the European Employment Policy Observatory and the European Social Policy Network.

In addition, the programme contributes towards the operating costs of key EU-level civil society organisation (CSO) networks (such as ERGO, Eurochild and the Euclid Network). It also co-finances projects carried out by CSOs, public and private sector organisations from EU Member States that have a transnational character, or are of interest to the EU as a whole. These activities contribute towards evidence-based policymaking, social innovation and advances in the fields of employment, social protection and inclusion as well as working conditions, while promoting an integrated EU market for labour mobility, microfinance and social entrepreneurship.

This is the **14th** report on projects and organisations funded by EaSI. Previous reports on EaSI projects and organisations can be downloaded from the European Commission's website.<sup>15</sup>

This report focuses on the results of **22 EaSI-funded projects** in the areas of social protection, working conditions, employment, development of the social finance market and EURES – geographical labour mobility. It also presents results from **14 EaSI-supported organisations** – major EU-level civil society organisations promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and access to finance for vulnerable groups and social entrepreneurs.

This report consists mainly of fiches that describe in concise and uniform format the results of a successful project or organisation, as well as potential good practices derived from the implemented actions. In addition, the project / organisation fiches were developed with the aim of making them easily accessible as standalone documents, and useful to all informed stakeholders (decision makers, social partners, NGOs, academia, media and civil society at large).

**The purpose of this report is to improve learning among the national authorities, civil society organisations and private actors** working in the field of employment and social affairs, and to support future policy developments. First, it can serve as guidance for public, private and civil society actors wishing to apply for EU funding in the future. Second, it will provide policymakers with ideas and suggestions that can inform the design and implementation of new policy interventions.

Along with this introduction, the report comprises three other parts. Chapter 2 features a description of the methodology that was applied to collect information about the actions and to analyse their results. Chapter 3 presents the activities of projects implemented between 2018 and 2021 that were funded by EaSI through **action grants** to finance actions aimed at helping to achieve European Union policy objectives. In Chapter 4, the reader will find an overview of the results achieved between 2020 and 2021 by EaSI-supported major EU-level organisations through **operating grants**. Operating grants finance the work programmes of bodies that pursue the same interests as the European Union or its specific policies. The report concludes with a short afterword explaining the next steps in monitoring EaSI-supported projects and organisations, as well as the overall programme.

The reader should note that the date of finalisation serves as the basis for the selection of the projects described in the report. This report lists EaSI-funded action and operating grants completed between **1 March 2021 - 14 December 2021**.

### 1.1. Key facts about the projects presented

This report presents **22 recently finished projects** funded by the EaSI programme through action grants in the areas of social protection, working conditions, employment and the development of a social finance market<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> Please see:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=monitoring+good+practices&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>

<sup>16</sup> Please note that projects within different policy areas, as well as projects within the same policy area that are funded through different calls, should not be directly compared with each other. They differ in terms of scope, aims, activities, budget and duration. Instead, each project should be seen as a distinct action.

In the policy area of **working conditions**<sup>17</sup>, the report presents four EaSI-funded projects aimed at enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information about the posting of workers, as well as preventing and tackling undeclared work (see Table 1).

One of the main areas of EU labour law concerns **working conditions, setting down minimum requirements at European level**. This includes provisions on working time, part-time and fixed-term work, temporary workers, and the posting of workers. All of these are key to ensuring high-quality and sustainable employment and decent and adequate social protection throughout the EU.

**Table 1. Calls for proposals in the policy area of working conditions (EaSI-PROGRESS)**

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2018/011 VP/2019/008	Posting of workers: enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information	3
VP/2018/012	Activities in the field of undeclared work	1

In the policy area of **employment**, the report analyses eight projects (see Table 2). Two of the projects specifically focused on the fast-track integration of third-country nationals into the labour market; another three focused on awareness-raising activities and support for the deployment of skills assessments in the project 'Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults'

**Table 2. Calls for proposals in the policy area of employment (EaSI-PROGRESS)**

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2016/015	Fast-track integration into the labour market for third-country nationals, targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members	4
VP/2018/005	Innovative work-life balance strategies to facilitate reconciliation of professional and caring responsibilities	3
VP/2018/008	Support for the deployment of skills assessments in the implementation of 'Upskilling Pathways'	1

In the policy area of **geographical labour mobility (EaSI-EURES**<sup>18</sup>), the report analyses eight projects. All of these projects fall under the same call for proposals to provide support to national classification inventories and innovative national online services for mobile workers.

<sup>17</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en>

<sup>18</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/homepage>

**Table 3. Calls for proposals in the policy area of geographical labour mobility (EaSI-EURES)**



**EURES**  
The European  
Job Mobility Portal

**EURES** is a European job mobility network providing information, guidance and recruitment/placement services to employers, jobseekers and any citizen wishing to take advantage of freedom of movement for workers within the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA).

It covers three thematic sections:

- transparency of job vacancies, job applications and any related information for applicants and employers;
- development of services on recruitment and placing of workers in employment;
- cross-border partnerships.

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2019/010	EaSI-EURES: support to national classification inventories and innovative national online services for mobile workers	5
VP/2018/009	EaSI-EURES: Targeted mobility scheme 'Your first EURES job'	3

In the policy area of the **social finance market**, the report presents two projects (see Table 4). These projects were aimed at financial intermediaries that undertake long-term risk capital investments to social enterprises in the EaSI participating countries. The activities implemented supported transaction costs linked to these investments.

**Table 4. Calls for proposals in the policy area of social finance market (EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship)**

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2017/013 VP/2018/017	Transaction cost support for social enterprises finance	2

## 1.2. Key facts about the organisations presented

The report also presents the activities of **14 EU-level civil society network organisations funded by EaSI** as a result of the call for proposals for operating grants, which was open to EU-level NGO networks that signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission (VP/2019/013). The thematic areas in which



these organisations operate range from social inclusion and poverty reduction to the promotion of access to finance for vulnerable persons and social entrepreneurs<sup>19</sup>.

**Table 5. List of the EaSI-supported organisations presented**

Organisation	Vision and goal
ERGO	Strengthening the participation of the Roma community in civil society, and advocating for social inclusion and anti-discrimination policies
Eurochild	Advocating for children's rights and well-being
RREUSE	Supporting the development of social enterprises active in the circular economy
SOLIDAR	Advancing social justice through a just transition in Europe and worldwide
European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE)	Striving for more inclusive and integrated forms of employment
Eurodiaconia	Providing social and health care services and advocating for social justice
Euclid Network	Supporting social entrepreneurs and impact-driven leaders
FEANTSA	Tackling homelessness and its effects
FEBA	Reducing food insecurity through food waste prevention
European Platform for Rehabilitation (EPR)	Providing rehabilitation services to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups
EuroHealthNet	Promoting health and health equity between and within European countries
European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD)	Promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities through effective and high-quality service systems
The European Confederation of Workers' Cooperatives (CECOP)	Promoting and uniting industrial, service and social cooperatives
European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)	Fighting poverty and social exclusion

### 1.3. How to read this report

This report consists mainly of fiches prepared as stand-alone documents. Therefore, please turn to the fiches that are of interest and relevance to your work or personal interest. To learn more about how these fiches were developed, refer to Chapter 2 – Methodology.

<sup>19</sup> Funded as a result of the call for proposals for operating grants open to EU-level NGO networks that signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission (VP/2019/013).

## 2. Methodology

The key components of this report are fiches presenting the results of projects and actions delivered by organisations funded by the EaSI programme. These project and organisation fiches are structured according to policy areas, as well as by the themes of their respective calls for proposals. The report presents projects completed between 2018 and 2021 through action grants (Chapter 3), and the results delivered in 2020 and 2021 by the EU-level civil society network organisations supported by EaSI through operating grants (Chapter 4).

In addition to an overview of activities carried out by the grant beneficiaries, the report aims to identify and describe **potential good practices**. To single out such practices, we applied a broad definition of the term 'practice' that encompasses both policy development and implementation. In our view, a 'good practice' is a process or methodology that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended to others as a model or useful example. What constitutes a 'good practice' can include initiatives as diverse as legislation (at national, sub-national and local levels), regulation, policies, strategies, institutional frameworks, planning and coordination procedures, various interventions (programmes, projects, campaigns, subsidies, financing mechanisms, tariff structures and similar), among many others. When analysing EaSI-funded projects and organisations, the report team aimed to include all information that was instrumental to distinguishing the most successful activities, in order that only effective calls are continued in the future.

To ensure that the information collected was as comprehensive as possible, we relied on **three data collection strategies**:

1. The main sources of information were the final technical implementation reports completed by grant beneficiaries;
2. The report team also used all available additional information about the projects and organisations presented that was provided to them by the European Commission. Such information included various reports and briefings, the agendas of organised events, participant lists, financial information, a detailed description of deliverables, and external/internal evaluations;
3. Lastly, data collection was carried out using openly accessible sources, such as project/organisation websites.

The report team then analysed the content of the collected material according to a pre-developed toolkit, in order to produce fiches for each project and organisation. The **toolkit** included a project/organisation fiche template (covering pre-established criteria for analysis), a list of criteria for classifying the projects and organisations analysed, and a reference grid for indicating potential good practices.

The resulting **38 fiches** consist of two parts. The first (a table) presents general administrative data about a given project or organisation, as well as its policy areas and sub-areas (as per the pre-established classification). In the context of this general administrative information, each project fiche indicates the total contribution that the project received from the EU at the point the grant was awarded. The amount indicated may slightly differ from the actual amount that has been or will finally be received by the project beneficiaries. The final amounts paid for each grant are not always known at the point of writing this report. Therefore, to ensure consistency and provide comparable information on each grant, the decision was taken to highlight the amounts received by each grant at the point of the award.

In the second part of each fiche, we outline the aims and results of each action, as well as its effectiveness, transferability/up-scalability, sustainability, innovativeness, impact and EU added value. These criteria were also used to assess which of the activities carried out by the projects and organisations analysed could be regarded as potential good practices. As the reports on the EaSI-funded projects and organisations will, *inter alia*, be used by the auditors of the projects and organisations, the aspect of effectiveness (i.e. the extent to which the projects and organisations achieved their results) was given particular attention.

Box 1 provides a complete list of the criteria applied in analysing projects.

### Box 1. List of criteria for analysing projects

- **Socioeconomic context.** This part describes why the action was implemented and the policy-related motives behind it. It also describes how the analysed project fits into the local/national/EU policy, social and economic context.
- **Aims of the project/organisation.** This summarises what the action aimed to achieve.
- **Results, impacts, lessons learned.** This part discusses the results, medium-to-long-term impacts of the action (both current and expected), and lessons learned.
- **Identification of potential good practices.** This identifies the processes/methodologies employed in a project that could be suggested to others as examples of good practice.
- **Transferability element(s) of the project/activities (if any).** This discusses the potential for the action or its individual parts to be applied in other contexts/at other levels.
- **Innovativeness of the project/activities (if any).** Activities that are considered novel, in terms of standing out in comparison to similar actions and settings, elaborating this innovativeness.
- **Policy evidence generated by the project (if any).** An overview of any studies, reports, databases or other evidence produced to inform policy developments in the respective field.
- **Transnational dimension (if any).** This section focuses on activities implemented in more than one country, at EU or international level. In the fiches on transnational networks or projects (i.e. those that are transnational by design), this section was often not singled out, and the transnational element was instead emphasised as a horizontal theme in the fiche.
- **New partnerships created (if any).** This heading elaborates on actions that have led to organisations finding new partners due to their involvement in a given project / network.
- **Dissemination strategy (if any)** considers how the projects communicated its results to their members, stakeholders and the general public, including intermediary and final target groups.
- **European added value.** In this section, the report comments on whether the action:
  - could have been implemented or achieved similar results without EU funding (where exactly did EU funding contribute most?);
  - contributed to implementing EU legislation or ensuring it is correctly applied;
  - led to economies of scale, more efficient use of money, and better services;
  - promoted best practice examples learned from previous EU / national actions;
  - promoted benchmarking for decision-making (e.g. through peer reviews, mutual learning, producing evidence for policymakers, etc.);
  - due to its transnational character, allowed cross-border risks to be reduced and their consequences mitigated;
  - contributed to the free movement of persons;
  - contributed to networking (especially of organisations from different countries).
- **Sustainability measures.** This part explains what measures were taken to ensure that the results and impacts are sustainable. Is there any evidence that activities would / will continue without EU support?
- **Horizontal objectives.** In all of its axes and activities, the EaSI Programme should contribute to promoting gender equality (including through gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting), paying particular attention to vulnerable groups such as young people, and ensuring non-discrimination on all grounds; promoting fair working conditions and sustainable work, and combating long-term unemployment; ensuring adequate and decent

social protection; and fighting social exclusion and poverty<sup>20</sup>. This section focuses on how these horizontal objectives of the EaSI Programme were considered within the technical implementation and the content of project activities. How did a project team pay attention to vulnerable groups? Is there any evidence of the use of non-discrimination and gender equality measures (including gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting)? Do the projects in any way promote high-quality and sustainable work, adequate and decent social protection and tackle long-term unemployment, social exclusion and poverty?

The reader should note that even though the projects and organisations presented in this report were funded under the same programme and many of them had similar aims, each of them implemented a unique set of actions. Therefore, in providing an overview of them, the research team focused on the most relevant information for each, rather than including a uniform list of criteria in every fiche. In other words, each project / organisation fiche features a different combination of headings, with more emphasis being given to certain criteria over others, in line with the nature of the specific actions.



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<sup>20</sup> Regulation EU No 1296/2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

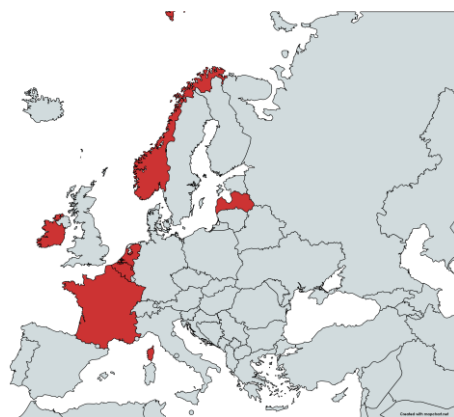
### 3. EaSI-funded projects

#### 3.1. Working conditions

##### **3.1.a. Posting of workers: enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information**

This section presents three projects aimed at further improving transnational administrative cooperation between national competent bodies and social partners involved in the monitoring and correct application of the Posting of Workers Directive and its Enforcement Directive. The projects under this call also worked to increase mutual trust among stakeholders, including promoting common actions between social partners at various levels, as well as exchanges of relevant officials and training. The actions also enhanced the evidence base in both qualitative and quantitative terms, as well as improving the evaluation of original information and data concerning various dimensions of the posting of workers.

##### **3.1.1. Posting of workers – Boosting transnational cooperation**



*'This 5th Eurodétachement project consolidated a dynamic network aimed at improving the transnational cooperation that the partners wish to support and continue.'*

Call identification number	VP/2018/011/0024
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0460
Policy area	Working conditions
Policy sub-area	Posting of workers
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>Social partners;</li> <li>Non-governmental organisations.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a questionnaire for partnering organisations about their specific individual practices in the fight against complex cases of fraud;</li> <li>Organised workshops and seminars on the topic of the posting of workers;</li> <li>Implemented 12 cooperation plans;</li> <li>Held an international conference to mark the completion of the action.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	France
Participating countries	Ireland, Norway, Belgium, Netherlands, Latvia.
Coordinator	Institut National du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle (INTEFP)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Astrées Association Travail Emploi Europe Société (France);</li> <li>Éire-Ireland (Ireland);</li> <li>Kongeriket Norge (Norway);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koninkrijk België (Belgium);</li> <li>• Koninkrijk der Nederlanden (Inspectorate SZW) (Netherlands)</li> <li>• Latvijas Republika (Latvia).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 421,890.28
Project duration	1 December 2018 – 31 May 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.intefp.travail-emploi.gouv.fr">www.intefp.travail-emploi.gouv.fr</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** this action aimed to contribute to the correct application of Directive 96/71/EC by improving the effectiveness of transnational cooperation and collaboration between the stakeholders in the field of posting of workers. Since 2011, INTEFP has completed four projects involving various EU Member States that have helped to increase the skills of professionals working in the public sector. In addition to significant changes in administrative cooperation, the projects implemented have made it possible to effectively control and monitor actions and to better inform and raise awareness among companies, workers and employers.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** taking stock of the previous actions and the experience built, this project aimed to:

- Develop cooperation plans;
- Further inform and raise awareness on the rights of posted workers;
- Identify the obstacles and barriers that hinder the control and surveillance of complex fraudulent schemes.

The project aimed to employ a sectoral approach to its activities, focusing on the construction and agriculture sectors.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the action began with a workshop aimed at building cooperation plans. The seminar focused on both the strategic and operational dimensions of the cooperation plans. Participants discussed objectives, expected results, the partnerships to be established at national level, as well as the timetable and resources needed.

The partners then successfully developed and implemented 12 cooperation plans based on three strands: (1) control and monitoring actions; (2) information and awareness-raising; and (3) prevention. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these cooperation plans had to be executed using remote working methods.

Project partners were also invited to fill in a questionnaire about the specific individual practices they employ in the fight against complex cases of fraud in the field of the posting of workers. Based on its findings, on 12 September 2019, the consortium held the seminar 'Solving complex fraud cases in the field of posting of workers – Which practices? What lessons can be learned?'. The seminar aimed to highlight various complex dimensions of selected fraud cases. In doing so, it focused on how to eliminate obstacles to better fight against fraudulent activities. The seminar was attended by 40 participants, representing 16 EU Member States.

The final conference marked the completion of the project. This was held online on 11 September 2019, and brought together 130 participants from 24 EU Member States. During the event, the results of the project were presented, together with experiences shared and challenges encountered during the lifespan of the action.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the consortium published a synthesis report providing an in-depth analysis of the significant fraudulent schemes presented



at the seminar 'Solving complex fraud cases in the field of posting of workers – Which practices? What lessons can be learned?'.

**New partnerships created:** the project team included five co-applicant organisations from five different EU Member States, and gathered together labour administration authorities from 15 EU Member States as well as an NGO from Germany (Arbeit und Leben). In addition to this wide geographical coverage, a wide spectrum of stakeholders also took joint action to support the better implementation of the EU legislative framework for the posting of workers. The partners represented trade union organisations, employers' organisations, a public sector institution, an NGO and a university. This diversity allowed for a valuable exchange of knowledge, good practices and experiences, and provided a cornerstone for the development of well-functioning cooperation of the network of social partners.

**Dissemination strategy:** all of the project's deliverables, including an overview of the cooperation plans implemented, were uploaded to a dedicated project website<sup>21</sup>. All of the cooperation plans signed were followed by an information seminar to disseminate the results achieved. In addition, informative brochures were created to reach wider audiences and raise awareness of the cooperation plans established in partnering countries.

**European added value:** this action supported the better enforcement of EU legislation with regard to the posting of workers. In addition, transnational events provided partners with an opportunity to develop a truly European mode of thinking, which may have various impacts on other aspects of their work in national contexts.

**Sustainability measures:** the sustainability of the action was assured through the cooperation plans signed between various public authorities. Several partnering countries even expressed a willingness to institutionalise these cooperation plans through bilateral agreements, or by establishing dedicated and permanent working groups.

**Horizontal objectives:** the transnational dimension was central to all of the activities implemented throughout the project. The action pursued a general objective of improving conditions with regard to the posting of workers Directive by improving cooperation between sending and receiving countries. The action also promoted high-quality and sustainable employment by fighting against posting fraud and social dumping. More specifically, this was achieved by sharing and disseminating good practice examples implemented in partnering countries.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.eurodetachment-travail.eu/>

### 3.1.2. ISA - Information Sharing Agreements. Building EU agreements for the posting of workers in the construction sector



*'Public authorities involved in posting shall address international cooperation as a political priority and earmark adequate financial resources for joint activities.'*

Call identification number	VP/2018/011/0027
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0458
Policy area	Working conditions
Policy sub-area	Posting of workers
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>Social partners</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produced seven country briefing papers providing contextual information on each of the countries covered;</li> <li>Published guidelines illustrating the features of 11 selected agreements and assessing their achievements and possible capacity to enlarge and improve;</li> <li>Organised periodic online events to promote the project's findings;</li> <li>Produced a final report assessing achievements and possible improvements in the current practices of administrative cooperation in the area of the posting of workers;</li> <li>Organised a final conference to disseminate the project's findings.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Portugal, Spain, Romania, Poland.
Coordinator	Commissione Nazionale Paritetica per le Casse Edili (IT)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association Européenne des Institutions de Protection Sociale Paritaires;</li> <li>Bulgarian Construction Chamber;</li> <li>Congés Intempéries BTP – Union des Caisses de France;</li> <li>Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (IT);</li> <li>IRSHARE SARL (IR Share) (FR)</li> <li>ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa;</li> <li>NOTUS (ES);</li> <li>MoLSJ (RO);</li> <li>Związek Zawodowy Budowlani (PL).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 425,090.00
Project duration	1 January 2019 – 31 March 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.isaproject.eu/">http://www.isaproject.eu/</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the ISIS project addressed the topic of administrative cooperation within the framework of posting, focusing on the correct implementation of Directive 96/71/EC and Directive 2014/67/EU. Administrative cooperation also concerns the correct payment of social security contributions in the sending country;



therefore, this project also covers aspects relating to the correct application of Regulation EC 883/2004.

The action builds on knowledge gained through previous EU-funded Post-Lab and EU Post-Lab projects. The former project presented good practices and identified existing cases of fraud in areas such as posting and undeclared work, while the latter explored and assessed datasets that would be of potential use in tackling such cases.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the ISA project aims to increase awareness among key stakeholders of the possible benefits for improving cross-border cooperation in the field of the posting of workers, as well as reinforcing transnational cooperation between these bodies by (1) promoting the establishment of information sharing agreements meant to monitor and ease the posting of workers; and (2) enlarging the coverage of the agreements currently in place to include other countries.

To achieve this aim, the project brings together a consortium of key actors in the area of posting (such as liaison offices, labour inspectorates, social security institutions and sectoral funds), as well as research centres with expertise on the topic, and the European umbrella organisation of paritarian institutions, and affiliating sectoral funds (AEIP).

**Results and impacts:** as a starting point, the project partners implemented an in-depth analysis of the current situation in relation to the posting of workers in their home countries. The analysis addressed (1) the posting of workers and their working conditions; (2) relevant policy discussions on the posting of workers; and (3) the roles and positions of different stakeholders with regard to the benefits and drawbacks of the posting of workers, and on the capacity for cross-border information sharing. This activity led to the identification of a network of stakeholders interested in the project's activities, and drafts of seven country briefing papers.

As a second step, the project team selected 11 agreements for further in-depth analysis. These spanned from agreements involving ministries to those involving labour inspectorates and sectoral funds. Using the findings of the country briefing papers as a starting point, the project partners compared the selected agreements to the EU-level recommendations and country-specific proposals to devise a set of guidelines that include features of the 11 selected agreements and recommendations as to their possible enlargement.

In addition, the project team created a project brochure as a way to share and disseminate the findings of the action and to promote its final conference. This brochure included references to the main outputs and a link to the video channel of CNCE, where extracts from ISA online events, as well as from the kick-off meeting and interviews, were made available. In addition, a dedicated project website was developed to host the project's content, plus updates on ISA events, reports and activities.

Project partner AEIP also organised a dissemination event, which took place online on 10 February 2021. This event involved, among others, European social partners such as the EFBWW and FIEC. To mark the completion of the project, a final conference took place online on 17 March 2021 to present the results achieved and highlight future opportunities to improve administrative cooperation between key stakeholders.

**Lessons learned:** the project team concluded that the public authorities involved in posting should address international cooperation as a political priority, and earmark adequate financial resources for joint activities. In addition, it is important that

cooperation agreements should benefit from structured governance, and should include institutions at both national and local levels. The project revealed a lack of information-sharing capacity that needs to be improved at national level first, to ensure that those institutions addressing questions related to posting are granted access to relevant information concerning the matter. Further exploration with regard to possible cooperation between public institutions and social partners or paritarian funds should be welcomed, as it will provide mutual benefits.

Among its key concerns, the project team identified the worrying role of personal contacts and relationships leading to a situation where cooperation is seen as a product of goodwill between certain officials rather than embedded as formal tasks of the authorities involved.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project resulted in three main deliverables, consisting of: (1) seven country briefing papers, which provide contextual information on each country; (2) guidelines on the ways in which the 11 selected agreements could be improved and enlarged; and (3) a final report, which includes possible improvements to the current practices of administrative cooperation in the field of posting, set against EU-wide recommendations and country-level plans.

**Dissemination strategy:** dissemination of the project's activities was carried out via newsletters, posts on social media and the ISA website, as well as through informal contacts with relevant stakeholders. The implemented activities were also promoted during events organised by the project partners. The partners were also successful in reaching out to the target audience by building a contact list that was initially populated with contacts made directly with stakeholders, and subsequently updated with participants at events who agreed to receive regular updates about the project's activities.

In addition, the CNCE used an event celebrating the centenary of the first Italian sectoral fund in the construction sector to spread information about the project via the brochure, which was distributed to approximately 300 participants.

**European added value:** the comparative findings of the project are anticipated to be particularly relevant and useful for the activities of the newly established European Labour Authority. This body could build on the experience and knowledge developed to support new pathways for cooperation between Member States, both in terms of knowledge sharing and mutual learning, as well as access to data and information relevant for ensuring compliance with the rules governing posting.

**Sustainability measures:** the findings of the ISIS project will serve as the basis for the EMEcs project – 'European market environment in the construction sector'. This project will explore the measures implemented in the construction sector to ensure the health and safety of workers ahead of the current pandemic, and to protect workers in the event of a forced interruption of activities. A particular focus will be paid to the impacts of these provisions on workers' mobility and on support measures that target workers posted abroad. In addition, the project will explore how digitalisation can improve administrative cooperation in the field of posting, as well as the efficacy of inspection activities.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project started with an acknowledgement that administrative cooperation is essential for the posting of workers to function properly as a tool to ensure freedom to provide services as well as freedom of movement for workers, while safeguarding working conditions, fair competition and proper social protection. As the topic of the posting of workers is transnational by its very nature,

the project team places a strong emphasis on cooperation activities taking place at transnational level.

### 3.1.3. SYNERGY – spreading the best practices in the implementation of EU – law on posted workers



*'The most important rule when it comes to the posting of workers is to compare provisions and apply more favourable ones.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/008/0003
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0394
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Free movement of workers;</li> <li>• Labour law.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility;</li> <li>• Public sector;</li> <li>• Entry, residence, departure and remedies;</li> <li>• Information and consultation of workers;</li> <li>• Transnational company agreements.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick-off meeting;</li> <li>• Workshops;</li> <li>• Online meeting of advisors;</li> <li>• European Labour Mobility Congress;</li> <li>• Research analysis and country-level reports and evaluations;</li> <li>• Creating an online platform providing information to workers, employers and authorities;</li> <li>• Appointing online advisers providing information and advice;</li> <li>• Organisation of focus groups and cooperation workshops in partner countries;</li> <li>• Elaboration of four sectoral toolkits and training curricula.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and Republic of North Macedonia.
Coordinator	Confederazione Generale dei Sindacati Autonomi dei Lavoratori (Italy)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Svaz podnikatelů ve stavebnictví v České Republice (Czechia);</li> <li>• Business Confederation of Macedonia (Republic of North Macedonia);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalición Sindical Independiente de Trabajadores de Madrid (Spain);</li> <li>• Malopolski Związek Protodeacon Lewiatan (Poland);</li> <li>• Stowarzyszenie Inicjatywa Mobilności Pracy (Poland);</li> <li>• Republiková únia zamestnávateľov (Slovakia).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 264,240.10
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 30 September 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="https://synergy-posted-workers.eu/en/main">https://synergy-posted-workers.eu/en/main</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the purpose of this project was to enhance the implementation and correct application of EU law on the posting of workers (Directive 96/71/EC and Directive (EU) 2018/957, 2014/67/EU) through the development of an information platform, the launch of a network of sector-specific advisers, and the development of sectoral toolkits providing practical guidelines for employers regarding the steps that need to be taken to adapt their activities to the changes introduced by Directive (EU) 2018/957. The project targeted countries that were net senders of posted workers (PL, IT, ES, SK) as well as net receiving countries (AT, CZ, NO, BE).

**Aims of the project/organisation:** to enhance the implementation and the correct application of EU law on the posting of workers, the project pursued multiple specific objectives:

- Improving understanding among representatives of employers, trade unions and public authorities, with regard to existing and new challenges relating to the posting of workers;
- Improving the capacity of social partners and authorities to cooperate with the European Labour Authority;
- Improving transnational cooperation between stakeholders and authorities in sending and receiving countries through the use of a new online platform, cooperation training, and the dissemination of information and training curricula;
- Improving access to information about the applicable terms and conditions of employment and administrative requirements for companies posting their workers within the EU;
- Aligning the actions of social partners and relevant authorities across the EU with the work programme of the ELA;
- Developing synergies, exchanging best practices and building on the outputs of previous projects;
- Involving social partners who can directly participate in the reform debate and the elaboration of various options and areas of focus, in particular through the integration of the project's activities into the biggest European event covering the field of the posting of workers.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** during the kick-off meeting in February 2020, previously implemented projects were discussed, best practices collected and shared, and methods were discussed regarding how to build on previous experience and knowledge, including developing synergy effects. The impacts of the project include better understanding of good practices, increased knowledge of national practices, the identification of difficulties in interpreting the Community rules and identifying information gaps and ways to remedy the situation. Further workshops contributed to clearly defining the information content that needed to be delivered, as well as how it should be delivered, and also the challenges involved in addressing posted workers. The project's results and next steps were further discussed at the European Labour Mobility Congress 2021, which provided both transnational visibility

for the project, and an opportunity to gain contributions from EU-level policymakers, social partners, representatives of businesses and other relevant parties.

Country-level surveys provided data on the attitudes of employers, trade unions and public authorities. These provided information about initial understandings of the new rules on the part of various actors, as well as yielding sector- and country-specific data. Discussions with country-level focus groups and interviews with selected participants further contributed to an increased understanding of the topic, while also allowing the project team to promote its activities.

An important impact of this project was the creation of an internet platform containing information aimed at posted workers (e.g. institutions they can contact, information about EU legislation, best practices for posted workers) that enables them to engage with online advisers and actors involved in the process. Five online advisers with sectoral and country-specific specialisations were appointed to provide services both through the platform and via e-mail.

In addition, the project delivered cooperation training in six countries, providing participants with the necessary tools and methods to enable effective transnational collaboration. The project also produced four sector-specific guides for employers (live-in care, the construction industry, manufacturing industry, and the transport sector) explaining the eight steps employers must follow when posting an employee abroad.

The deliverables of the project contributed to the achievement of the project's objectives by improving understanding among representatives of employers, trade unions and public authorities with regard to existing and new challenges relating to the posting of workers, thanks to the comparative analysis that resulted from the project's research. The report also provides general policy recommendations regarding posted workers, and specifies the roles and responsibilities of specific actors.

Other results included improved awareness on the part of employers of their duties under EU law with regard to posted workers. In addition, the project increased the involvement of social partners in discussions on EU policies, improved the cooperative abilities of 105 representatives from social partners and authorities from seven countries, and informed posted workers across the EU about their rights.

Similarities exist in the way different Member States implement the EU Directives on posted workers, but the main differences in the implementation of the Directive are found to be in the role of social partners. In addition, while representatives of posting companies were often uncertain as to which rules applied and in which situations, the obligation to inform the employee remains with the employer.

Without regular and thorough cooperation from authorities in different Member States, proper enforcement of the Directives is impossible to implement, as authorities in the receiving Member State have no formal control over an employer registered in another Member State, and authorities do not have the capacity to compare their own provisions with those of another Member State in order to apply the favourability principle.

**Identification of potential good practices:** selecting interviewees on the basis of discussions and participation in workshops. Creating an online platform that connected the functions of information portal with the provision of a space for communication between stakeholders and online advisers. Integration of the project's

activities with the biggest annual event covering the field of the posting of workers in Europe.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** creating an online platform that connects the functions of an information portal with the provision of a space for communication between stakeholders and online advisers. Integrating project activities with large-scale events.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** the project's innovativeness related to the use of ICT tools and social media (plugging into existing networks and creating new ones). In addition, it created an innovative online platform that connected the functions of an information portal with the provision of a space for communication between stakeholders and online advisers. Innovative dissemination of information.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project produced a significant amount of evidence. Of this, the evidence most relevant for policymaking are the five country-level reports presenting the findings of the research, and the comparative report based on this research. In addition, the project produced a guide for national advisers. All of these materials are available online. The comparative report presenting the outcomes of the research could also be useful to research centres from all EU Member States including ETUI and members of the TURI network, as well as university departments dealing with the mobility posting of workers, EU labour law and so on.

**Transnational dimension:** the project targets workers, companies and social partners in transport, construction, manufacturing and care services, as well as liaison offices and public authorities. It targets net sending countries (PL,IT,ES,SK) as well as net receiving countries (AT,CZ,NO,BE).

**Dissemination strategy:** the project's reports were disseminated to local, regional and national policymakers and socio-economic partners from partnership countries. The main tools used during the project's lifecycle included mailing lists, online platforms and social media. A detailed list of the means used for dissemination includes:

- Development of an online platform available in four languages;
- Online cooperation training curricula;
- Sector-specific toolkits for employers;
- Video tutorial based on the contents of sector-specific toolkits;
- Online survey, available at the project's website in English, Spanish and Italian;
- Five country-level reports and a comparative report;
- Guide for national advisers;
- Articles disseminating the project;
- 800 brochures;
- Newsletter.

**European added value:** the project contributed to the enhanced implementation and correct application of EU law on the posting of workers (Directive 96/71/EC and Directive (EU) 2018/957, 2014/67/EU), while gathering evidence for policymakers about posted workers.

EU funding contributed to the organising of the required project meetings, ensuring effective communication between project partners and experts (e.g. simultaneous interpretation and translation of project documents). Without EU funding, it would



have been impossible to implement a similar action involving a similar number of countries.

**Sustainability measures:** the consortium designed the action with an emphasis on its long-term impact. By producing tangible results, the consortium has sought to ensure the strong sustainability of the action. As the results are widely available after the project has been completed, it is expected that organisations active in the posting of workers will make use of the resources produced during the project (e.g. training curricula, toolkits, video tutorials). By reaching EU and national-level policymakers, social partners and academic experts, the consortium also considers the value and the dissemination potential of the project results to have increased. This should support the further exploitation of the research results in academic research and policymaking.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project’s deliverables have improved the understanding of existing and new challenges in relation to posted workers. Its recommendations, specifying the roles of different actors in the field of posted workers, and offering sector-specific toolkits that provide ways to address shortcomings with regard to posted workers, can be expected to lead to improvements in their employment and social conditions.

### **3.1.b. Activities in the field of undeclared work**

The main objective of this call for proposals was to complement and add value to the activities indicated in the work programme of the [European Platform tackling undeclared work](#)<sup>22</sup>. Hence, projects funded under this call are designed to develop and fund initiatives that contribute to enhancing the implementation, application, knowledge and better enforcement of EU and national law in the area of undeclared work.

The project presented in this section well reflects the objectives of the call. It fosters joint cross-border activities to improve partner countries’ technical capacity, and to implement preventive measures in the fight against undeclared work.

### **3.1.4. Tackling Undeclared Work in the Nordic Countries 2.0**



*The project has reached more than one million residents, and several hundred experts across the whole Union.’*

<sup>22</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1299&intPageId=4875&langId=en>

Call identification number	VP/2018/012/0052
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0427
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Undeclared work
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 104 joint inspections and exchange of staff;</li> <li>• Sharing of information and mutual learning events;</li> <li>• Communication events;</li> <li>• Evaluation.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Sweden
Participating countries	Estonia, Denmark, Norway, Latvia, Iceland, Finland.
Coordinator	Swedish Work Environment Authority
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eesti Vabariik (Estonia);</li> <li>• Kongeriget Danmark (Denmark);</li> <li>• Latvijas Republika (Latvia);</li> <li>• Lydveldio Island (Iceland);</li> <li>• Suomen Tasavalta (Finland).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 674,640.00
Project duration	3 February 2019 – 2 March 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.av.se">www.av.se</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** Tackling Undeclared Work in the Nordic countries 2.0 is a continuation of the work carried out within the scope of its predecessor project, 'Tackling Undeclared work in the Nordic countries 1.0'. The initial project aimed to reinforce cooperation between enforcement authorities such as labour inspectorates, and promoted the mutual exchange of good practices in the fight against undeclared work both within and between the Nordic countries and the EU.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project aimed to strengthen cross-border cooperation between enforcement authorities, to better tackle undeclared work. As a continuation of the previous project, its activities followed the same intervention logic used before, but also aimed to include the Baltic countries and Faroe Islands. The main objectives of the project were to:

- Identify best practices in how to carry out inspections relating to undeclared work;
- Promote fair working conditions and raise awareness about the consequences of undeclared work;
- Strengthen cooperation between authorities, trade unions, employers' organisations and other relevant stakeholders, to create a common vision regarding how to best tackle undeclared work;
- Test process indicators produced as a result of the previous project, which measure a country's capacity to facilitate cross-agency cooperation to combat undeclared work.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** in total, 104 joint labour inspections in seven different sectors were carried out within the scope of the project, along with study visits to labour authorities. By carrying out joint cross-border inspections, the inspectors gained an opportunity to learn from colleagues in another project country about their regulations, organisation, priorities, methods of inspection, administrative capacity and culture.

In addition, the project team successfully implemented a self-assessment tool for the evaluation of each country's capacity to facilitate cross-agency cooperation to combat



undeclared work. This tool helps to identify the bottlenecks in each enforcement authority that hinder their capacity to combat undeclared work.

Two transnational webinars were also organised. The first of these took place in September 2020, and focused on the road transport sector. The webinar was attended by 90 participants including representatives from ELA, road transport unions and employers' organisations, as well as experts in taxation and in occupational safety and health. The webinar aimed to create a common understanding of the biggest problems faced, and how to facilitate effective cross-border cooperation. The second webinar was held in February 2021 and focused mainly on the gig economy and platform work. In total, 77 participants attended this event. They shared best practices, experiences and visions of how best to tackle undeclared work in these newly formed labour markets.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project's activities were carried out by four distinct working groups. The working group on inspections produced 'NordBalt – UDW final inspections report', presenting the inspections carried out throughout the project and the lessons learnt. The working group on knowledge exchange produced a report on 'Combating undeclared work: recommendations, procedures and challenges', which includes country reports. Another report, 'Joint Efforts Combating Undeclared Work', was produced by the working group on cooperation. This covered obstacles, opportunities, good practice examples and proposals received through the webinars, workshops, inspections and other mutual knowledge exchange events. Lastly, the working group on communication released a final report on all communication activities that were carried out during the project's implementation cycle. In addition, the working group made available a communication handbook with the purpose of providing examples of how authorities can better communicate in order to combat undeclared work. All of the reports and policy evidence generated by the project can be found at a dedicated project website.<sup>23</sup>

**Dissemination strategy:** the project team shared and discussed experiences of joint supervision between countries at the Nordic-Baltic Dissemination Webinar, which was held on 22 March 2021. During the webinar, key findings and lessons learned from all of the working groups were shared among the project partners and relevant stakeholders.

**European added value:** initially, the activities of the European Platform Tackling Undeclared work, where the participating organisations established and learned about cross-border collaboration, set the foundation for building strong partnerships. EU funding was crucial not only for strengthening existing partnerships but also for creating new ones.

**Sustainability measures:** the established network of work environment authorities, particularly labour inspectorates, is based on a joint and written agreement to continue cooperating in the future. In addition, another Baltic country, Lithuania, has also signed this agreement and will henceforth join the network.

**Horizontal objectives:** this project promoted high-quality employment and equality between women and men. Some of its activities focused on awareness-raising, and directly targeted workers in precarious working conditions. Through communication and awareness-raising campaigns, the project team aimed to increase the capacity of enforcement authorities to fight poverty and social exclusion and to guarantee adequate and decent social protection.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.vinnumalastofnun.is/en/nbudwp>

## 3.2. Employment

### ***3.2.a. Fast-track integration into the labour market for third country nationals targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members***

Four projects funded under this call for proposals aimed to promote the development and testing of innovative and effective mechanisms to ensure fast-track integration into the labour market. They also worked to develop sustainable multi-level partnership models for integrating their target groups into the labour market. Lastly, they fostered the sharing of knowledge and experience between different Member States with regard to already operational mechanisms to swiftly and successfully insert members of the target groups into the labour market, with a particular focus on the challenges faced by women.

The actions funded resulted in the effective integration of the targeted groups into the labour market. The success of these actions was ensured through the following activities:

- Analysis of labour market needs;
- Skills matching and profiling;
- Creation of a long-term vision;
- Fighting against stereotypes of gender roles among migrant communities and the promotion of gender equality;
- Creation of sustainable mechanisms and strategies that can be transferred and replicated.

### 3.2.1. FAB: Fast Track Action Boost

*'One size does not fit all! The more we can move from standardised services to services tailored to a specific target group, the more we can respond to their needs and achieve real results.'*



*'One size does not fit all! The more we can move from standardised services to services tailored to a specific target group, the more we can respond to their needs and achieve real results.'*

Call identification number	VP/2016/015/0096
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0441
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Public employment services
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and impact assessment.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Context research and policy analysis;</li> <li>• Training, coaching and mentoring visits;</li> <li>• Knowledge-sharing study visits, peer reviews and benchmarking;</li> <li>• Development of transfer and adaptation plan (TAP);</li> <li>• Local empowerment workshops;</li> <li>• Curriculum development and ToT delivery;</li> <li>• Pilot services to and with refugees;</li> <li>• Developing the capacity of administrations and multi-level partnerships;</li> <li>• Setting up policy / practice working groups.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Italy, Spain, Germany, Serbia, Austria, Sweden.
Coordinator	Comune di Milano
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencia para el Empleo de Madrid (Spain);</li> <li>• Agenzia Metropolitana per la formazione, l'orientamento e il lavoro (Italy);</li> <li>• MetropolisNet-European Metropolis Employment Network EWIV;</li> <li>• Republika Srbija (Serbia);</li> <li>• Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales (Germany);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SÖSTRA Sozialökonomische Strukturanalysen GmbH (Germany);</li> <li>• Stadtschulrat für Wien (Austria);</li> <li>• Stockholms Kommun (Sweden).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 1,891,441.05
Project duration	1 February 2018 – 30 April 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.fabproject.eu">www.fabproject.eu</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** governance with regard to the social inclusion of refugees depends not only on the political vision and organisational efficiency of cities, but also on exogenous factors such as European regulations, national legislation and the socio-economic situation. Policies towards asylum seekers and refugees are at the centre of the European political agenda, and remain a pivotal subject for the newly elected European Parliament. The European Commission is tackling many issues related to migration while trying to coordinate the various national policies and regulations. During the lifetime of the FAB project, Austria, Italy, Serbia and Spain all had new governments, which modified national policies several times. Any city must maximise its efficiency in any given conditions, which requires wise and coordinated use of knowledge, resources and networks. Furthermore, the regulatory framework, socio-economic conditions, operational capacity, city budget, and the profiles of migrants vary greatly from city to city, and from country to country. Therefore, it takes a well-developed adaptive capacity to put other people's experiences to use.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** FAB adopted a city-centred approach to fast-track integration into the labour market for refugees, their families, and other persons seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention or as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

The specific objectives pursued in the FAB project were to:

- Improve the integration of the populations of refugees, asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection in the target contexts by adapting, testing and mainstreaming relevant policies, measures and practices;
- Improve the capacities and knowledge of key players at city level to plan, implement and mainstream those measures, service delivery mechanisms and practices that are most relevant and effective as responses to the specific challenges emerging in the different contexts;
- Develop innovative policy approaches, practices, methods and guidelines flowing from the project results with regard to fast-track mechanisms for the integration of refugees and women into the labour market.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** a glance through the numbers for the FAB project reveals its complexity: six European cities took on the challenge, and 11 partner organisations deployed 72 officers for 39 months from February 2018 to April 2021. This generous input generated four study visits involving 89 participants, who shared 23 best practices; 10 local empowerment workshops attended by 101 participants; five pilot implementation programmes with 250 direct beneficiaries, of whom 169 were women (67.6 %); five 'Training the Trainers' programmes for 130 practitioners; and 10 transnational mentoring visits. Moreover, thousands of people were reached daily through the project and partners' websites, social media and local dissemination meetings.

The project contributed to increasing the knowledge about the situation of refugees in the partners' contexts, as well as about the main policy and practice drivers. It also developed a functioning peer-mentoring system among the participating cities, for the

adaptation and transfer of fast-track and women's integration models and practices. Furthermore, it contributed to effective integration of refugees in partner cities and countries through the piloting and testing of innovative practices. Lastly, it enhanced the capacities of administrations and multi-level partnerships through the development of policy and practice.

**Identification of potential good practices:** one of the most innovative aspects of FAB was the project's transfer and adaptation plan (TAP). This challenged, on one hand, the notion that good practices are society-specific and are hardly replicable, and on the other hand, the opposing notion that good practices can be applied anywhere without regard to context. FAB's TAP experimented with these notions in an unorthodox manner by demonstrating that under certain conditions, good practices can inspire others and be transferred or even be replicated by others, also including failures. These conditions include the existence of a community of practices, adequate funding, and openness to failure.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the FAB mentoring system operated among the five participating metropolitan areas and enabled the partners to exchange, adapt and transfer some of the most interesting experiences concerning fast-track integration and the inclusion of refugees, especially women, into the labour market. Five experimental pilots were carried out in Milan, Berlin, Vienna, Stockholm and Belgrade to address the same challenge with five different approaches, in five different legislative, social, and economic environments, thus providing a multitude of feedback to analyse and learn from.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** FAB provided an innovative European policy approach that is easily adaptable to numerous city settings. FAB chose a city-centred approach to fast-track integration into the labour market for refugees, their families, and other persons seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention or as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. FAB's city-centred approach had three main pillars: multi-stakeholder partnership, transfer of knowledge, and the development of innovative measures.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the main policy papers and reports developed throughout the project included:

- FAB best practices repertory;
- Final publication;
- Final recommendations for a European partnership and intervention model;
- Final conference documentation;
- Toolkit for peer mentoring cities in Europe;
- FAB guidelines;
- Policy strategy outline.

Moreover, several case studies and research reports from individual cities were made available at the project's website.

**Transnational dimension:** the project is transnational by the virtue of its design. FAB relied on existing local partnerships, strengthening and connecting them at a transnational level. Throughout the project, six European cities took on the challenge and 11 partner organisations deployed 72 officers for 39 months between February 2018 and April 2021.

**New partnerships created:** in Berlin, a new project partner, GoldNetz, was included to contribute to the action, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of refugee integration in the partner cities and countries through piloting and testing innovative

practices. GoldNetz was responsible for the implementation of Job Boost: a FAB pilot project for female refugees. Meanwhile, and throughout the project, four partnership agreements amendments flexibly realigned human, instrumental and financial resources to better achieve the objectives laid down.

**Dissemination strategy:** the dissemination strategy targeted the relevant stakeholders including policymakers at the EU, national, and local levels; practitioners; local authorities; scholars; NGOs; social parties, associations; activists; and refugees. The outreach plan relied on FAB corporate channels including the official website, the Facebook page, the YouTube channel, in addition to disseminating other digital and printed outreach material including flyers / leaflets, newsletters, and scientific papers. Moreover, a partner dissemination map was designed to maximise the project's visibility by capitalising on the partners' media platform. The map included eight websites, 23 social media channels (YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook). Additionally, dissemination meetings were organised in parallel to the participation in relevant conferences, seminars, and other high-level events.

**European added value:** with a transnational project design such as that of FAB, EU funding and policy support is crucial to facilitating country- and city-level cooperation both from a financial as well as a technical perspective. Moreover, the project's objectives are completely aligned with the EU's political agenda, in which asylum seekers and refugee policies represent a pivotal subject, both for the EU and for the participating Member States.

**Sustainability measures:** FAB's pilot experimentations became permanent policies in several cities before the end of the project. In Stockholm, thanks to cooperation with the city's districts, Neighbourhood Mothers was approved as a long-term programme in the city. In Vienna, ComPare was included in the department of education's standard approach to career guidance for youngsters. Meanwhile, Berlin vertical partnership included in its Job Boost experimentation the legislative body (Senate), as well as a consultancy agency (MetNet), and an implementing organisation (GoldNetz). Milan, thanks to collaboration between the three Council departments and several employment institutions, is ready to bring its experience to the newly opened 'one-stop shop' managed by the Social Policy Department

**Horizontal objectives:** FAB crosses the issues of job inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees with a gender-balanced approach, even when inflows of targeted people may change due to many factors including the evolution of international crises, EU border policies, and the law enforcement policies of the EU and neighbouring countries. Currently, many of the countries of first arrival face an unforeseen rise in unaccompanied male minors, which may cause policymakers shift the focus from gender issues to age issues.

### 3.2.2. RIAC - Regional Integration Accelerators

*'RIAC modifies the logic, methodology and timing of the standard integration process by ensuring that the different pathways are implemented simultaneously and not in sequence.'*



Call identification number	VP/2016/015/0117
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0469
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active inclusion;</li> <li>• Mobility;</li> <li>• Youth unemployment;</li> <li>• Skills.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities ;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implemented 21 RIAC units (four in Germany, seven in Turkey, four in Denmark, six in Italy);</li> <li>• Involved 1,078 participants, of whom 224 were integrated into the labour market.</li> <li>• Activated 21 'speed managers', one for each RIAC unit;</li> <li>• Activated 24/7 integration measures in relation to learning the language of the host country;</li> <li>• Created opportunities for refugees to volunteer and socialise with locals;</li> <li>• Established five RIAC units dedicated to female refugees and asylum seekers;</li> <li>• Established dedicated RIAC self-employment programmes to enhance the entrepreneurship (self-employment) skills and employability of the target group;</li> <li>• Disseminated project achievements through newsletters, website, films and brochures in several languages;</li> <li>• Implemented at least one conference in each partner country, and held a final conference.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	Italy, Denmark, Turkey.



Coordinator	Stadtverwaltung Offenbach
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alisei Societa Cooperativa Sociale (Italy)</li> <li>• Centro Informazione Documentazione e Iniziativa per lo Sviluppo – C.I.D.I.S. – Onlus (Italy)</li> <li>• Esbjerg Kommune (Denmark)</li> <li>• Habitat Dernegi (Turkey)</li> <li>• Iltica ve goc Arastirmalari Merkezidernegi (Turkey)</li> <li>• Kiz Sinnova Gesellschaft fur Soziale Innovationen gGmbH (Germany)</li> <li>• Stadtverwaltung Offenbach (Germany)</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 2,027,203.14
Project duration	1 January 2018 – 30 June 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.offenbach.de">www.offenbach.de</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** even when they are included into a reception system, refugees and asylum seekers encounter many obstacles in accessing the labour market. Despite an increase in active policies in their favour over recent years, they remain one of the groups most vulnerable and exposed to poverty and social exclusion. Long waiting times for asylum applications, the lack of social and informal networks that facilitate the job search, poor knowledge of the local language and widespread discrimination all contribute to making it even more difficult for the asylum seekers and refugees present in various EU countries to gain access to dignified and sustainable employment.

The Regional Integration Accelerators (RIAC's) aim to address these challenges by reducing initial inequalities and making the integration process more effective.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the main objectives of the RIAC project were to create high-quality and sustainable jobs, promote social protection and support the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany, Denmark, Italy and Turkey. The RIAC project aimed to develop tools, expertise and a common strategy for accelerated integration for refugees and asylum seekers into the labour market in the aforementioned countries. These resources can and should be transferable to any other country or region in Europe.

RIAC units (RIACs) are decentralised units responsible for the quick placement ('integration') of migrants and refugees into the labour market. RIACs are established via the cooperation of employers. Given that RIAC units operate locally, they are able to map the structures of the participating ('cooperating') employers and focus on their actual needs.

The sub-goals of the project are (according to the implementation of the RIAC units):

- 21 RIAC units in four countries, 756 participants, 225 labour market integrations;
- Reducing integration time for participants from a long period such as 24 months, to 12 months or less;
- Recruiting 50 employers to the project;
- Establishing at least four Speed Managers;
- Integrating 200 mentors;
- Developing three special 24/7 offers;
- Establishing at least five mother-child RIAC units in three countries;
- Implementation of at least five self-employment RIAC units in two countries.



**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the activities carried out under this project helped to bring about indirect and immediate changes in the local landscape. This was achieved through the commitment of partners to linking RIAC actions to other projects and initiatives promoting social cohesion and democratic values. In doing so, it promoted a new way of thinking about 'integration.' Instead of focusing solely on placements in the labour market, the project had a broader focus, ranging from employability to social justice, the inclusion of vulnerable groups, the inclusion of gender and the ethical values of a society in general. While partners followed this broad objective, they also established their own individual goals and actions, taking into account the specific conditions in their own countries. Each country set its own priorities and designed the best strategy to help address local challenges, in accordance with their context.

Over the course of the project, 21 RIAC units were implemented (four in Germany, seven in Turkey, four in Denmark, and six in Italy), involving 1,078 people. These led to 224 integrations into the labour market. The project expected to activate at least four speed managers, but the partners went further, successfully activating one speed manager for each RIAC unit. Speed managers are central figures whose role is to manage the processes and ensure the integration and coordination of technical and linguistic training, bureaucracy procedures, mentoring, orientation and job placement activities.

Recruiting employers to the project was a very complex issue. Each partner had to adjust its strategy to the peculiarities of their respective region. The Turkish and Italian partners involved employers through a broad-based acquisition campaign. In Denmark and Germany, the inclusion of employers was facilitated through an existing network of contacts.

The activation of integration measures 24/7 was achieved through the learning of the language of the host country. Some partners more than others made use of participants' free time by creating opportunities for volunteering and socialising with locals. In this sense, it is difficult to separate these activities from mentoring and teaching; the holistic approach to the social and soft skills of the participants forms a coherent picture that is not easy to describe in structured terms. Religious values merged with democratic ideals; employers assumed roles as facilitators in many aspects of life, not just professional – especially where participants were employed in small and medium-sized family businesses (Italy, Turkey).

The RIAC project also experimented with a self-employment programme that allowed participants to create their own hypothetical companies and start-ups with support from specialists / partners in the subject matter concerned. KIZ, Habitat, Alisei and IGAM established dedicated RIACs specifically focused on enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of the targeted groups.

RIACs, designed for both asylum seekers and refugees, have proved particularly useful to asylum seekers, who are generally excluded from socio-labour pathways due to the precariousness of their legal status and the uncertainty surrounding their stay in the territory.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** RIAC units were able to develop, test and outline a scalable and transferable model for the accelerated integration of refugees into the labour market on a regional scale. Because RIACs can use local conditions as a starting point and provide an individually coordinated solution, they can be modified to adapt to local, regional and national particularities.

This makes the concept easily transferable to different contexts because it does not contain abstract and rigid definitions that must be strictly followed.

RIAC's methodology prioritises an integration process that respects the individual characteristics of refugees as well as the needs of the local labour market. Instead of focusing solely on job placement, it promotes the long-term employability of refugees by considering their lives as a whole, with different aspects influencing their life and their socio-economic integration in the host country. As integration pathways aimed at small groups, RIAC's approach can be particularly useful for carrying out personalised activities targeting vulnerable groups.

The model was constantly adapted to local conditions (political and economic), which helped to create innovative solutions which could be shared with the project partners. This repeated transfer of knowledge and adaptation of practices to local contexts ensured the transferability and scalability of this model. In particular, tools for the integration of specific target groups (women and self-employed workers) in the labour market were translated and transferred into very different regional contexts. For instance, in Italy female refugees who were trafficked and deprived of residence permits were supported to establish structured cooperatives as a form of self-employment. This approach was picked up by other partners in Turkey and Germany.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities: the** RIAC project modified the logic, methodology and timing of the standard integration process by implementing different pathways simultaneously, instead of in sequence. By simultaneously promoting the socio-economic autonomy of refugees and activating their resources, the project was able to match the motivation that migrants bring with them with the needs of the host society. RIAC's approach focused on a constant and gradual evolution by taking small but consistent steps every day. It focused on employability, rather than solely on placement. In RIAC, the acceleration of socio-labour integration processes is not intended as a race towards employment. Instead, it consists of anticipating and synthesising the various activities useful for integration, to ensure participants ready to face the labour market autonomously and in a reduced timeframe.

The RIAC project's approach can be impactful where it focuses on a holistic approach to integration by taking into account diverse areas, including social, economic and political, that affect the whole life of the individual.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project coordinator has established a dedicated [website](#) and social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)) via which information about the transnational RIAC project, partner organisations, relevant resources and events are shared. The website provides [downloadable resources](#) such as teaching materials and brochures in English and other languages, as well as the RIAC Handbook and RIAC Sustainability report, which are available in English.

**Transnational dimension:** the project was transnational, with partners from Germany, Denmark, Italy and Turkey. The partners exchanged experiences across national borders. In addition to local events in each of the partner countries, a final conference was held at which partners had an opportunity to exchange lessons learned and discuss the way forward.

**New partnerships created:** different partnerships have been created at all levels of the project, ranging from local partnerships with employer organisations, local authorities, RIAC target groups and social partners, as well as a partnership at the consortium level and between the lead partners and European institutions. For

example, in northern European countries, partnerships with local institutions were instrumental to successful placement, as they financially supported the vocational training of participants. In countries with fragmented labour markets characterised by small and medium-sized enterprises, partnerships with family-run businesses were crucial to the placement of refugees. Moreover, each partner organisation created its own network, and these were instrumental to the local success of the project. Some country-specific partnerships include those with volunteering organisations in Turkey; small and medium-sized enterprises in Italy; and institutional partners in Germany and Denmark. Equally important is the partnership created between the participating organisations. Thanks to the project and funding from the EU, these organisations were able to cooperate, share best practices and learn from others throughout the three years of the project and beyond.

**Dissemination strategy:** the dissemination strategy for the project partners was oriented towards the following actions:

- acquisition of participants;
- recruitment of employers;
- seeking endorsement from public authorities;
- dissemination of the model at regional and national levels;
- dissemination of the model at the international level.

Communication activities and products were tailored towards different target groups by differentiating their approach, language, communication media and channels. For instance, to recruit participants, the project team mainly relied on flyers in local languages, which were distributed in places where refugees gather and at the first reception facilities as well as on social media platforms. Similarly, teaching materials and event documentation were shared via the project website and uploaded to the Pro Arbeit cloud platform. Links and login details to access these resources were provided to the relevant stakeholders. For meetings with employers and public administrations, the project teams relied on brochures in local languages. Partners also helped to promote national and regional conferences during their events.

To transfer and scale up the project, a 'Blueprint' brochure was produced in all of the partners' languages, and disseminated locally. In Germany, a RIAC toolkit was created, consisting of a textile bag, one poster, one copy of the manual, a copy of the blueprint brochure, and copies of the newsletter. Given the large volume of dissemination material, a special QR code was provided to the programme's participants to access these materials via the RIAC website.

The project provided an opportunity to share information and knowledge between several European partners and develop a successful model for the socio-economic integration of refugees. The most visible added value of the European component is provided by the dimension of autonomy within the project. While partners were able to use existing procedures, they were provided with clear encouragement to consider new and more effective methods. The RIAC methodology encouraged local authorities to critically examine their existing approaches to the integration of refugees, and to move from a dogmatic idea of sequenced actions to a new, holistic approach of parallel processes. This helped to speed up the various actions and maintain a high level of motivation among the participants. Further European added value is delivered through the project's objective assessment of current integration strategies. This is something many institutions cannot afford to carry out, due to a lack of time and financial resources. The European dimension offered each partner organisation the opportunity to benefit from the experiences and know-how of other partners.

**Sustainability measures:** to ensure the sustainability, scalability and transnational relevance of this approach, project partners produced standardised documentation of the functionality and results of the RIACs. This included the formulation, publication, and implementation of guidelines, rules and specifications for common and repeated use, aimed at achieving the optimum degree of order and uniformity in a given context, discipline or field. The handbook, manuals and templates will allow any third-party organisation to use and apply this integration approach within their own country or region. The Blueprint brochure provides a generalised model, with a proposed methodology to potential decision makers and policy-makers active in policies relating to the integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market.

**Horizontal objectives:** improving the employability of refugee and asylum seekers women was one of the main topics in RIAC project. Some partners (Alisei in Italy, KIZ in Germany and Esbjerg in Denmark) implemented a total of five RIAC units dedicated to this target group. They also transferred their knowledge and outputs to the other partners. Esbjerg took the lead in designing the topic and sharing it with the rest of the partners.

### 3.2.3. FORWORK - Fostering Opportunities of Refugee WORKers

*'Impact assessment is the key to evaluating the effectiveness of projects, in particular if financed by public funds.'*

# forwork



Call identification number	VP_2016_015_0171
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0446
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public employment services</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>Employment services;</li> <li>Asylum seekers.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registration of asylum seekers in the Piedmont PES database;</li> <li>Provision of mentoring and placement services;</li> <li>Skills profiling / mapping;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language, civics and short VET courses;</li> <li>• Recognition of informal and non-formal skills.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Italy and Albania
Coordinator	Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive del Lavoro (Anpal)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adriapol – Smart and Creative Development (Albania);</li> <li>• Agenzia Piemonte Lavoro (Italy);</li> <li>• Agjencia Kombëtare e Arsimit, Formimit Profesional dhe Kualifikimeve, (Albania);</li> <li>• Centro Internazionale di Formazione dell'ILO (Italy);</li> <li>• Fondazione Rodolfo Debenedetti (Italy);</li> <li>• Forcoop Consorzio Sociale Società Cooperativa Sociale Impresa Sociale (Italy);</li> <li>• Kairos Mestieri srl (Italy).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 2,339,568.1
Project duration	1 February 2018 – 30 September 2021
Project/organisation website	www.anpal.gov.it

**Socioeconomic context:** emergency reception centres (CAS) are under the competence of the Ministry of the Interior and local prefectures. While waiting for their asylum applications to be processed, asylum seekers in these centres are legally entitled to work. However, they lack proper access to employment services aimed at enhancing their participation and integration in local labour markets. Moreover, they are challenged by several existing constraints including a lack of relevant language skills, the complexity of the recognition process for their prior learning, as well as academic and professional qualifications, and their limited knowledge of their new socioeconomic context. Therefore, successful labour market integration is essential for sustainable employment, and is likely to reduce the risk of poverty and social exclusion for this specific vulnerable population.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** FORWORK aimed to develop, implement and evaluate innovative paths to the effective integration of asylum seekers in the labour market. The proposed action tested a new national model of integration, piloted in the Piedmont Region in Italy and, on a smaller scale, in Albania. In Italy, the specific objectives of the project were as follows: involvement of the local public employment service (PES) in the provision of services in cooperation with private social enterprises; experimenting with a targeted and individualised approach to labour market integration services (through mentorship) in the local PES; experimenting with a formative path aimed at a vulnerable targeted population, and conducting impact evaluation using an experimental research design. In Albania, an intervention was planned for asylum seekers and refugees hosted at the National Centre for Asylum in Tirana. Activities included skills profiling, Albanian language and civic education courses, as well as VET courses (for a smaller group of beneficiaries).

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** in Italy, 592 asylum seekers received one or more of the project's individualised support measures according to each beneficiary's specific needs. Around 58 % of FORWORK beneficiaries participated in placement activities, each receiving an average of 10 hours' individual support from a job mentor. In Albania, the project's beneficiaries participated in skills profiling, language and civic education courses, and VET courses. As an additional activity, the Albanian partners organised a training course on asylum-related issues for 30 public officials.

With regard to labour market integration, FORWORK increased the employment rate among the beneficiaries by 15 percentage points, which corresponds to an increase of 37 % compared with the employment rate among non-participants. Its effect on

the employment rate among male participants was 19 percentage points, while the increase for female participants was 10 percentage points. Meanwhile, there was a similar increase in earnings as well (35 %). In addition, around 20 % of the beneficiaries were recruited for internships under FORWORK using additional national funds from the Ministry of Labour (82 internships were activated between January 2020 and July 2021). Moreover, FORWORK had a positive impact on the participants' knowledge of the Italian language, with around 25 % of beneficiaries participating in language, civic education and vocational training courses. The project also impacted the social networks of participating individuals.

**Identification of potential good practices:** adopting an experimental approach to the design of the impact evaluation for the Italian pilot is a good practice that should be followed by other projects and organisations wherever it is deemed relevant and feasible. A sample of 1,262 asylum seekers, hosted in a representative sample of reception centres (CAS), was monitored for the purposes of impact evaluation. Half of the potential beneficiaries were randomised into the programme (treatment), while the other half were monitored as the control group. The evaluation offered evidence that FORWORK had a positive and significant impact on the employment rate of its beneficiaries. The benefits of the project also extended to social integration.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the project presented an inter-institutional cooperation model that embraces a plethora of entities such as the Ministry of Labour (which co-financed the project), the Ministry of Interior, ANPAL, APL, and the prefecture of Turin, among others. The model followed a combined approach to taking care of its vulnerable target population, based on local PESs and cooperation with private social enterprises. The consortium had a multi-level governance structure, with strengthened collaboration between national government institutions, local authorities and various stakeholders operating in the local labour markets.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** a crucial element in the success of the FORWORK intervention was its individualised pathways for the integration of asylum seekers. After joining the project, each beneficiary was assigned to a mentor in a one-to-one relationship. Wherever needed, planned services also included the support of inter-cultural mediators and job coaches. These professional figures accompanied the beneficiaries along their integration path, providing them with services relating to skills assessment, mentoring and placement.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project published several key documents, including:

- FORWORK Italy: impact evaluation report;
- FORWORK Italy: description of activities;
- FORWORK Albania: final report.

**Transnational dimension:** the project had a transnational scope that included Italy and Albania. While Italy represents the main location for the project's activities, the choice of Albania came after a baseline survey was carried out in 2019 that confirmed Albania as a transit country for asylum seekers (most respondents stated that they did not plan to stay in Albania, and expected to move elsewhere within a short period).

**New partnerships created:** APL strengthened the relationship between Piedmont region and its research institute, IRES Piemonte, through regular and stable communication and the organisation of activities to create synergies with similar projects including PRIMA, BUONA TERRA and SOFIA, which were financed by the National AMIF fund. Moreover, APL consolidated its institutional relations with other



public bodies (Turin Prefecture, associated entity) and local strategic stakeholders (for example, with CEIPIEMONTE, the Piedmont Agency for Investments, Export and Tourism) to strengthen the project's local network. In addition, FORWORK's final event, held in September 2021 in Turin, provided an opportunity to strengthen the network of key local actors.

**Dissemination strategy:** the project deliverables were, and continue to be, communicated both online and during live knowledge-sharing and reporting events. The FORWORK website went live in February 2021 as the main online vehicle for disseminating the project's outputs and policy evidence. The website is available in both English and Italian. Another accessible platform is the ITC-ILO website. The preliminary results from the impact evaluation report were presented at the final FORWORK conference, held in Turin on 28 September 2021. Partners are also expected to make use of their contacts lists to disseminate reports to selected target audiences (policy evaluation researchers, local and national policymakers, PES personnel, etc.)

**European added value:** the project addresses one of the most pressing issues for the European Union: migration and asylum. Thus, it contributes, in a novel way, to alleviating economic burdens that would otherwise result from a high unemployment rate amongst asylum seekers, by facilitating their integration into the labour market, as well as the effective utilisation of their professional skills and qualifications. Meanwhile, the project has capitalised on the existing EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals in its skills mapping activities.

**Sustainability measures:** FORWORK partners called for the greater involvement of local prefectures and CAS centres to enhance collaboration between all actors in the field of reception policies. In alignment with this, the sustainability of the project will rely mainly on the involvement of local PESs to continue the social and labour market inclusion of the beneficiaries, as well as to engage them in local social networks of public and private services.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project targeted one of the most vulnerable groups: asylum seekers who were in the early stage of the application process for gaining refugee status (in practice, the individuals selected were waiting for their first meeting with the territorial commission). Without strong and well-tailored support packages, it would have been extremely challenging for those individuals to integrate into the labour market. The project was particularly welcoming to the participation of women. Women made up 78.5 % of the 172 participants in the organised training sessions; 66 % of the 244 participants in the exchanges of good practice, peer reviews and mutual learning events; and 70.6 % of the 187 participants in the organised conferences, seminars and other high-level events.



### 3.2.4. ALMIT – Acceleration of the labour market integration of immigrants through the mapping of skills and training

*'Mapping participants' skills and competences and providing them an overview of job opportunities definitely strengthened their capacities and their chances to take part in a vocational training or further education.'*



Call identification number	VP/2016/015/0179
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0448
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills;</li> <li>• Youth employment;</li> <li>• Mobility.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners.</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepared training package consisting of language courses, civic skills course, language training course, intercultural course and course on ICT tools;</li> <li>• Produced a training handbook in four different languages;</li> <li>• Created a dedicated project website;</li> <li>• Analysed local labour market trends and rules on social aid;</li> <li>• Provided advisory support for the recognition and validation of competences;</li> <li>• Offered counselling on settlement and job-seeking processes;</li> <li>• Organised joint events linking job-seekers and local enterprises.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Bulgaria
Participating countries	Turkey, Serbia, Austria.
Coordinator	Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beogradska otvorena škola (Serbia);</li> <li>• Council of Refugees in Bulgaria (Bulgaria);</li> <li>• Covekoljublje, Dobrotvorna Fondacija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve (Serbia);</li> <li>• Düzce Province (Turkey);</li> <li>• Opština SID (Serbia);</li> <li>• Osterreichische Jungarbeiterbewegung Ojab (Austria);</li> <li>• Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria)</li> <li>• Zgura-M EOOD (Bulgaria).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 979,177.50
Project duration	1 January 2018 – 30 June 2020

**Socioeconomic context:** there is a clear need for innovative policy schemes and delivery mechanisms that would facilitate and ensure the swift labour market integration of asylum seekers, refugees and their family members. Immigrants and refugees who have obtained legal residential status face many barriers hindering their entrance into the local labour market. Many refugees remain in European countries for at least the medium term; therefore, swift entry into the labour market is key to their successful integration into European society. However, it has been observed that many refugees lack vocational and language skills, making it harder for them to find sustainable employment.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the ALMIT project aimed to develop several steps to facilitate the integration of immigrants and refugees by improving their skills and abilities. The project team defined four specific objectives:

- To coordinate actions between organisations from the Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey) and Austria to find solutions that would facilitate quick access to the local labour market for refugees and migrants with legal residential status;
- To develop a process to map and match the skills of immigrants and refugees to the needs of the local labour market;
- To diminish civic, intercultural and language barriers between immigrants / refugees and local societies;
- To improve counselling and support for issues relating to settlement and job-seeking processes.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the project successfully prepared a training package consisting of (1) an initial language course in Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish and German; (2) a civic skills course in Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish and German; (3) language training courses in Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish and German; (4) intercultural courses in Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish and German; and (5) ICT tools in the German language. The project also produced a trainer's handbook in four different languages. All training materials were made available online, through the e-learning platform Moodle. The courses were completed by five different groups of individuals.

Subsequently, the project team: (1) gathered relevant information about local labour market trends and rules on social aid; (2) mapped the educational background and work experience of the targeted immigrants / refugees; and (3) provided advisory support regarding the process of recognising and validating competences.

As the final step in the project's implementation cycle, the project team offered counselling on settlement and the job-seeking processes. These activities included: (1) information sessions for people working with the target groups, and information sessions with local businesses; (2) joint events linking job-seekers and local enterprises; (3) psychological consultations and individualised support.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the concept of 'competence workshops' was developed and later transferred to all the project members' countries. This concept also included group-tailored tests on subjects such as language, mathematics and logic. These work packages were presented as examples of good practice, and were highly regarded in the consortium member countries.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** meetings with local enterprises and people working with groups contributed to achieving the project's aims and targets,

as this allowed fruitful discussions. ALMIT joint meetings, linking jobseekers and local enterprises, were innovative and worked well for both parties: immigrants and local enterprises.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** as part of its mapping and profiling activities, ALMIT produced a detailed assessment report on the impact of the matching process, including recommendations. The consortium also prepared two interim technical implementation reports and a final technical implementation report to the European Commission.

**Dissemination strategy:** the project's dissemination activities were carried out using different approaches, channels, methods and instruments, depending on which means were most appropriate. The main target audiences for the project were:

- Legally resident refugees and immigrants in the so-called 'hot border' area of Bulgaria and Serbia;
- Accepted refugees and immigrants in the far neighbouring area of megacities in Turkey, e.g. Istanbul, and hence Düzce;
- Diffused refugees and immigrants within the partner countries, who remain in contact with refugee organisations;
- Refugees who have obtained a status, but still live in or around refugee camps.

The consortium equally targeted training providers and facilitators, training staff from vocational education and training centres, policymakers, and SMEs willing to employ people with a refugee background, as well as the pedagogical departments of universities.

For the purposes of wider outreach and visibility, the consortium created a dedicated project website<sup>24</sup>. The website includes information about the project and short descriptions of the consortium partners, along with news and events related to the activities of the project. In addition, the partners created and disseminated paper-based brochures, information sheets, posters, articles and activity reports to raise awareness about the activities implemented.

ALMIT project partners have also held many various events to disseminate the results of the project and discuss the way forward, including a final dissemination event that took place online via Zoom and attracted 128 participants.

**European added value:** the financial support received from the EU contributed to paying costs of the project's human resources. This funding also made it possible to accelerate the integration into the labour market of many young individuals with refugee backgrounds. Without European funding, it would not have been possible to hire local experts to facilitate training.

**Horizontal objectives:** the main issues with regard to the employment of youth with a refugee background were addressed through job skills matching, profiling and settlement activities. By addressing the barriers faced by young people with refugee backgrounds, such as in language and civic skills, the project also contributed directly to combating long-term unemployment. Nonetheless, the project indicated that the recognition of qualifications and tailored matching of skills and jobs are stepping stones towards durable and sustainable employment. The activities implemented also aimed to promote equality between women and men by providing civic and intercultural courses that specifically highlighted gender equality and the need for further integration.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://almit-project.eu/>

### 3.2.b. Innovative work-life balance strategies to facilitate reconciliation of professional and caring responsibilities

This section presents three projects funded under a call for proposals aimed at developing, testing and implementing innovative work-life balance strategies in the workplace. The overarching purpose of these strategies is to facilitate the reconciliation of work and private life by supporting a more equal share of care responsibilities between working men and women, thereby encouraging the increased participation of women in the labour market.

#### 3.2.5. MASP – Parenting as a Master in a new ‘work-life’ synergy perspective

*‘The project strengthened has demonstrated that adequate work-life balance policies should not be aimed at women only but should also target other actors such as public services, employers and social partners. They should reaffirm the importance of a targeted approach to the design of welfare and social services, and of a gender perspective in service delivery and practices within companies involved in care work’*



Call identification number	VP/2018/005/0096
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0416
Policy area	Gender equality
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming;</li> <li>• Specific measures for the advancement of women.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organised two international dissemination seminars: ‘Towards a European Action Plan Implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights: Work-Life Balance: Master parenting in Work and Life’ and ‘Projects of life and skills development: Different approaches to valuing parenting in work and life’, and a final conference ‘Perspectives on Work Life Balance: the MASP project – final event’;</li> <li>• Organised training courses for employers and public service operators;</li> <li>• Organised public seminars on work-life balance strategies and tools for employers and employees;</li> <li>• Created eight newsletters in English and Italian;</li> <li>• Developed and tested a digital programme for unemployed pregnant women and unemployed mothers;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and tested the MASP private services for enterprises package.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Belgium
Coordinator	Comune di Milano
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenzia Metropolitana per la Formazione, l'Orientamento e il Lavoro (Italy);</li> <li>API Milano-Associazione Piccole e Medie Imprese di Milano e Provincia (Italy);</li> <li>Associazione Basic Income Network Italia</li> <li>EUROMASC AS (Italy);</li> <li>Gruppo Cooperativo CGM, 'Consorzio Nazionale della Cooperazione Sociale Gino Matterelli', Società Cooperativa Sociale a Responsabilità Limitata (Italy);</li> <li>LIFE BASED VALUE SRL (Italy);</li> <li>Provincia Autonoma di Trento (Italy);</li> <li>Réseau Européen des villes et régions de l'économie sociale AISBL (Belgium);</li> <li>Associazione Italiana per la promozione della Cultura della Cooperazione e del Nonprofit (Italy).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 1,368,322.80
Project duration	1 February 2019 – 30 March 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="https://economielavoro.comune.milano.it/progetti/masp-master-parenting-work-and-life">https://economielavoro.comune.milano.it/progetti/masp-master-parenting-work-and-life</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** Work-life balance has been, in recent years, an increasingly debated topic, and as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown unequivocally, people will be forced to rethink the traditional way of living and imagine a new idea of the future in relation to the organisation of work and family life. The pandemic has placed a disproportionate burden on people with care responsibilities, predominantly women, with wider consequences for labour market outcomes and gender equality. To counterbalance this trend, it is important to put in place effective strategies that would support women to access and stay in employment and encourage an equal sharing of care responsibilities between parents.

The Italian Parliament, in the 2020 Budget Law, increased the Universal Allowance Fund and Family Services for 'the implementation of measures to support and enhance the family as well as the reorganisation and systematisation of support policies for families with children'. At a time when large companies, with vast economic resources, adopt advanced work-life balance policies internally for their employees, small and medium-sized enterprises, which constitute the real productive and economic fabric of Italy, are still reluctant to initiate similar policies. It is essential for companies to open up to greater flexibility in the organisation of work (new hourly schemes) and to focus on the well-being of workers and their conciliatory needs.

Moreover, it is observed that policies depend to a large extent on the balances that are decided within families and that the choices of sharing care commitments between men and women condition the availability and the possibility for women to work. In this regard, the awareness of the citizens on these issues and the knowledge of legal means of conciliation on the part of both parents, play an important role.

**Aims of the project/organisation** MASP - Parenting as a Master in a new 'work-life synergy' perspective – is a project aimed to reconcile work and private life, support a more equal share of care responsibilities between women and men and encourage higher participation of women in the labour market. The project will develop and test an innovative work-life balance strategy focusing on a different culture of parenthood.

MASP project anticipates changing the perspective of work-life balance, moving to the concept of 'work-life synergy', highlighting the linkage between 'personal' and 'working' dimensions of individuals and the importance of the different roles of a person. The project builds on two positive Italian experiences: MAAM and Family Audit.

The MASP project focused on the following specific objectives:

- To develop and test an innovative Work-Life Balance strategy focusing on two programmes: one dedicated to women; the second one targeting enterprises and their employees;
- To improve capacities and knowledge of the key actors involved in the process of balancing work and private life (companies and employers, public and employment services staff, management consultants) to make them aware of work-life synergy perspective and give them tools to implement the MASP innovative measures.
- To develop a sustainable multi-level partnership model to create an integrated urban policy in the territories participating in the project;
- To foster knowledge and experience sharing between different countries - in particular Norway - with a strong emphasis on the need to involve more men in care duties;
- To facilitate access to information about social protection rights and entitlements.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** To achieve the objectives, MASP created a diversified consortium that included national and European public bodies and private companies. The project started with a research phase to identify and analyse the best work-life balance strategies used by European municipalities and enterprises. The research also helped to analyse and define the specific needs of unemployed women. The consortium successfully selected and illustrated 10 best practices related to work-life balance. Good practices showcased examples from three European municipalities and seven European enterprises. The study visits to Norway provided with an opportunity for mutual learning and experience sharing with regard to a variety of work-life balance policies and measures, regulations and practices linked to parental leave and the first year of the child, as well as elder care, social activities, and the welfare model.

As a next step, MASP facilitated training sessions aimed at awareness-raising on work-life-balance related issues and promotion of specific work-life-balance measures. The trainings targeted employers, social partners, management consultants, Family Audit consultants and the staff of the public employment services. As part of the training sessions, four short videos and a 'Handbook for public and employment services staff' were created.

MASP also developed and tested a digital programme on an online platform<sup>25</sup> for unemployed pregnant women and unemployed mothers. The consortium also created the programme's user guide as well as a factsheet on social protection rights, services and incentives dedicated to parenting. At the core of the platform is the process of recognising and evaluating the transversal skills acquired in the course of a lifetime. The aim is to provide unemployed women who have care responsibilities with useful competencies to increase their employability. The creation of the platform was

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.masp4skills.it/>



inspired by the MAAM model<sup>26</sup>, a digital programme that enhances the educational potential of parenting and care.

MASP also developed and tested 'MASP private services for enterprises'. The created package included a digital training path in Italian and English for parents employed in large enterprises or SMEs and a process to develop an internal work-life balance conciliation plan that could serve as a preparatory action for the acquisition of the 'Family Audit' certification.

**Identification of potential good practices:** The results achieved by the project have promising practices in addressing the issue of women's under-representation in the labour market, especially relevant for the Italian context. The project is aligned with an overall ambition at the EU level to promote greater work-life balance and encourage the reconciliation of professional and care responsibilities of men and women. It has provided evidence that gender-balanced work-life balance policies in companies can benefit both workers and employees. It offered effective tools as well as tangible results in terms of adopting gender perspective in service delivery, increasing employability, putting in place work-life balance measures, empowering employees and their well-being, and raising awareness of gender inequalities. Through a multi-level partnership, the project tested innovative practices and showed how these challenges can be addressed at the local and regional level in Italy, but also be enriched with best practices from other countries thereby creating a transnational dimension.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** Instead of being based on the mere concept of work-life conciliation, MASP focused on the concept of synergy. MASP combined all the available resources, from the presence of services locally to those offered by companies to those coming from a single person and the social and family context. Innovative programmes were developed, enriched with research activities, and subsequently tested in a variety of contexts and two different territories with the aim to build capacity, foster empowerment, raise awareness, increase the connectivity of people and organizations, improve working conditions and corporate welfare, strengthen skills, improve service delivery and unlock the potential of social innovation practices. The project has shown the will of the public institutions to promote and experiment with a change in their practices and innovation in the delivery of their services.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** MASP produced a report on the best work-life balance strategies employed in different European municipalities and European enterprises. MASP also produced a social impact evaluation report which included a description of the stakeholder's map, an impact value chain and impact value dimensions. During the last two months of the project, MASP wrote a policy evaluation report 'Measuring the value of work-life-balance synergy. Evidences and changes of the MASP project'. Training and information contents have been made available to a wide audience to promote a change of perspective from the work-life balance to work-life synergy, even beyond the direct beneficiaries of the project. The project has showed that the work-life balance policies should not be aimed at women only, but rather tackle other important actors, such as public services, employers, social partners. The evidence reaffirms the importance of a targeted approach to the welfare and social services design and the relevance of soft skills' certification.

**Dissemination strategy:** MASP partners organised two main international dissemination seminars and one final conference. First international dissemination seminar 'Towards a European Action Plan Implementing the European Pillar of Social

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.lifeed.io/>



Rights: Work-Life Balance: Master Parenting in Work and Life' took place on 21 February 2020 in Brussels. The second seminar 'Projects of life and skills development: Different approaches to valuing parenting in work and life' was held online, on 26 March 2021.

The conference 'Perspectives on Work-Life Balance: the MASP project - final event' took place on 25 March 2020 on Zoom. The conference was set up to coincide with the conclusion of the project, in order to present the MASP opportunities, experiences, tools and results of the project, focusing on two increasingly urgent macro issues: the balance of personal and working life and the promotion of female participation in the labour market. The events were well attended and gathered relevant stakeholders, such as social economy enterprises in promotion of work-life balance, local government and administration, Italian and European decision-makers, European networks, NGOs, academics, private sector.

MASP partners also used other types of events for dissemination purposes. These include:

- 13 seminars and webinars organised by LBV;
- six seminars organised by A.P.I.;
- Training courses organised by Agenzia di Lavoro Trento for employers and public service operators as well as public seminars on new work-life balance scenarios and tools for employers and employees.

In addition, MASP created eight newsletters that were published in English and Italian languages and spread among the partners through email campaigns. A project factsheet providing information on the objectives, activities and outputs was also published in English and Italian.

**European added value:** MASP project strengthened the collaboration between different partners active in the field of work-life balance as well as existing corporate commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and the Sustainable Development Goals. The project aimed at addressing gender inequalities and the under-representation of women in the labour market. The activities and results correspond to the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular principle 2 on gender equality and principle 9 on work-life balance. In the context of the Work-life balance directive, adopted in 2019, the project is aligned with an overall ambition to promote greater work-life balance and encourage the reconciliation of professional and care responsibilities of men and women.

**Horizontal objectives:** MASP developed a theoretical and methodological approach useful for the development and implementation of innovative ways for unemployed women to increase their employability and employed parents to find synergies between work and private life. The project provided opportunities for women to validate transversal skills and took into account the particularities of the lives of both women and men while aiming to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality. The results achieved provide an example of promising practices and tools in addressing challenges to work-life balance and gender inequalities on the labour market. The strength of the project was an approach of social innovation, based on multi-stakeholder cooperation and benefiting from expertise of various regional and local actors, as well as European good practices.

### 3.2.6. EQW&L – Equality for Work and Life

*'The EQW&L project aims to elaborate and test a set of strategies, a new model of intervention and a toolkit to facilitate the access to labour market of unemployed persons – women but not only women – who are hindered from getting and keeping a job by their work-life balance needs. Furthermore, the project aims to support SMEs – namely, those in the social economy – in embracing reconciliation-friendly working environments.'*



Call identification number	VP/2018/005
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0415
Policy area	Working conditions
Policy sub-area	Work-life balance
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Unemployed persons;</li> <li>• Small and medium-sized enterprises;</li> <li>• Social enterprises.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of the EQW&amp;L toolkit – an easy-to-read and informative tool for work-life balance, accessible both on paper and online;</li> <li>• Implementation of the EQW&amp;L intervention study;</li> <li>• 21 qualitative interviews with PES managers and PES operators, as well as coordinators from ANPAL;</li> <li>• A dedicated project website;</li> <li>• Online webinar 'Work-Life balance and job-seekers: the role of Public Employment Services';</li> <li>• Final Conference 'EQW&amp;L good practices for reconciliation policies, employment services and territorial welfare'.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Spain, Norway, Belgium.
Coordinator	Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive del Lavoro (ANPAL)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gruppo Cooperativo CGM "Consorzio Nazionale della Cooperazione Sociale Gino Mattarelli" Società Cooperativa Sociale</li> <li>• Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (FGB)</li> <li>• Instituto de la Mujer y para la Igualdad de Oportunidades</li> <li>• REFORM- Ressurscenter for Menn Stiftelse</li> <li>• The Worklife Hub</li> <li>• Unione Italiana del Lavoro UIL</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 862,014.73

Project duration	1 February 2018 – 28 February 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.anpal.gov.it">www.anpal.gov.it</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** for a long time, increasing the participation of women in the labour market has been an ambitious and strategic goal at both European and national levels. In April 2017, the European Commission introduced the Social Pillar, which sets out 20 key principles and rights to support fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems. Its Work-Life Balance package aims to extend existing rights for working parents and carers in order to achieve a better distribution of caring responsibilities within families. On 12 July 2019, Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers was published. This sets out the minimum requirements in relation to paternity leave, parental leave and carers' leave and the requirements for being able to exercise the right to request flexible working arrangements for workers who are parents or carers.

Italy is among the EU countries most affected by the gender employment gap: in January 2018, Italy's male employment rate stood at 67 %, while the female rate was 49.3 %, signifying a gender employment gap of 17.7 %.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the EQW&L project aimed to achieve an impact on social inclusion and employment policies. Specifically, it aimed to elaborate and test a set of strategies, a new model for intervention, and a toolkit to facilitate access to the labour market by unemployed persons who are hindered from getting/keeping a job due to their specific work-life balance needs. In addition, the project aimed to support SMEs – namely, those in the social economy – in embracing reconciliation-friendly working environments.

The project team focused initially on three main targets: (1) the employment services system, by proposing and testing strategies that the Italian PES network could use to support persons (re)entering the labour market who are particularly vulnerable due to their work-life balance needs; (2) all individuals in their active working life cycle, unemployed or re-entering the labour market, both women and men, who have caring responsibilities and / or other reconciliation needs; and (3) SMEs and social enterprises that offer relevant employment opportunities for women, but face more difficulties than bigger companies in implementing policies in relation to work-life balance.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** during Phase 1, the project was successful in implementing the WLB toolkit, which was designed in a user-friendly and informative way, accessible both on paper and online. The final version of the toolkit was composed of four parts: (1) context; (2) definitions, with an overview on work-life balance and related worker's rights; (3) content – a description of the tool for workers / employment seekers and SMEs; and (4) a checklist to pinpoint the WLB needs of job centres / services, together with an assessment tool for enterprises to evaluate different levels of work-life balance needs.

During the second phase of the project, the team organised nine training seminars with PES representatives and operators. These meetings aimed firstly to present the project, the EQW&L toolkit, the experimentation steps and evaluation procedures to PES operators. Second, they aimed to define a list of participants selected for each region/area in order to pilot the counterfactual evaluation. In each of the three regions (the autonomous provinces of Trento, Tuscany and Piedmont), four PES centres were identified to carry out the testing activities.

The activities in Phase 3 of the project mainly focused on data analysis. The FGB evaluation team carried out a total of 21 qualitative interviews, 18 of which were with PES managers and PES operators from each of the PES centres involved in the testing. Worth mentioning are the two interviews that involved national coordinators from ANPAL, which focused in particular on relationships with the territories and the possibility of scaling the project up to national level after its end date. One other interview was devoted to the role of the welfare manager and their activities with PES operators and further synergies.

During Phase 4, Fondazione Giacomo was in constant contact with the partners to monitor the implementation of the action via meetings. The project delivered its first and the second monitoring reports, its intermediate evaluation report and the final monitoring report.

Phase 5 focused on the project's dissemination and up-scaling strategy, wherein the dissemination and communication activities were of particular relevance not only in terms of the content produced but also the results achieved.

The project team learned that an overall increase in knowledge about issues relating to women's participation in the labour market has turned out to be an important factor in moving towards the anticipated solutions in terms of work-life balance reconciliation.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the project employed a quasi-experimental, quantitative / qualitative pre-post group design. The design and quasi-experimentation of a model of intervention and a work-life balance toolkit catered for every single unique case (selected regions and localities). In addition, the content of the EQW&L toolkit was easily integrated into daily work of public employment service centres, and displayed good self-maintenance practice with respect to further legislative developments in Italy's expected implementation of the Directive 2019/11581 in 2020.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the tool that was created proved easily adaptable, and its efficiency is a specific feature that will allow scaling-up and the applicability of the project to other regional and national contexts. The toolkit's accurate theoretical and methodological elaboration needs only to be updated with the new information to be adopted in new contexts. Furthermore, the tool can be used to create instances for awareness raising on the issues of work-life reconciliation.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** the novelty of the project lies in its offering of a wide range of tools and ideas to address the same problems relating to the topic of work-life balance, but in a different and diverse way, especially by paying greater attention to vulnerabilities and the need for assistance.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the EQW&L Toolkit is publicly accessible via the Resources section of the project's website<sup>27</sup>.

**Transnational dimension:** the project has stimulated an exchange of practices and knowledge about work-life balance and approaches to reconciliation. Transnational dialogue has been of utmost importance to the development of the toolkit materials, which drew upon different national contexts and experiences to produce a set of best

<sup>27</sup> <http://equalityforworkandlife.eu/en/home/>

practices. In particular, when building a business case for SMEs investing in gender-balanced work-life policies, the EQW&L project relied on the support received from REFORM and IWEQ, which coordinate a network of over 120 companies implementing work-life balance strategies in Spain.

**Dissemination strategy:** a set of dissemination events were organised throughout the project implementation cycle. One event marked the launch of the project, and the end was marked with the final conference, which was held online on 25 February 2021. The events gathered together different stakeholders, ranging from national and local policymakers to individuals responsible for the coordination of Italian PES activities, trade unionists and representatives of SMEs. In January 2021, the consortium also organised a public webinar to present the EQW&L project and toolkit to participants from the ETUC, Eurocarers, the Austrian PES and officials from the European Commission. All events were promoted through the project's website, and each of the partners involved disseminated and promoted the events in their respective networks to ensure the widest participation.

The EQW&L toolkit and its annexes have been published on the project's website in both Italian and English. The toolkit was also presented during a webinar at European level on January 2021 attended participants from EU institutions and national policy makers, EU-level and national social partners, and the general audience (workers, students, job-seekers) interested in the topic of work-life balance and the activities of public employment services.

**European added value:** the project focused on the correct application of Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and Council on work-life balance for parents and carers. The project team relied on multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote a non-stereotypical approach to work-life balance by defining and testing concrete tools that would better cater for the WLB needs of unemployed people and persons in the process of (re)entering the labour market in Italy. The activities carried out by the project were well grounded in the best practices gathered from partnering countries.

**Sustainability measures:** the evaluation of the project concluded that the EQW&L tool is in need of constant updating to ensure its future functionality. In addition, the toolkit can provide a direction for the production of complementary tools that are more suitable to the specificities of the area and the needs of users. A second stage of the project would allow the continuation of activities carried out so far and respond to the need for constant updating to maintain the tool's effectiveness.

**Horizontal objectives:** with the creation of the EQW&L Toolkit, the project aimed to tackle long-term unemployment among job-seekers with work-life balance needs, providing public employment service centres with a checklist to first assess their WLB needs to allow better job matching. The project also helped to promote equality between women and men, supporting female users of PES centres in seeking job opportunities and re-entering the labour market.

### 3.2.7. R.A.F.F.A.E.L – Redesigning Activities in a Family Friendly way in Viterbo’s workplaces

‘The R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project showed the importance of public-private local networks and integration. The activation and maintenance of networks containing different types of stakeholders proved a hard and time-consuming task, but was the key to the project’s success, even during a very difficult period such as the COVID-19 pandemic.’



Call identification number	VP/2018/005/0126
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0462
Policy area	Working conditions
Policy sub-area	Work-life balance
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Professionals in social and educational services</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a Province Permanent Table for the purpose of collaborative local planning;</li> <li>• Report on the multi-dimensional analysis of the local context;</li> <li>• Identification of the needs related to work-life balance and types of services to be tested;</li> <li>• Launch of two public calls for the provision of reconciliation services;</li> <li>• Training and capacity-building events;</li> <li>• Promotional campaign;</li> <li>• Counter-factual evaluation.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Norway
Coordinator	Provincia di Viterbo
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (Italy);</li> <li>• Consorzio per lo sviluppo delle metodologie e delle innovazioni nelle pubbliche amministrazioni (Italy);</li> <li>• Forum permanente del Terzo Settore del Lazio (Italy);</li> <li>• Lega delle Autonomie Locali Associazione (Italy);</li> <li>• Leganet SRL (Italy);</li> <li>• Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet NTNU (Norway);</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoqates Intelektualet e Rin, Shprese (Shkoder) (Albania);</li> <li>• Studio COME SRL (Italy).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 1,300,000.00
Project duration	1 January 2019 – 31 July 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.provincia.viterbo.gov.it">www.provincia.viterbo.gov.it</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the province of Viterbo extends over an area of 3,000 square kilometres and has a population of more than 300,000 inhabitants. By 2018, the economy of the area was showing signs of a slowdown, with direct repercussions on the labour market, which subsequently amplified problems relating to work-life balance, particularly in rural areas and among vulnerable persons. The project indicates the need for well-functioning, permanent governance mechanisms at provincial level to address issues relating to work-life balance through the integration of relevant stakeholders and the creation of tailored policy measures.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project aimed to achieve six objectives:

- To promote permanent networks among public and private stakeholders that would implement and monitor work-life balance policies;
- To promote the strategic role of public employment services in bridging the gap between the needs of citizens and local municipalities;
- To develop, model and test services and interventions aimed at improving work-life balance, e.g. building a system through which both public and private entities can share services and instruments, including ICT solutions;
- To promote the participation of women in the labour market, particularly young women in Tuscia;
- To inform both women and men within the local community about their rights and obligations in relation to work-life balance, and to raise awareness regarding the sharing of care responsibilities;
- To strengthen the transnational dimension of knowledge exchange for local administrators and experts from European countries.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** first, the project successfully identified local stakeholders and established a Provincial Permanent Table. A total of 30 identified stakeholders met five times during the project's implementation cycle. Stakeholders included a provincial councillor, representatives of municipalities, provincial-level trade unions, employers' associations, third-sector organisations, Tuscia University, and the local health authority.

Second, the project team produced an analytical report covering: (1) various practices used in European countries; (2) publicly-led reconciliation services at national level; and (3) work-life balance experiences in enterprises across Italy. In addition, a total of 10 capacity-building workshops were carried out, involving 63 participants from all five social districts in Tuscia, as well as representatives of third-sector organisations active in the provision of work-life balance services. The workshop cycle concluded with a webinar aimed at presenting and discussing systematic actions to address issues relating to work-life balance.

During the project's implementation phase, an international workshop on successful practices at European, national and local levels was held in Vetralla on 25 October 2019. This workshop provided an opportunity to discuss and exchange knowledge in relation to experiences with work-life balance policies and measures. In addition, a virtual international exchange event was held on 11 May 2021 to examine the sharing of care responsibilities, mainly through a comparison between practices in Norway and Italy.



As part of the project, two social cooperatives were selected through public calls for the implementation of experimental reconciliation services. The project consortium has worked with the cooperatives selected to re-arrange services to address the needs emerging from lockdown periods and also through local co-planning meetings. The services provided by the cooperatives included: (1) support services for the education and care of children and adolescents; (2) support for elderly care; (3) time-saving services; and (4) the provision of co-working space suitable for children. Approximately 100 families in Tuscia benefitted from these experimental services. A web app to book support services for elderly care was also developed and tested<sup>28</sup>.

The R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project showed the importance of public-private local networks and integration. The activation and maintenance of networks of different types proved to be a hard and time-consuming task, but it was key to the project's success. The active involvement of private enterprises and employers – including small enterprises – is crucial for work-life balance policies, as long as they are well connected with public bodies and services through integrated networks.

Another lesson learned deals with the necessity to guarantee information and guidance to citizens; to identify and provide access to the services that better meet their personal and family needs, and to provide work-life balance services.

Finally, a promotional campaign about the experimental reconciliation services was launched in Autumn 2020 via social media channels and press releases. All the activities foreseen and implemented so far have been made available on a dedicated project website<sup>29</sup>.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the project team has highlighted the demand for services capable of promoting work-life balance and for services to support the elderly, especially in rural areas of the province. The possibility to replicate the project by extending its scope to wider territories is bound by the availability of economic resources, thus the objective of other provinces will therefore be to find the necessary financial recourses.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** the R.A.F.F.A.E.L. project aimed to test and integrate a model for a 'second welfare system' including innovative work-life balance strategies. The project's results represent an innovative, experimental, inter-organisational, system-level action for a new 'welfare system', which could be replicated in other local settings. The system is based on a multi-dimensional and integrated model of actions, as well as local agreements, intersectoral networks of enterprises and creative clusters, and flexible organisational models of integrated services.

**Dissemination strategy:** the project's analytical outputs were disseminated among its various target audiences. Reports and impact assessment studies were disseminated to regional and local policymakers, social workers from the public and private sectors, socioeconomic partners, and third-sector organisations at local and regional levels. The main channels used for dissemination were the project's website and e-mail campaigns. The final publication was printed (100 copies) and distributed to local policymakers not only in the Viterbo and Lazio regions, but also via the networks of the partners ALI and Fondazione Lotti. A mapped list of local work-life balance services was created to further elaborate a web-based geo-localisation of

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<sup>28</sup> <http://raffael.iasi.cnr.it/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.raffael-vt.eu/>

services available for citizens in Viterbo Province<sup>30</sup>.

In addition, R.A.F.F.A.E.L.'s 12 newsletters were regularly sent to the 60 municipalities in Viterbo Province, as well as to other stakeholders in the social and private sectors. To inform about the project and the opportunities provided by the experimental services, 15,000 brochures were printed and distributed among the 60 municipalities, as well as to private enterprises and citizens. The project team also created a dedicated project website<sup>31</sup> and a Facebook account<sup>32</sup>, both of which were regularly updated. The R.A.F.F.A.E.L. press office also produced 30 articles about the project and specific events, which were published in local newspapers.

**European added value:** the realisation of the project's activities was made possible due to the European funding received. Specifically, the financial support helped it to provide tailored services to citizens without acquiring higher costs for the administrative apparatus. The funding also made it possible to identify the specific needs of citizens, and to design services that had the capacity to improve the balance between people's work and private life, and to create wider opportunities for women to participate in the labour market.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project aimed to promote equality between women and men through a participative method that actively involved policymakers and local stakeholders in various activities throughout the lifecycle of the project.

### ***3.2.c. Support for the deployment of skills assessments in the implementation of 'Upskilling Pathways'***

This section presents a project that falls under a call for proposals with an overall objective to support the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on 'Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults'](#)<sup>33</sup>. The project specifically focused on a coordinated approach and strategy in the assessment and development of basic skills in Slovakia.

<sup>30</sup> <https://maparena.it/mappecomuni/web/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.raffael-vt.it/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/ProgettoRaffael>

<sup>33</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1224>

### 3.2.8. Blueprints for basic skills development in Slovakia

'One of the project's aims was to open up a discussion about basic skills development in Slovakia, and to raise awareness about basic skills.'



Call identification number	VP/2018/008/0008
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0106
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Skills
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping report on the state of basic skills in Slovakia;</li> <li>• A methodological manual for the development of basic skills for low-skilled adults;</li> <li>• Reference framework of basic skills;</li> <li>• Manual for assessment and development of basic skills;</li> <li>• Report on good practice examples from abroad;</li> <li>• Information note on the Upskilling Pathways initiative;</li> <li>• Analysis of skills assessment tools in the selected EU countries;</li> <li>• Pilot programmes to support basic skills of adults and cooperation with public authorities.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Slovakia
Participating countries	Ireland, Belgium
Coordinator	State Vocational Education Institute and Centre for Labour, Social Affairs and Family (Slovakia);
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) (Belgium);</li> <li>• AONTAS (Ireland);</li> <li>• Association of Adult Learning Institutions (AIVD) (Slovakia);</li> <li>• Association for career guidance and career development (ZKPRK) (Slovakia);</li> <li>• European Basic Skills Network (Hungary);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic (Slovakia).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 308,080.00
Project duration	1 April 2019 – 31 March 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.zakladnezrucnosti.sk">www.zakladnezrucnosti.sk</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the literacy, numeracy and digital skills of adults in Slovakia have thus far not received adequate attention. There is a lack of research, and no reliable data are available on the current landscape regarding basic skills of adults in Slovakia.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project set four main objectives:

- To initiate national-level discussions on issues relating to adult literacy;
- To map and understand the current landscape regarding basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital skills among the Slovak adult population, focusing mainly on low-skilled individuals;
- To develop tools and methodologies to identify the needs of low-skilled jobseekers;
- To train individuals involved in dealing with issues relating to the basic skills of the adult population.

**Results and impacts:** the project implementation cycle began with the development of a mapping report on 'The state of basic skills in Slovakia'. This report served as a starting point for further activities. The basis for the mapping report was information received from 13 interviews with representatives of third-sector organisations, employment offices, regional government, enterprises employing low-skilled people, educational institutions, and research organisations. The report also included an analysis of national policies and strategies in relation to the upskilling and reskilling of unemployed and job-seeking individuals, as well as an overview of educational offers in further education.

In addition, two seminars on 'How to create and promote adults' chances to improve their skills?' were organised in cooperation with the National Coordinator for Adult Learning in Slovakia. These took place in June 2019 and November 2019. Participants included regional stakeholders working in areas related to education and career counselling.

The project team also created a methodological manual on the development of basic skills for low-skilled adults, which contains exercises and examples of good practice. In addition, The State Vocational Education Institute, together with policy experts, created a reference framework for basic skills that serves as a reference for minimum standards in terms of literacy, numeracy and digital skills. The reference framework supplements the Slovak qualifications framework and supports citizens in need of upskilling via non-formal education pathways. A report on good practice examples from abroad was also released. This provided an overview of the development of basic skills across Europe, paying particular attention to the implementation of the Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways.

As part of the project, project team members participated in field visits to three partnering countries (Austria, Ireland and the Netherlands). In Ireland, the project team members visited six organisations: AONTAS, NALA, two organisations dealing with the education of low-qualified adults, SOLAS, and the Donegal Education and Training Board. In Austria, three organisations were visited: ABZ Austria, an organisation dealing with the accreditation of adult education in basic skills, and an organisation in charge of the Quality Framework for Adult Education Providers. A

virtual study visit to the Netherlands involved experts from three organisations: the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; the Reading and Writing Foundation; and LeerWerkLoket.

Lastly, the project team developed a manual for the assessment and development of basic skills. This manual contains the characteristics of basic skills to be evaluated/assessed, as well as methods on how to approach clients during interviews. During the piloting of the manual, a series of training sessions for labour counsellors were organised by the Central Labour Office. In total, 74 counsellors took part in the training sessions.

**Lessons learned:** the project team concluded that among the stakeholders actively supporting the upskilling of the adult population, there was low awareness concerning opportunities for non-formal education in basic skills. 'Second-chance' programmes for adults are not suitable for individuals who do not already possess basic skills. Thus, non-formal education in basic skills serves as a prerequisite for the success of second-chance education programmes. The project team also encountered a lack of systemic knowledge regarding the current landscape of skills. This lack of knowledge hinders the effective development of non-formal programmes in basic skills.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** with regard to policy outputs, a mapping report on the state of basic skills in Slovakia was published. The project produced a methodological manual on the development of basic skills among low-skilled adults and created a reference framework of basic skills indicating minimum reading, numeracy and digital literacy standards. In addition, the project team produced a manual for the assessment and development of basic skills. The outcomes of the project fed into the Slovak Lifelong Learning Strategy, as well as the proposal for the new Lifelong Learning Act.

**Dissemination strategy:** a good level of visibility at national as well as EU level was ensured through the partnering organisations. In addition, a dedicated project website<sup>34</sup> and Facebook account were created to facilitate the dissemination of project activities and outcomes. The outcomes of the project were also made available through the EPAL platform. The State Vocational Education Institute shared the findings of the project via newsletters that covered lifelong learning strategies across Europe and trends in the domain of vocational education and training.

**European added value:** this project was made possible thanks to the funding from the EU. It allowed the project team to organise study field visits, raise awareness among education and training providers, and achieve policy impact in the field of adult education. The funding received also made it possible to organise several thematic seminars and a final conference, as well as to strengthen cooperation between several ministries to better address the Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways.

**Sustainability measures:** the State Vocational Education Institute has plans to further fill the gaps in the provision of education and training to low-skilled persons. In the context of the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2021-2030, it is foreseen that the State Vocational Education Institute will further support the concept of basic skills in Slovakia. The basic skills framework developed is already used by the Ministry of Education, and the methodology for the development of basic skills is embraced by several non-governmental organisations working with marginalised and vulnerable target groups.

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<sup>34</sup> <http://zakladnezrucnosti.sk/>

**Horizontal objectives:** the project addressed issues relating to long-term unemployment and social exclusion by helping individuals to acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Without these skills, and with a low level of qualifications, individuals are at higher risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

### 3.3. EURES: projects promoting geographical labour mobility

In total, 10 projects were funded in the area of geographical labour mobility. Five of these were funded under a call for proposals aimed at supporting Member States to establish an inventory to map their national, regional and sectoral classifications to and from the European classification ESCO, in order to maintain interoperability or to replace their national classifications with the European classification system.

Three projects were funded under a call for proposals aimed at ensuring job placements in economic sectors with hard-to-fill vacancies, through the EURES targeted mobility scheme 'Your first EURES job'. These projects contributed to the enhancement of the services provided by the EURES organisations. It also fostered public-private partnerships and helped to improve conditions for jobseekers and workers to exercise their right to freedom of movement across the EU.

#### **3.3.a. Support to national classification inventories and innovative national online services for mobile workers**

##### **3.3.1. ESCO classification in the new Icelandic IT system**



*'This project will undoubtedly strengthen the commitment of Iceland and its Directorate of Labour to EURES cooperation. In recent years, the Icelandic labour market has become more and more dependent on foreign labour, and that trend is likely to increase.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/010/009
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0360
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Free movement of workers.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment analysis;</li> <li>• Public sector;</li> <li>• Access to employment and jobseekers.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• National statistical offices.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESCO classification adopted in a new IT system;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six dissemination workshops to four main stakeholders;</li> <li>• Introducing the ESCO project to all employees at the Directorate of Labour, including visits to all of the organisation's service offices around Iceland;</li> <li>• The Dissemination Team produced and published nine e-zines on social media about the development of the Galdur/ESCO system;</li> <li>• Participation in ESCO workshops.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Iceland
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Lydvedio Island (Iceland)
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 282,042.69
Project duration	1 December 2019 – 31 May 2021
Project/organisation website	-

**Socioeconomic context:** in 2016, the Directorate of Labour in Iceland evaluated its IT system and found it to be outdated. One of its many shortcomings was that the IT system was limited at matching and profiling. The system used an outdated ISCO 88 classification. It was decided to develop a new IT system, and to adopt the ESCO classification in the new system. The development of this action helped to modernise and digitalise services towards clients and improve the work tools used by the staff. The new IT system also facilitates mobility between Iceland and the EU and EEA countries, thus contributing to the EU policy of promoting sustainable employment. This project addresses issues of both youth and long-term unemployment by improving the matching services available. In recent years, the Icelandic labour market has become more dependent on foreign labour, and that trend is projected to increase. This project helps to offer and further improve services linked to the free movement of labour.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** development of a new IT system, Galdur, and the implementation of the ESCO classification system, which helps to match jobseekers' profiles, CVs and job vacancies while accounting for other taxonomies (e.g. language, education). The project included the development and construction of the matching and profiling part of the system, which employs ESCO. In addition, the project included a systematic review and adaptation of the ESCO classifications to fit Iceland's labour market.

The new IT system is roughly divided into three main components: 1) applications and registration; 2) calculation, paying and monitoring of unemployment benefits; and 3) matching and counselling. The new IT system will allow for the implementation of the EURES Regulation, both legally and technically.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** a new IT system has been developed, and the ESCO classification system implemented in the system. The ESCO classification system has been reviewed and adapted to fit the needs of the Icelandic labour market.

The new IT system will greatly improve all services provided by the Directorate of Labour to its clients, both domestically and in Europe. The action had the direct goal of technically implementing the EURES Regulation from 2016, which would result in better access for domestic and European jobseekers and employers in and from Iceland. The search and match part of the system will modernise the matching services through increased automation, while the ESCO classification and other taxonomies will improve the quality of matching. The adoption of the ESCO



classification will increase synergies between the Icelandic and pan-European labour markets – facilitating easier comparisons, for example.

The project's main lessons learned relate to flexibility and adaptability in planning. The matching of ESCO classifications with the Icelandic labour market has proven to be more time-consuming than originally anticipated. In addition, delays have occurred in the development of the IT system that have impacted the implementation of parts of the system on which the action focused (e.g. elements allowing for the implementation of EURES Regulation). The IT system has not yet been launched, but all parts are under development. The main reason for this delay has been the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, another lesson learned was the importance of internal communications. Developing a new IT system and a new work environment for all staff requires support from the staff, which necessitates both informing employees regularly and providing a platform for them to voice their opinions to ensure that the system is also built for their needs.

**Identification of potential good practices:** having an IT contractor, and cooperating with a Dutch IT company that had worked on other modules of the system such as updating the taxonomy manager to the latest version and setting up and migrating the test environment to production. Preparing an initial needs analysis and categorising this into four phases, each of which were developed into production tasks. After the tasks were complete, the system was tested by VMST experts in a test environment.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** sharing the database comprising the work done on ESCO and related taxonomies, and the lessons learned from that.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** due to the nature of the action, there is limited analytical output. However, there is a database comprising the work done on ESCO and related taxonomies. This database will be available to all actors, domestic and other, when work on it has been completed. After the full-scale launch of the system, the information the system provides could impact policy by providing evidence on the gaps between jobseekers' profiles and registered vacancies. In addition, the system can provide valuable tools to improve synergies between the Icelandic and European labour markets by using ESCO.

**Transnational dimension:** the project's transnational dimension relates to its main goal of implementing the ESCO code and eventually increasing and improving the access of both employers and jobseekers to the EURES portal through vacancy and CV exchange. Foreign jobseekers, employers, private recruitment agencies and colleagues in other EEA countries will benefit from the development of the search and match element, the implementation of ESCO, and access to EURES portal.

**Dissemination strategy:** Iceland's Directorate of Labour organised six dissemination workshops to four main stakeholders, and introduced the ESCO project to all of its employees. This included visits to all of the organisation's service offices around Iceland. The Dissemination Team produced and published nine e-zines on social media about the development of the Galdur / ESCO system. Because the IT system also provides a new work environment for all staff, disseminating information directly to staff and providing a platform for staff to voice their opinions were also important parts of the dissemination tasks. In addition, project representatives participated in ESCO workshops.

**European added value:** the action has had an impact on the technical implementation of the EURES regulation, which will result in better access for domestic and European job-seekers, as well as employers in and from Iceland. The implementation of the EURES Regulation had been made a priority before the launch of the system. The adoption of the ESCO classification increases the synergies between the Icelandic and pan-European labour markets. EU support had a significant impact on devoting greater resources to the search and match part of the IT system. The project will strengthen Iceland's commitment to EURES cooperation.

**Sustainability measures:** the new IT system is considered sustainable, and the work has continued after the action's end date. The development of the search and match element has continued, and the action was part of a larger project in which the Directorate of Labour in Iceland has invested significant financial and human resources. It is therefore crucial to support the system and adapt it according to the changing needs of both the staff and the labour market. Continuing maintenance of ESCO and its connected taxonomies is planned. The IT system will be the main tool for the Directorate of Labour, and will be maintained and updated as such.

**Horizontal objectives:** higher-quality, sustainable employment is addressed, as the IT system offers much more sophisticated matching than the previous system, which should increase the number of high-quality vacancies and placements. The project addresses both youth employment and long-term unemployment by greatly improving the matching services provided. These groups will benefit from the tools offered by being able to register their skills, experience and education in one place. The Directorate of Labour will also be better equipped to identify potential gaps in the profiles of individuals in these groups, which will allow these challenges to be addressed through labour market measures, thereby strengthening the employability of individuals.

### 3.3.2. ESCO-mapping



*'To realise the mapping, an approach was chosen in which artificial intelligence technology and human expertise were complementary, and went hand in hand.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/010/0017
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0392
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Free movement of workers.</li> </ul>

Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment analysis;</li> <li>• Public sector;</li> <li>• Access to employment and jobseekers.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment services</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own classification mapped to ESCO;</li> <li>• Organising a kick-off meeting;</li> <li>• Participating in mapping workshops;</li> <li>• Coordinating work with experts;</li> <li>• Mapping and reviewing occupations and competences.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	Luxembourg
Coordinator	Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding VDAB (Belgium)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arbeitsamt der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft (Belgium);</li> <li>• Forem (Belgium);</li> <li>• Office Régional Bruxellois de l'Emploi (Belgium);</li> <li>• Grand-Duché de Luxembourg (Luxembourg).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 100,000.00
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 30 June 2021
Project/organisation website	-

**Socioeconomic context:** realising the qualitative mapping tables between Competent 2.0 (the national occupational and competencies standard) and ESCO, both between the occupations in both standards and between the competencies. This was carried out to comply with the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021 of 18 July 2018 on the adoption of technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of automated matching through the common IT platform using the European classification, and interoperability between national systems and the European classification. This decision will facilitate future data exchange regarding job vacancies and CVs via EURES, and thereby contribute to mobility in the European labour market.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** mapping Competent 2.0 (NOC) to ESCO, at the levels of both occupations and of competences (skills and knowledge). To map occupations and competencies, IT algorithms were developed and improved, step by step, to achieve the desired results. The mappings were checked and validated by experts from the various partners, creating a mapping table for occupations and a mapping table for competencies.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** based on a preliminary analysis of the data and the ESCO mapping, a decision was made to amend the project and move from manual to automated mapping. This necessitated the acquisition of a methodology to develop a joint mapping exercise, as well as clarifying and refining remaining questions and the project plan. New milestones were developed that were more in line with the automated mapping project. Due to this process of amendment, the mapping started later than intended.

Work packages 2-7 included rounds of mapping and review by experts, from ESCO to ROME / Competent and vice versa. To realise the mapping, an approach was chosen in which artificial intelligence technology and human expertise were complementary and went hand in hand. Initially, the semantic recognition of occupations and competencies, the mapping algorithms and the regression testing environment were

built and / or set up. Next, automatic mapping results were continuously assessed by an expert panel through short loops. Based on this expert feedback, new training runs were undertaken. This was repeated in order to arrive at a consolidated mapping.

This process produced the following outputs:

- A table with a complete occupational mapping containing a total of 2,430 mappings, including the type of mapping relationship;
- A table with competency mappings containing a total of 11,311 mappings, including the type of mapping relationship → 99% of the Competent competencies, and 41% of the ESCO competencies are mapped;
- A table with unmapped ESCO competencies containing a total of 7,965 or 59% unmapped ESCO competencies;
- A table of unmapped Competent competencies with a total of 118 or 1% unmapped Competent competencies.

The mapping tables and the final report were finalised and transferred, with the tables published on the ROME / Competent website. All stakeholders were informed about the results and their availability.

The move from manual to automated mapping required the replanning of the workflow, but also reduced the workload of the project team, allowing them to focus on reviewing and adjusting. However, the validation process took longer than estimated and although all occupations were mapped, meaningful mappings were found for only 41 % of the ESCO competencies. By definition, there is a large spread between the number of Competent competencies and the ESCO competencies.

To monitor the project closely and intensively, the project teams moved over to monthly coordination rather than quarterly, which led to more intensive project management.

**Identification of potential good practices:** automation of the mapping via artificial intelligence and machine learning.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** automation of the mapping via artificial intelligence and machine learning, and the project management guidelines and practices related to it. Sharing the mappings, as well as relevant data and practices related to matching classifications with relevant parties.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** implementing artificial intelligence technology. The semantic recognition of occupations and competencies, the mapping algorithms and the regression testing environment were built and set up. Automatic mapping results were assessed by an expert panel through short loops. Based on this expert feedback, new training runs were undertaken to arrive at a consolidated mapping.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** output comprises two ESCO-Competent mapping tables, which have been made available to all project partners as well as being available for all users of Competent. Provision of detailed information of how the mapping tables were created.

**Transnational dimension:** the project team consisted of several PES from Belgium and Luxembourg, who realised the mappings together. To facilitate collaboration over the mapping and reviewing activities, the project team met monthly, either physically

or via video conferencing, to discuss progress and the quality of the project, and to align activities with each other and discuss any necessary improvement actions.

**New partnerships created:** throughout the mapping project, the consortium exchanged both approaches and samples with Pôle Emploi (PES, France).

**Dissemination strategy:** publishing the mapping tables for all partners and interested parties. Communicating the tables to the IT/EURES teams of different partners. Informing internal and external stakeholders, users and project leaders via a newsletter (sent out with every quarterly update of Competent). Advising the IT colleagues at different partners with regard to the selection of mapping codes in the context of data transfer to EURES from August 2021 onwards.

**European added value:** the action contributed to the application of the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021 of 18 July 2018 on the adoption of technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of the automated matching through the common IT platform using the European classification and interoperability between national systems and the European classification.

In addition, the project contributed to networking activities between organisations from different countries.

**Sustainability measures:** plans are in place to update the mapping tables every time Competent is updated (four times a year), or when ESCO is updated. With regard to version management for the mapping tables, an approach for the upcoming years has been developed to ensure the accuracy of the tables and their usability in the future. Once data exchange with EURES is up and running, plans exist to analyse the effects that mappings, or the selection of mappings according to the EURES guidelines, have on final results on the EURES portal. Based on the results of this analysis, the mapping tables and / or selections can be further developed to produce better results.

**Horizontal objectives:** the mappings will allow various partners to comply with Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1021 of 18 July 2018 on the adoption of technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of automated matching through the common IT platform using the European classification and interoperability between national systems and the European classification. This decision will facilitate future data exchange on job vacancies and CVs via EURES, and thereby contribute to mobility in the European labour market.

### 3.3.3. EURES: ESCO under Regulation (EU) 2016/568, Article 19

*'Both national classification systems and ESCO are living systems. Therefore, it is important to ensure maintenance in the mapping and make it a constant.'*



Call identification number	VP/2019/010/0021
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0391
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Free movement of workers.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment analysis;</li> <li>• Public sector;</li> <li>• Access to employment and jobseekers.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment services</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National classification mapped to ESCO;</li> <li>• Participating in events and workshops organised by the European Commission;</li> <li>• Presenting the ESCO mapping at national level;</li> <li>• Communication actions within the coordinator;</li> <li>• Mapping and reviewing occupations.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Bundesagentur für Arbeit (Germany)
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 100,000.00
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	

**Socioeconomic context:** the objective of this action was to map national classifications of occupations and skills and competencies with ESCO. Establishing a mapping between the German classifications and ESCO allows a more elaborate exchange of job vacancy and jobseeker profile data involved in the interoperability of the EURES network. The mapping generated within this action is used in the IT system of the German Public Employment Service (Bundesagentur für Arbeit). It sets the standard before transferring job vacancies and jobseeker profiles to EURES using a single coordinated channel for Germany.

Regulation EU 2016/589 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets aims to provide better job search and recruitment services across Europe. The Regulation provides for strengthened cooperation between Member States and the Commission with regard to interoperability (exchange of CVs and Job vacancies via a single coordinated channel) and automated matching between CVs and job vacancies.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the objective of the action was to assist in the mapping between ESCO and the German classifications of occupations, skills and competencies, as foreseen in Regulation EU 2016/589.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the use of ESCO within the interoperability of EURES will support the matching possibilities between jobseeker profiles and job vacancies at a European level. Structured and transparent information on occupations, skills and competencies is the basis for achieving the goal of interoperability in the EURES network. This directly facilitates the transparency of labour market demands and needs, and with them, labour mobility within the European Union.

As a result of the mapping project, the following relations were implemented:

Occupations (ESCO → DKZ):

- 1,220 exact matches;
- 520 close matches;
- 147 no relation (to ISCO-08 4digit).

Occupations (DKZ → ESCO):

- 1,220 exact matches;
- 1.267 close matches;
- 49 no relation (to ISCO-08 4digit).

Skills (ESCO → DKZ):

- 1,276 exact matches;
- 5,944 close matches;
- 1,140 no relation.

Skills (DKZ → ESCO):

- 1,276 exact matches;
- 3,358 close matches;
- 1,254 no relation.

The team learned that constant communication is crucial, especially bearing in mind the impact that specific mapping will have on various processes. In addition, the support, guidance and technical assistance provided by the European Commission was necessary and ensured the success of the project.

**Identification of potential good practices:** structural differences and differences in the level of detail require guidelines, both at a European level and a more detailed national level, to ensure consistent mapping results with a high level of practical utility. Both national classification systems and ESCO are living systems. Thus, it is important to ensure consistent maintenance in the mapping, and to make this a constant.



**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the sharing with relevant parties of mappings and relevant data and practices relating to matching classifications.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** following the bidirectional approach of the mapping, four tables were generated:

- Occupations:
  - DKZ → ESCO
  - ESCO → DKZ
  
- Skills and Competences:
  - DKZ → ESCO
  - ESCO → DKZ

It is foreseen that the mapping will not only be used in the back end of the data exchange of EURES, but also to link the ESCO information on national, occupational and competence-based information systems. The mapping will be published on the ESCO Portal of the European Commission.

**Transnational dimension:** being able to handle ESCO-enriched data on job vacancies and jobseeker profiles supports the transnational exchange of labour market data, and as a result facilitates the free movement of workers.

**Dissemination strategy:** publishing the mapping on the ESCO Portal of the European Commission. Networking and sharing good practices at two events organised by the European Commission in 2020, and in an initial workshop in 2019. At a national level, the ESCO mapping project was twice presented to national social partners. Communication actions were taken within the *Bundesagentur für Arbeit*: information on ESCO and the mapping were internally shared to the organisation, explaining what ESCO is and what it is used for.

**European added value:** EU funding and support from the European Commission enabled faster implementation and limited national costs, due to the opportunity to use a technical mapping platform. Without this funding and the technical mapping platform, it would not have been possible to realise the mapping in time to meet the implementation of Regulation EU 2016/589. The networking and exchange of best practices organised by the European Commission was decisive in this success. Participation in meetings at an early stage of the process allowed for the adoption of lessons learned at a European level.

**Sustainability measures:** beginning from the implementation of the tables in German PES IT systems, it was ensured that future adjustments due to changes in national classifications would be immediately reflected in the mapping. The project's technical integration also provides processes for future versions of ESCO and ways of implementation. These measures secure the sustainability of the mapping project. Broadening the scope to what is required for EURES interoperability, both the pure mapping results and the mapping relations are integrated and constantly updated in the IT systems.

**Horizontal objectives:** being able to handle ESCO-enriched data on job vacancies and jobseeker profiles supports the transnational exchange of labour market data and as a result facilitates the free movement of workers.

### 3.3.4. A data-driven bridge towards ESCO using AI algorithms (AI4ESCO)

*'Bridging and linking national occupation taxonomy is gaining interest, as it allows the use of a unified taxonomy as a lingua franca to observe and reason about the labour market across countries.'*



Call identification number	VP/2019/010/0028
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0423
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Free movement of workers.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching job vacancies;</li> <li>• Job mobility;</li> <li>• Skills recognition</li> </ul>
Target groups	National, regional and local authorities
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project management;</li> <li>• Apply AI to Link ESCO Occupations;</li> <li>• Quality evaluation of generated mapping tables;</li> <li>• Process report and documentation.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Università Degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca
Partners	CRISP-Unimib, ANPAL
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 64,613.39
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.unimib.it">www.unimib.it</a> , <a href="http://www.crisp-org.it">www.crisp-org.it</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** bridging and linking national occupation taxonomy is gaining interest, as it allows the use of a unified taxonomy as a lingua franca to observe and reason about the labour market across countries. Since 2014, the CRISP research centre has been working on several international and national projects on Labour Market Intelligence – the application of artificial intelligence (AI) and big data analytics (BDA) techniques to labour market information. In such a context, the ESCO taxonomy represents a reference term that enables the organising of labour market information using a unified standard taxonomy. The key intuition behind this project is to apply AI and big data techniques to link the Italian national occupation classifier CP2011 and ESCO (Occupation pillar), reducing the human effort needed to connect the two for the validation activity.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the purpose of AI4ESCO is to support Member States, EURES members and partners to establish high-quality mapping tables allowing the matching of job vacancies and CVs on the European Job Mobility Portal. AI4ESCO employs state-of-the-art artificial intelligence algorithms to build a map from the Italian CP-2011 (level 5) to ESCO (level 5) and vice versa, validated by labour market experts. Specifically, AI4ESCO aims to achieve the following goals:

- Derive a machine-readable structure of the lexicon used within the Italian National Occupation Taxonomy (CP2011);
- Connect ESCO to the Italian national taxonomy by means of word-embedding similarities;
- Use domain experts to review and validate the results.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** AI4ESCO can support labour market experts in bridging taxonomies by employing AI techniques. It has been successfully applied to bridge the Italian CP-2011 taxonomy over to ESCO (Occupation pillar), demonstrating that it can reduce the human effort required to build the mapping, enabling experts to focus their labour market competencies on approving/rejecting suggested matches with a high level of accuracy (97 % in the validation set; 76 % were validated as correct by ANPAL, while the remaining 24 % were validated as appropriate but refined by the experts).

Results achieved include:

- Mapping CP-2011 to ESCO and vice versa, realised by employing AI algorithms, and validated by labour market experts;
- A fully documented and reproducible approach to bridging national occupation classifiers on ESCO.

The project provides some lessons learned on the benefits and limitations of using AI in the context of the labour market. On one hand, the project showed that AI can help humans to perform a time-consuming and error-prone task, in the case of building a mapping from scratch. This allows humans to concentrate on validating the results. On the other hand, AI sometimes fails at encoding the deep and specific characteristics of a profession, and requires human expertise and supervision to fill the gap.

**Identification of potential good practices:** while the machine achieved a 97 % level of accuracy in the validation test, the evaluation provided by ANPAL revealed that the proposed mapping was considered correct in 76 % of cases, while in the remaining 24 % of cases, the mapping was refined by ANPAL with a more precise one, although it was recognised as appropriate in all but 20 (0.68 %) cases. This means that AI4ESCO is a useful means of facilitating an error-prone and time-consuming activity, and can be easily bridged to work on different languages.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the AI4ESCO team formally described the whole process, enabling the (technical) reader to precisely reproduce this approach. AI4ESCO will allow the mapping table to be updated over time by having a specific and reproducible report describing in detail the steps taken to realise the AI system. This could work as a manual for a future re-implementation of the process for other national taxonomies. The code to reproduce and re-iterate the procedure that maps the Italian Occupation taxonomies on ESCO can also be used in other countries. The use of the multi-criteria decision-making model will provide evidence of the judgments and criteria used by labour market experts.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** from a technical perspective, AI4ESCO is domain-dependent (i.e. it can be used to bridge from / to the ESCO Occupation pillar) but language-independent, as it can be applied to any other language encoded in ESCO. This allows for the reproducibility and transparency of the approach.

AI4ESCO built a mapping between the Italian CP occupation classifier and ESCO, as well as investigating the benefits of using state-of-the-art artificial intelligence techniques to support humans in bridging the taxonomy. The team assessed and

highlighted the benefits of using AI to support humans, who then only have to concentrate on approving / rejecting suggestions made by the machine rather than building a mapping from scratch. Meanwhile, they also noted that it is impossible for the AI to disambiguate certain jobs, for which human expertise is still mandatory.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** within the AI4ESCO project, the team developed:

- Two mapping files, CP2ESCO and ESCO2CP, organised as specified in the 'Technical standards and formats necessary for the operation of the EURES Common IT Platform', so that they can be immediately employed within the EURES portal;
- A final report that organises all the intermediate reports as unified documentation to clarify the whole project's organisation, the results achieved, the issues and a formalisation of the approach to allow its reproducibility.

**Transnational dimension:** the transnational dimension of the project was addressed by building a bridge between the Italian CP-2011 occupation taxonomy and ESCO (Occupation pillar). Moreover, the goal of AI4ESCO is to support the Member States, EURES members and partners in establishing high-quality mapping tables allowing the matching of job vacancies and CVs on the European Job Mobility Portal.

**New partnerships created:** through this project, AI4ESCO established a partnership with the Italian labour market experts from ANPAL.

**Dissemination strategy:** the project team plans to produce a scientific publication describing how AI4ESCO works, as well as a technical report to disseminate the project's results and approach on the CRISP website. They also plan to continue their collaboration with ANPAL to apply the AI techniques developed within this project to other labour market-related tasks.

**European added value:** without EU funding, this project would not have been possible. The project also provides great value-added to the EURES community through its approach, which can be used to bridge from / to the ESCO Occupation pillar, and can be applied to any other language encoded in ESCO, along with a formalisation that clarifies all the steps and allows for the reproducibility and transparency of the approach.

**Sustainability measures:** the sustainability of AI4ESCO, which will allow the mapping table to be updated over time, will be guaranteed by:

- A specific and reproducible report describing in detail the steps taken to realise the AI system, which could work as a manual for a future re-implementation of the process for other national taxonomies;
- Code to reproduce and re-iterate the procedure that maps the Italian occupation taxonomies on ESCO;
- Use of the multi-criteria decision-making model to provide evidence of the judgments and criteria used by labour market experts.

Moreover, the team planned to continue the experience of AI for taxonomy refinement through the following actions:

- Producing a scientific publication about the approach, making it available to the whole community and fostering collaboration and awareness about the usefulness of using AI in the labour market;
- Continuing collaboration with colleagues from ANPAL to employ AI in further tasks such as skill recognition and skill linkage with standard taxonomy, the

- identification of tasks for jobs, and the updating of an existing taxonomy with novel occupations and similarities (taxonomy refinement);
- Getting in touch with the ESCO team to show the results of AI4ESCO, applying the same approach to bridge ESCO with other taxonomies.

**Horizontal objectives:** the AI4ESCO project contributes to combating long-term unemployment by supporting the Member States, EURES members and partners in establishing high-quality mapping tables that allow the matching of job vacancies and CVs on the European Job Mobility Portal.

### 3.3.5. Mapping the ESCO: Croatia

*'The mapping tables produced in the project represent only the first step ... modernisation and revision of the mapping tables must become an almost automated process.'*



HRVATSKI ZAVOD ZA ZAPOSŁJAVANJE



Call identification number	VP/2019/010/0030
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0354
Policy area	Free movement of workers
Policy sub-area	EURES
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up of a project team and an extended working group;</li> <li>• Development and analysis of supporting material;</li> <li>• Comparison between NOC and ESCO data models;</li> <li>• Development of mapping tables to ESCO;</li> <li>• Review of mapping results;</li> <li>• Publishing the mapping tables;</li> <li>• Implementation of mapping tables in national IT system(s);</li> <li>• Development of a framework for the maintenance of mapping tables.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Croatia
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje
Partners	Algebra d.o.o. Za Obrazovanje Odraslih i Usluge
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 80,000.00
Project duration	1 January 2020 - 30 September 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.hzz.hr">www.hzz.hr</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the Croatian Employment Service (CES) is one of the key stakeholders in the Croatian labour market. As a public employment service of an EU Member State, it has an obligation to conduct activities towards facilitating the overall EURES mediation process. Furthermore, ESCO-backed EURES mediation is expected to be highly beneficial to the target groups that are particularly vulnerable to recent negative trends in the Croatian labour market. As such, the implementation of ESCO methodology is both a necessity and an opportunity to enhance the existing workflow within the area of transnational job placement. The CES has already implemented a series of EURES-themed projects. However, none of these have aimed to link the Croatian National Qualification Framework (NOC) to the ESCO system.

Efforts to approximate the Croatian NOC and ESCO have been carried out to reduce the youth unemployment rate and support the long-term unemployed. Within this context, the project 'Mapping the ESCO: Croatia' was in line with the legislative framework laid down in the Labour Market Act of 2018, as well as with overall strategic planning of the CES and the overriding objective of mitigating the negative effects of unemployment and negative trends in the labour market. The project was also in line with the postulates of 'EUROPE 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth', Regulation (EU) No. 492/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on freedom of movement for workers within the Union, and Regulation (EU) 2016/589 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2016 on a European network of employment services (EURES), workers' access to mobility services and the further integration of labour markets.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project aimed to enhance EURES mediation in the Croatian labour market through the specific objective of generating and systemising relations between the Croatian National Qualification Framework (NOC) and ESCO. Specific objectives of the project included:

- Setting up teams and engaging a wider expert group that would contribute to the implementation of actions, education, dissemination and implementation of future deliverables (e.g. applications, research studies).
- Mapping the concepts from national data models to the ESCO model while ensuring the harmonisation of national classifications towards the ESCO model in all applications used by relevant policy stakeholders.
- Establishing a framework for the annual review of mapping tables.
- Publication of mapping tables and related research studies, and the maintenance of mapping tables.
- Establishing a team ready to educate and provide support on all relevant questions relating to the use of mapping tables and its implementation in applications/services.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** implementation of the mapping tables in national IT systems meant implementation in the IT surroundings of the CES. Implementation was only partially achieved, due to the relatively small number of exact matches established in the mapping tables (only 1,274). Out of 1,274 exact matches established, 1,115 NOC occupations were paired with their identical 7-digit code synonyms in the ESCO system. The remaining 2,747 NOC occupations can only be published using the old ISCO code, meaning that CES will only partially publish ESCO occupations, as do the majority of Member States.

The project is projected to have a tangible impact on the matching of job vacancies and CVs, as well as on the functioning of the European Job Mobility Portal, through the adaptation of current national process flow with linkage to ESCO, and communication through ESCO-related terms. Furthermore, maintenance of the ESCO



classification will positively impact the dynamics and quality of national classifications in terms of both content and usage. The lasting result of the project will be a fully functional business process for EURES mediation within the Croatian Employment Service (CES).

**Identification of potential good practices:** the project team faced the challenge of a large number of partial matches between the occupations described in the National Qualifications Framework (NOC), and those in the ESCO system. The decision was made to move away from the one-on-one matching technique, which was rarely achievable, to a more realistic approach in which matching takes place between groups of characteristics. The final version of the mapping tables was completed in June 2021, with 6,939 relations established on the basis of several types of matching: broad match, narrow match, exact match, and close match.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** aside from its positive contributions to the Croatian Employment Service (CES), the project offers a general schema for linking national qualifications frameworks to the ESCO system and facilitating ESCO-backed EURES mediation. The project's actions and implementation methodology / process are therefore applicable in the other Member States.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** the project's novelty stems from its structured approach to matching NOC occupations with those in the ESCO system. In addition, the inclusion and capacity building of relevant stakeholders from public agencies, including those from the CES, ensures the sustainability and continuation of these efforts.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project produced and published the following reports and policy evidence:

- NKZ98 (*Nacionalna kvalifikacija zanimanja '98*: Croatian NQF) analysis;
- NKZ98 V2 analysis;
- NKZ98-ESCO comparison;
- Mapping process methodology;
- NKZ98-ESCO mapped data models;
- Methodology for updating mapped data models in case of national change.

**Transnational dimension:** the project has an integrated transnational component, being fully dedicated to the CES business process of EURES. The overarching theme of the operation was transnational mediation through the application of the ESCO system in the Croatian labour market. At a project team level, the transnational dimension was addressed through a working visit to Slovenia in January 2020.

**New partnerships created:** Algebra, a Croatian company which specialises in adult education, was responsible for the development of the supporting material. This included analysis of NKZ98 and ESCO, with inputs from CES experts.

**Dissemination strategy:** the project's outputs and deliverables were disseminated during the online presentation of the project's results, as well as during the final event (online). Participants in the final event included the employees of the labour market sector of the Ministry of Labour, pension system as well as representatives of all of the relevant departments/divisions of the CES. All project deliverables were published online, and openly accessible by the relevant stakeholders and the wider public. Deliverables and additional information about the project were made available on the official website of the Croatian Employment Service.



**European added value:** the project has contributed to deepening European integration through multiple channels. It has fostered the free movement of labour by facilitating ESCO-backed EURES mediation, and consequently enhancing access to vacant jobs at EU level, via a fully functional EURES portal. This transnational aspect of the project could potentially mitigate youth unemployment on a national level, as the majority of jobseekers who are willing to work abroad are young people or those who have faced repeated difficulties in finding suitable jobs in Croatia.

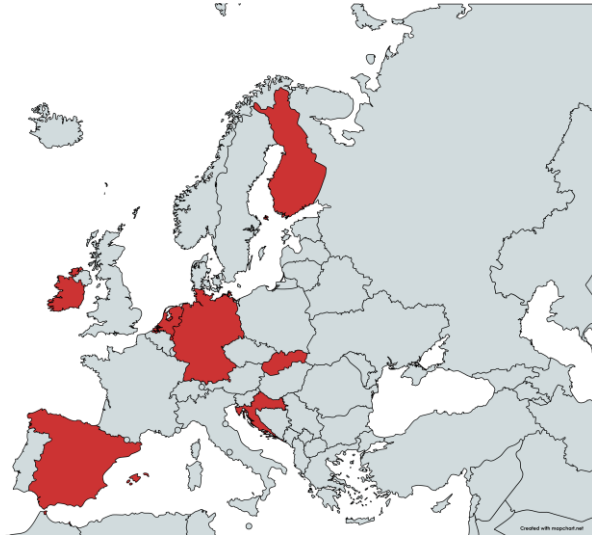
**Sustainability measures:** the project paid special attention to the dimension of sustainability, which was manifested in several measures. First, the project formed a team that was ready to educate and provide support on all relevant matters relating to the use of the mapping tables and their integration into applications/services. Second, the project developed a framework/methodology for the maintenance of the mapping tables. In alignment with this, a working group was formed at the CES, tasked with periodical maintenance and updating of the existing mapping tables. Third, the Ministry of Labour is in the process of launching a project that will contribute to the further mapping of skills within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. Meanwhile, the CES is conducting activities within the Strengthening of Mobility through a EURES network project, co-financed by the ESF. The line ministry has also implemented the ESCO classification in the National Platform for Advanced Analytics of the Labour Market's Mechanics and Dynamics.

**Horizontal objectives:** by the virtue of its design, the project contributes to the protection of vulnerable youth and the long-term unemployed by enhancing their access to the European labour market. This can potentially combat some of the negative trends in the Croatian labour market, and promotes gender equality by helping jobseekers of all genders to explore more job opportunities at the EU level that are relevant to their professional interests and skillsets. Moreover, women had a strong presence in all of the project's activities; out of the 46 participants in the project's training sessions, meetings and seminars, 78 % were women.

### 3.3.b. EaSI–EURES: Targeted mobility scheme ‘Your first EURES job’

#### 3.3.6. Your first EURES job Germany

*‘The project offered the chance to test and establish useful and efficient work-sharing processes in the BA / ZAV and within the network. These processes were further developed over the course of the project and proved to be resilient and adaptable during the COVID-19 pandemic.’*



Call identification number	VP/2018/009/0009
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0470
Policy area	Free movement of workers
Policy sub-area	EURES
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• National statistical offices;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated 1 294 job placements;</li> <li>• Covered travel expenses for job interviews for 422 individuals;</li> <li>• Facilitated 766 language courses;</li> <li>• Supported the recognition of qualifications for 530 individuals;</li> <li>• Covered relocation expenses for 924 individuals.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	Ireland, Croatia, Spain, Finland, Netherlands, Slovakia.
Coordinator	Bundesagentur für Arbeit (BA) (Germany);
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) (Ireland);</li> <li>• Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje (Croatia);</li> <li>• Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal (Spain);</li> <li>• Suomen Tasavalta (Finland);</li> <li>• Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen (Netherlands);</li> <li>• Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (Slovakia).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 4,430,692.00
Project duration	1 January 2019 – 30 June 2021
Project/organisation website	-

**Socioeconomic context:** the EURES Targeted Mobility Scheme is a European job mobility programme to encourage the activation of the unemployed by offering a comprehensive package of support services to jobseekers. The YfEj scheme aims to provide young people with valuable job and training experience. The scheme serves as one of the tools developed by the European Commission to tackle youth

unemployment in Europe, making it easier for them to gain work experience in another Member State or EEA Countries (Norway, Iceland).

BA is the provider of EURES services in Germany to support the mobility of workers and help employers to recruit and fill job vacancies across borders. BA's 'Your first EURES job' project builds on the existing infrastructure and cooperation formats of the EURES network. Another consortium partner, ZAV, provides the operational basis and service infrastructure for the implementation of the project YfEj Germany.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project aimed to support young people from Europe aged between 18 and 35 years by providing high-quality counselling services ranging from recruitment to integration, as well as targeted financial benefits. The guidance services provided by EURES advisers, as well as its financial support services, aim to overcome obstacles to employment and facilitate entry into the German labour market.

Cooperation and coordination within the consortium and the EURES network aimed to achieve a better balance between hard-to-fill vacancies in Germany and a supply of applicants from countries with high unemployment rates, in particular youth unemployment.

The lack of language skills emerged as a key obstacle to recruitment and integration. Therefore, the project also focused on funding preparatory language courses. Building on the experience of previous projects, it was anticipated that the counselling and guidance services would be to be supplemented with the provision of either a preparatory orientation internship, subject to social security contributions, or a language course to accompany the internship or probationary period.

The quantitative goal of the project was to integrate approximately 800 participants into apprenticeships, skilled labour positions or internships.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the provision of high-quality counselling services from recruitment to integration, as well as targeted financial benefits, proved to be a success. A total number of 1,294 individuals were supported through this action. In total, 75.7 % of all participants were fully integrated into the labour market. The services, which related to recruitment, counselling, placement and post-integration counselling, as well as the financial support, were deemed useful for young people in securing stable employment in Germany.

The consortium also covered travel expenses for 422 individuals to attend job interviews, facilitated 766 preparatory language course sessions, and reimbursed relocation costs for 924 young people. In addition, the project provided financial support for the costs incurred in order to recognise diplomas and qualifications for 530 TMS candidates.

Over the course of the implementation of the action, the project team noticed a reduction in scepticism among German companies towards hiring workers from non-EU countries. The increasing shortage of non-skilled workers also made it quicker and relatively easier to secure job placements.

**Transnational dimension:** the project operated within the transnational dimension by being open to jobseekers and employers from all EU-27 countries, as well as Norway and Iceland. Furthermore, it promoted mobility in Europe through the [EURES](#)

[network](#)<sup>35</sup> and public employment services. However, it had a specific focus on supporting the target groups within the countries of the consortium members. These countries ensured that information about the project was widely disseminated among jobseekers, employers and within their national public employment services, as well as within their geographical area of Europe.

**Dissemination strategy:** as regards the dissemination of project outputs, occasional reports were published on BA's intranet about the status and results of the action. The results of the mutual learning activities and process optimisation were mainly disseminated among the members of the consortium.

**European added value:** the project resulted in two types of added value – one being the good level of cooperation within the consortium, which added to knowledge about European labour imbalances; as the other being an increase in the number of quality recruitments taking place across borders. These results can therefore be seen as providing added value for the entire [EURES network](#)<sup>36</sup>.

**Sustainability measures:** due to the increasing level of professionalism and growing importance of targeted mobility scheme projects, the Federal Employment Agency (BA / ZAV) decided to create six new permanent positions for the implementation of TMS projects during the project period. As the German labour market offers many opportunities, future projects will continue to focus on placements within Germany, but will also be open to funding in the context of placements in every member country of the EU.

In general, BA / ZAV will continue to apply for TMS projects and push for greater transparency in the European labour market. Nonetheless, the organisation will strive for the advancement of individual employability, especially for workers who have particular obstacles to overcome. It will also prioritise funding for the development of improved language skills and support for the recognition of professional knowledge among European workers, to promote transnational labour mobility.

**Horizontal objectives:** the facilitated placements supported unemployed young people who were at risk of poverty and social exclusion to secure a stable employment position. The project also employed a social code that laid down the fundamental principle of equal treatment of women and men. One of the project's main focuses was to improve the occupational situation of women by eliminating existing socio-economic barriers and providing them with access to the same opportunities as men.

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<sup>36</sup> For more information, please see <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/eures-network>

### 3.3.7. TMS Your first EURES job – YfEj 6.0

*'YfEj 6.0 offered a wide range of services tailored to meet the needs of individual employers and youth before, during and after placement.*

*This included a direct delivery mechanism for information and advisory services, as well as tools, skills development, comprehensive recruitment package, language and soft skills training, plus financial benefits for services to support successful placement in another EU country.'*



Call identification number	VP/2018/009/0012
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0473
Policy area	Free movement of workers
Policy sub-area	EURES
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated 1,289 job placements for young people;</li> <li>• Reimbursed 569 work-related interview trips for jobseekers;</li> <li>• Facilitated and supported 1,260 relocations;</li> <li>• Covered language training costs for 558 young people;</li> <li>• Supported 102 trainees with a subsistence allowance;</li> <li>• Covered financial expenses related to the special needs of 16 individuals;</li> <li>• Supported recognition of qualifications for 227 young people;</li> <li>• Financed 417 SME integration training programmes;</li> <li>• Carried out an information and awareness-raising campaign;</li> <li>• Created an online job-matching platform that included the provision of services relating to recruitment, matching and placement activities.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Romania, Croatia, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Spain, Netherlands.
Coordinator	Agenzia Nazionale per le Politiche Attive del Lavoro (ANPAL)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agentia Nationala pentru Ocuparea fortei de Munca (Moldova);</li> <li>• Citta' metropolitana di Roma capitale (Italy);</li> <li>• EURODESK Italy associazioni (Italy);</li> <li>• Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (Italy);</li> <li>• Hrvatski zavod za zapošljavanje (Croatia);</li> <li>• Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Portugal);</li> <li>• K Milios and SIA OE (Greece);</li> <li>• Kypriaki Dimokratia (Cyprus);</li> <li>• Republika Bălgariya (Bulgaria);</li> <li>• Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal (Spain);</li> <li>• Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekering (Netherlands);</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universita Degli Studi di Roma la Sapienza (Italy).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 4,643,199.84
Project duration	1 February 2019 – 30 April 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu/">http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu/</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the unemployment rates across Europe have mounted steadily over the last decade, making it extremely difficult for young people to secure a stable job in a competitive labour market. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has had major implications for the way people live and work, affecting their physical and mental well-being in a profound way. The YfEj 6.0 project addresses the need to support youth in making a successful transition into the EU labour market, and assists companies in filling bottleneck vacancies. The project builds on the experience gathered through five previous actions aimed at providing results-oriented, customised job mobility services, fully embedded in the EURES system.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the YfEj 6.0 project pursued five main objectives:

- Supporting youth employment, delivering an EU-wide mobility package that included information, recruitment, matching and placement services together with financial benefits, using a client-oriented / personalised approach;
- Consolidating a multi-stakeholder partnership to design common youth-oriented policies;
- Addressing labour market imbalances and skills mismatches by delivering economical and demand-driven scheme, designed to respond to the individual needs of employers facing barriers in filling vacancies;
- Implementing at least 1,500 placements (work, apprenticeships and / or traineeships) across all EU countries plus Norway and Iceland, with a special focus on the partnering countries;
- Transferring and enhancing the experience gained through the European Solidarity Corps project.

**Results, impacts:** the project team created a job-matching platform that ensured transparency and accountability. The web platform managed the services provided, which included matching activities as well as financial support. A user guide for beneficiaries was drafted and published via the project's platform, offering user-friendly explanations as to how to register and upload an application.

The project successfully secured 1,289 job placements for young people and covered the expenses for job-related trips by 569 individuals. The project also supported 1,260 relocations, where traineeships accounted for a significant percentage of total placements. In addition, 558 young people received financial support for language training and 102 trainees received a subsistence allowance. The project also covered financial expenses relating to the special needs of 16 individuals. The project team also covered expenses relating to the recognition of qualifications for 227 young jobseekers and financed integration training programmes for 417 SMEs.

The project team implemented a comprehensive communications, information and dissemination strategy. The project's activities and results were accessible to a wider audience via the project's website and social media channels (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook and LinkedIn). A project roll-up and leaflets in English and Italian were produced and sent out via e-mail to project partners for further dissemination. An information kit was also produced, which included essential information about the project's activities, benefits and eligibility criteria for applicants / jobseekers. In addition, the project team published the stories of jobseekers and employers,

focusing mainly on mobility experiences and the changes that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As regards awareness-raising and promotional activities, one meeting was held to present the project to the Italian Chamber of Commerce, and another meeting was held with the Association of Chambers of Commerce abroad. In addition, seminars carried out jointly with EURODESK, Euroguidance, Europass and EqF about European programmes and tools for transnational mobility took place in Rome, Florence, Matera, Cagliari, Gorizia and Salerno. YfEj 6.0 was also promoted across Italy, at the Umbria Festival, the Career Day in Camerino, the Festival of Work in Milan, JobOrienta in Verona and Job Day in Ancona. The project also carried out training for Euroguidance operators and EURES assistants.

As part of the project, an international conference – Learning by Leaving – took place in Cagliari, Italy. The aim of the conference was to establish closer cooperation between European mobility networks and to make better use of synergies to improve the quality of service provision.

The project ended with a final YfEj 6.0 event, which was held online on 21 April 2021. The objectives of this event were to share the results of the project and to discuss the way forward. The event was recorded and made available via the project's Facebook account.<sup>37</sup>

**Lessons learned:** in general, the project team concluded that a comprehensive approach, based on complementary interventions, is a key factor in success. In addition, it was observed that the greater involvement of employers and dedicated communication strategies increased the effectiveness and impact of the project's activities. It was also very important to involve young people in communication activities, thus bringing an up-to-date understanding of the lifestyle and habits of the target group and creating a sense of 'community'.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the consortium developed specific pilot actions and transversal activities to improve the quality of mobility experiences and the services provided. One example is a traineeship pilot action launched to develop specific tools to verify the quality of a traineeship offer. The pilot also successfully provided guidelines regarding traineeship schemes in EU countries, and created a Top EURES Employer Label, rewarding employers that meet the highest standards in terms of delivering a quality traineeship experience.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project team released a checklist for compliance with the Council Recommendation for quality traineeships. A factsheet and guidelines on more suitable traineeship schemes in the EU countries were also published. The YfEj 6.0 action successfully carried out a survey to gauge the extent to which previous YfEj projects had contributed to the improvement of labour mobility and the personal / professional growth of participants / beneficiaries. The report on the findings of the survey was shared among the members of the consortium through the project's Google repository.

**New partnerships created:** the previous YfEj project supported by the EU enabled the building of a broad consortium led by ANPAL, which comprised 12 partnering organisations, 15 associated partners and one affiliate partner, covering eight EU Member States.

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<sup>37</sup> <https://fb.watch/4-TS7l3x26/>



**Dissemination strategy:** the target audiences for the project’s communication and dissemination activities were young jobseekers, SMEs and large companies, employer’s associations, chambers of commerce, education institutions, public and private employment services, as well as national / regional policy and decision-makers.

The main channel for communication was social media. A dedicated project website was set up with a job-matching platform available in three different languages. The project team also created a project Facebook page, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, and a YouTube channel. The project’s activities were also promoted via articles, leaflets, e-mail marketing campaigns, radio and TV interviews.

The project partners also organised numerous events such as workshops, online and on-site ‘job days’ and seminars targeting young people in need of employment, as well as employers and national / regional policy- and decision-makers.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project paid special attention to youth unemployment and promoted equal and fair access to a high-quality, sustainable employment by delivering an EU-wide mobility package embedded within the EURES system. The project did so by addressing labour market imbalances and skills mismatches through the delivery of demand-driven schemes and client-oriented services designed to respond to the individual needs of employers facing barriers to filling bottleneck vacancies.

### 3.3.8. Targeted Mobility Scheme - Your first EURES job

*‘The EURES recruitment services offered to employers contributed to an increased knowledge of the project as well as a better understanding of the benefits of the EURES network.’*



Call identification number	VP/2018/009/0015
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0450
Policy area	Free movement of workers
Policy sub-area	EURES
Target groups	Employment services
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financially supported 350 interview trips;</li> <li>• Facilitated 1,332 job placements;</li> <li>• Provided 371 language courses to individuals;</li> <li>• Supported 235 recognitions of qualifications;</li> <li>• Supported 1,332 relocations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported SMEs in offering integration programmes to 64 employed candidates.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Sweden
Participating countries	Romania, Estonia, Ireland, Portugal, Denmark, Spain, Netherlands, Slovenia.
Coordinator	Arbetsförmedlingen
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agenția Națională pentru Ocuparea Forței de Muncă (Moldova);</li> <li>Eesti Töötukassa (Estonia);</li> <li>Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) (Ireland);</li> <li>Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (Portugal);</li> <li>Københavns Kommune (Denmark);</li> <li>Região Autónoma dos Açores (Portugal);</li> <li>Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal (Spain);</li> <li>Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen (Netherlands);</li> <li>Zavod Republike Slovenije za Zaposlovanje (Slovenia).</li> </ul>
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 5,034,122.06
Project duration	2 February 2019 – 1 November 2021
Project/organisation website	-

**Socioeconomic context:** ‘Your first EURES job’ (hereafter, YfEj) is an intra-EU job mobility scheme. It helps young EU nationals in the 18–35 age bracket from the EU-27, Iceland and Norway to find a work placement – a job, traineeship or apprenticeship – in a country other than their country of residence. It also helps employers – in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – to find the workers for their hard-to-fill vacancies. YfEj is an EU labour market activation measure that combines tailor-made employment assistance with financial support for its target groups. It is implemented by the YfEj employment services, which include public employment services and members of the EURES network, in cooperation with EURES partners and other public or private organisations. These organisations provide information, recruitment, matching, and pre-and post-placement support to both young people and employers.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project’s main objectives focus on supporting the policies of EURES –providing information, advice and recruitment / placement (job-matching) services for the benefit of young EU workers and employers alike, those wishing to benefit from the principle of the free movement of workers. Across Europe, there is a situation in which high youth unemployment simultaneously co-exists with employers in several sectors who face problems in filling vacancies.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** through the joint efforts of the consortium members, 350 jobseekers were granted financial support for a job interview trip. This result was substantially lower than the initial target, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely hampered mobility; however, it was also an effect of the increasing number of jobseekers benefitting from interviews taking place online.

During 2020, the project’s members managed to secure 1,332 placements. The project supported 31 SMEs in offering integration programmes to 64 newly employed workers. Moreover, 371 jobseekers were granted language courses. Lastly, 235 jobseekers were granted support for the recognition of qualifications. When

jobseekers have their qualifications recognised, it makes it easier for them to meet the recruitment needs of employers.

The consortium members were successful in making good use of existing tools such as the EURES Portal and social media channels, which were implemented during previous YfEj projects. The project team took stock of the existing social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Social media platforms proved to be an efficient way of reaching out to a wider audience and raising awareness about targeted mobility schemes. Consortium members also participated in regular international chats, answering questions about the project. These chats were promoted through the EURES network and by the European Coordination Offices. Consortium members also participated in a number of EJDs (European Job Days), as well as EOJDs (European Online Job Days) by holding seminars.

In addition, the project team held two follow up conferences in Estonia and Sweden. The purpose of these was to follow up on the progress of the project, discuss results, clarify queries, exchange experiences and ensure the correct implementation of the project's activities.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the following good practices were identified during the project:

- Spending time at the beginning of the project to establish a common platform for understanding project implementation, cooperation and processes within the consortium;
- Building trust among the consortium members by being transparent and professional with regard to the management of the project;
- Maintaining a good level of communication by arranging regular online meetings with consortium members to follow up on the budget and results;
- Focusing on quality, fair mobility and the continuous improvement of processes and administrative procedures.

**Transnational dimension:** the project had a transnational dimension by being open to jobseekers and employers from all EU Member States, as well as from Norway and Iceland. The project promoted mobility across Europe through the EURES network and PES, while having a specific focus on supporting the target groups within the countries of the consortium members. These countries ensured that information about the project was widely disseminated among jobseekers, employers and within their national public employment services, as well as within their geographical region of Europe.

**Dissemination strategy:** the main deliverables of this action, apart from the many support services provided to the target groups, were the setting up of the main project website, [www.yourfirsteuresjob.se](http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.se), and the creation of application forms and supporting documents for all financial support services. In addition, instructions and templates were provided to all consortium members. Routines and processes were also developed to aid the correct and efficient processing of applications for financial support.

The project's achievements were disseminated to PES / EURES and other EU stakeholders at seminars, events and conferences. Ministries of Labour in many of the consortium member countries have shown a genuine interest in the project, and thus asked to receive updates on its progress. The media in many consortium countries have shown a keen interest in the workings of the project and the opportunities it provides to jobseekers and employers.

**European added value:** the project resulted in two types of added value – one being the good level of cooperation within the consortium, which added to the knowledge concerning European labour imbalances; the other being an increased number of quality recruitments taking place across borders. These results can therefore be seen as providing added value for the entire [EURES network](#)<sup>38</sup>. In addition, the project has provided added value in ultra-peripheral parts of Europe such as the Azores, where it provided an opportunity for jobseekers to receive mobility services.

**Sustainability measures:** the sustainable impact of this action is the well-established cooperation between consortium members, which in turn has resulted in a variety of new recruitment collaborations, all aimed at resolving situations of shortage, and supporting both jobseekers and employers. As these new collaborations have been based on mutual trust, the partnership has good potential to become a long-lasting one, which could continue to grow and develop within new mobility projects and within other contexts of cooperation.

**Horizontal objectives:** youth employment, and the combatting of youth unemployment, are both key issues for the 'Your first EURES job' project. Its purpose is to work on lowering the level of unemployment among youth by focusing on increasing mobility in Europe. The project has addressed these key issues through the work performed by the [EURES network](#)<sup>39</sup> within the consortium member countries. This work consisted of recruitment services, including targeted recruitment events, the pre-selection of candidates, job matching and preparation, as well as information sessions with both jobseekers and employers.

The promotion of a high-quality, sustainable employment was another key element of this project. The consortium focused its efforts on working with employers who offered high-quality and sustainable employment. This was achieved by focusing on quality rather than quantity, and by establishing good contacts with both jobseekers / candidates and employers.

### 3.4. Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship: projects supporting social enterprises

Two projects presented in this section tested and developed a transaction cost support scheme combined with financial instruments, as a means to address the mismatch between necessary and sustainable ticket sizes. The projects aimed to catalyse smaller risk-capital investments of below 500,000, which would otherwise not happen.

These projects made it possible for financial intermediaries to undertake long-term risk capital investments in the form of equity, quasi-equity or hybrid financing to social enterprises.

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<sup>38</sup> For more information, please see <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/eures-network>

<sup>39</sup> For more information, please see <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/eures-network>

### 3.4.1. BIF – Belgian Investment Fund for Social Enterprises

*'We can talk about change. We can also measure it. And for some, the logical next step is to decide to shape it. This is what we do. Change is an impact investment fund run by Credal. We direct money and talent to innovative social entrepreneurs.'*



Call identification number	VP/2017/013/0088
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0295
Policy area	Investment fund for social enterprises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy sub-area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable mobility;</li> <li>Responsible e-commerce;</li> <li>Reducing the digital divide;</li> <li>Sustainable clothing;</li> <li>Sustainable logistics;</li> <li>Digital marketing;</li> <li>Fair and sustainable food.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social enterprises;</li> <li>Impact investors;</li> <li>Disadvantaged groups;</li> <li>Young people.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operationalising Change as an investment fund dedicated to social enterprises;</li> <li>Raising a dedicated fund for Belgian social enterprises of EUR 7.5 million, and investing in 25 social enterprises;</li> <li>Conducting a pre-screening of potential projects to be invested in, and submitting its proposals to the eligibility committee;</li> <li>Conducting full due diligence on the shortlisted social enterprises;</li> <li>Establishing a social impact evaluation criterion to monitor the social and environmental performance of social enterprises during the overall investment period;</li> <li>Fundraising activities such as raising awareness about impact finance and social entrepreneurship among the community of potential investors, and proactively promoting Change as a new social first impact fund to potential investors.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	CREDAL SC
Partners	TAMA, FEBEA
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 579,982.80
Project duration	16 September 2018 – 15 September 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.credal.be">www.credal.be</a> ; <a href="https://changeffund.social">https://changeffund.social</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the transaction cost support grant has allowed Credal, an investment fund for social enterprises, to create a new investment tool in Belgium dedicated to supporting the development of social enterprises at an early stage in their development. Such a tool addresses several strategic objectives of the EU, including:

- Creating sustainable quality employment;
- Creating employment opportunities for young people and disadvantaged groups;
- Building a more inclusive society by addressing key societal challenges such as the lack of inclusion of youth and disadvantaged groups in the labour market, and assisting people's inclusion by improving their digital skills and reducing the digital divide;
- Contributing to the EU's green agenda by supporting start-ups that develop sustainable solutions for clothing, mobility or logistics;
- Contributing to the development of the social economy by supporting fair and organic food production and short food supply chains;
- Creating new economic opportunities for social economy organisations and local, fair and sustainable social enterprises by developing new e-commerce markets for them;
- Supporting the work of NGOs and other social initiatives by developing e-giving through technology and paid digital marketing.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** Change is an impact-first cooperative investment fund open to professional investors, both private and institutional. The goal of Change is to maximise social and environmental impact while generating a fair financial return.

Change aims to develop an offer of investment products to satisfy the demand for equity and quasi-equity among social enterprises in Belgium, particularly within the social economy sector. This includes starting grants, equity participation, subordinated loans and convertible loans.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** Change has fully achieved its first objective, and partially achieved its second. It has developed its full operational capacity as an investment fund for social enterprises, and built a solid and impactful portfolio of social enterprises that have proven resilient in the face of the current pandemic. Change has invested a total of EUR 1 million in seven leading social start-ups and one scale-up, active in key economic sectors with high growth and impact potential such as sustainable mobility, responsible e-commerce, reducing the digital divide, sustainable clothing, sustainable logistics, digital marketing, work insertion through digital skills, or fair and sustainable food.

Its second objective – namely, raising EUR 7.5 million and investing in 25 social enterprises – has only partially been achieved. It was difficult to mobilise investors both in Belgium and abroad, who are still very cautious about investing in social enterprises. They perceive social enterprises as 'high risk', but not sufficiently 'high reward'. Overall, eight social enterprises received an investment of around EUR 100,000. The Change team attracted a solid and diverse group of investors, including both individuals and institutional investors.

Change has actively contributed as a founding member to the launch of Solifin, a networking platform on which other impact investors can join forces to co-invest in impact projects.

The lesson learned is that investors still prefer 'high-risk, high-reward' investments, and perceive investing in social enterprises as certainly 'high-risk', but not sufficiently 'high reward'.

**Identification of potential good practices:** building partnerships with other European organisations to share best practices. For example, the Change team established a direct relationship with necessary contacts with European partners, both for fundraising purposes in France, Italy and Spain, and in order to adopt best practices from well-known European partners (La Bolsa Social, Ship2B, SeedBizkaia, France Active, SEFEA, Maze, etc). These practices have had a positive impact on the design and implementation of Change.

To increase the number and diversity of social enterprises in Europe, it is important to ensure that the number and diversity of impact investors also grows. This can foster innovation and lead to the development of new investment approaches, as well as helping to mobilise greater investment for social enterprises.

There is a need for impact investors to develop new financing tools that can also serve the wider social economy, which is much larger than the still-nascent sector of social enterprises, and will require much greater investment in the future. Hence, promoting greater collaboration between social finance and the impact investment sector is one of the ways to achieve this.

Another potential good practice is to follow the principle 'tax the bads, subsidise the goods', to encourage the creation and development of positive impact companies because they generate positive externalities in the long term – unlike traditional companies, which pollute more, and create costs relating to the negative externalities they generate (pollution, precarious jobs, leakage of profits to foreign countries ...), which are ultimately borne by the community. At first glance, positive impact companies do not always have a high financial return. However, if we consider the fact that they create sustainable jobs, limit their environmental impact and act on their local community, they are very profitable.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the lessons Change learned in becoming an impact investor, as well as its investment and impact approach and the processes, methods and tools it has developed, could be very useful to other organisations embarking on this path. In particular, they will be of use to social finance organisations that have no previous experience in investment, as well as to those actors who launch their activities in countries where social finance is still developing. The Change model is easily transferable to other realities, and can serve as an example to countries in which investors with an impact-first approach have so far not developed.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** Change uses a co-investment approach that is centred on the needs of social enterprises, and which is patient and impact-focused. Its investment approach is collaborative, systematically involving like-minded co-investors to fairly share risks and rewards and ensure that social entrepreneurs raise the maximum capital they need from an early stage. Such an approach is not quite the norm in Europe yet. However, the European institutions could facilitate the emergence of more investors of this kind. After all, social enterprises will only be able to develop if they find a conducive environment in which to do so – and access to investment at an early stage is probably their biggest need.



**Policy evidence generated by the project:** Change developed its first impact report in 2020, which was addressed to social enterprises, investors and partners of Change. It was also relevant to potential future investors, new social enterprises and similar peer organisations. The report was a valuable resource for regional, national and European public authorities who focus on developing the social enterprise and impact sector. Similarly regional, national and European public investors can better understand the type of impact and investments they can generate by supporting initiatives such as Change.

**Transnational dimension:** the transnational dimension has been present throughout the process of setting up Change as an impact-first investment fund. The Change team has taken inspiration from similar funds in other countries such as Fondo Si in Italy, managed by SEFEA Impact. Creas, La Bolsa Social, Seed Bizkaia and Ship2B from Spain have also been important sources of inspiration. In France, Change has sought guidance and inspiration from France Active, given its similar approach towards impact investment, with the former investment manager of France Active taking part today in the investment committee of Change.

In addition to using such funds as models for its development, Change has maintained regular contact with them, in particular when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Such contacts have been used as a sounding board to re-evaluate Change's investment strategy at the first moment of uncertainty caused by the pandemic. The advice of such actors with more experience in this field reassured the Change team, which decided not to modify its investment strategy and has continued investing regardless of the pandemic.

**New partnerships created:** the relationship manager at Change has established a partnership with European institutions, both for fundraising purposes in France, Italy and Spain, and in order to adopt best practices from well-known European partners (La Bolsa Social, Ship2B, SeedBizkaia, France Active, SEFEA, Maze, etc) that have had a positive impact on the design and implementation of Change.

**Dissemination strategy:** the Change team, with the support of a specialised communication agency, has developed a visual identity for Change (logo, promotional materials, presentation tools and website). The project team have communicated the results of the project via the following means:

- Change newsletter - aimed at social enterprises, investors, potential investors and peers;
- Change impact report - aimed at social enterprises, investors, potential investors and peers;
- A dedicated LinkedIn page with 294 followers, mainly industry professionals<sup>40</sup>;
- A dedicated Facebook page with 481 followers, mainly drawn from the Credal Community and a community of Change sympathisers<sup>41</sup>;
- A dedicated website explaining Change's investment approach<sup>42</sup>;
- Regular press and media articles in which Change has been presented or referred to;
- Interviews with the Change team on Radio and TV;
- Participation in several initiatives, conferences, seminars and workshops to increase the project's visibility among social enterprises and potential investors;

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/company/change-credal/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/CHANGE.CREDAL/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://changefund.social>

- Attending Solifin pitch events, and presenting at key co-working spaces in Brussels such as 'The Impact House' and 'Coopcity'.

**European added value:** the financial support received from the European Commission was crucial in allowing Change to move from being a start-up to a solid and sustainable fund with promising prospects.

**Sustainability measures:** Credal is now much better equipped to respond to the needs of social enterprises in three complementary ways, through investment readiness coaching, through social lending and (thanks to Change) also as an impact investor.

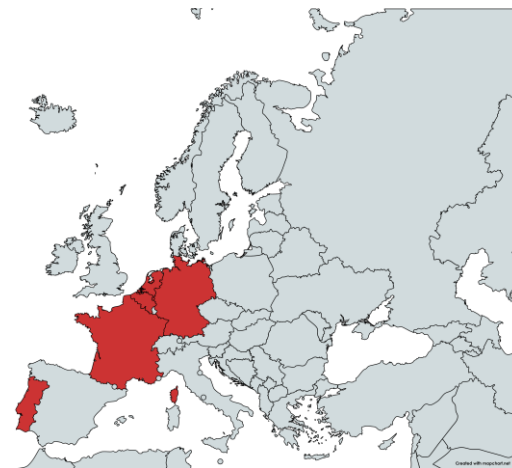
In the years to come, and with the support of Credal, Change will continue to expand its investor base and pursue its investment activities, making sure that impact-oriented social enterprises have access to investment early on when funding is scarce, and which is adapted to their needs, promotes impact and is patient, to allow for their development.

Change will continue to create a positive impact for both society and the environment. It will focus on developing in Belgium first, and not investing in other countries yet.

**Horizontal objectives:** Change contributes to building a more inclusive society by addressing key societal challenges such as the inclusion of youth and disadvantaged groups into the labour market, and supporting people's inclusion by increasing their digital skills and reducing the digital divide. The extent to which an investment contributes to social inclusion is one of the key aspects evaluated in its impact assessment, evaluating whether social enterprises work directly to reduce social exclusion by targeting specific disadvantaged groups, or indirectly, through their products or services also being accessible to such groups.

Change also supports initiatives that create employment opportunities for young people and disadvantaged groups. In this regard, the jobs created (in particular, jobs for young people or disadvantaged groups) is one of the aspects evaluated in its impact assessment. Furthermore, Change pays particular attention to the fact that any jobs created are lasting and quality jobs.

### 3.4.2. Seeding social enterprises in Portugal



*'There is a need for support beyond investment. Social enterprises need continuous support after the investment, in four main areas: commercial introductions, strategic advisory, fundraising and talent recruitment.'*

Call identification number	VP/2018/017/0098
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0329
Policy area	Social enterprises' access to finance
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth employment;</li> <li>Combating long-term unemployment;</li> <li>Promotion of equality between women and men;</li> <li>Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social enterprises;</li> <li>Social partners;</li> <li>Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	The project team has implemented a total of 18 seed investment activities, which resulted in the financing of 18 social enterprises. An additional three social enterprises were in the final stages of the decision-making process.
Implementation country(-ies)	Portugal
Participating countries	Portugal, Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands.
Coordinator	MUSTARD SEED MAZE - SOCIEDADE DE EMPREENDEDORISMO SOCIAL SA
Partners	MAZE Impact
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 558,096.00
Project duration	1 October 2019 – 30 September 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.mustardseedmaze.vc">www.mustardseedmaze.vc</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** A need exists for pre-seed and seed investments in social enterprises, both in Portugal and across Europe. This has been proven by the 18 investments completed in 24 months, and by the large size of the pipeline of social enterprises being assessed by the project team: over 1,500 during the

implementation period. There is also a need for support beyond investment. Social enterprises require continuing support after the investment is made, in four main areas: commercial introductions, strategic advisory, fundraising and talent recruitment.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the goal of the action 'Seeding Social Enterprises in Portugal' was to carry out 21 eligible seed investments over 24 months in Portugal and Europe. To achieve this, the team focused on the following objectives:

- Significantly increasing the number of early-stage social enterprises backed by professional investors, signalling to both Portuguese and European economies more broadly that the impact investment movement continues its steady growth, as demonstrated by the Global Impact Investing Network over the last five years.
- Adding credibility to the social enterprise movement in Portugal and across Europe, which is key to convincing industry experts that the ecosystem is now sufficiently well established to provide the relevant support and upside for entrepreneurs (from the perspective of personal risk and return).
- Acting as a catalyst for further social enterprises to be created and to capture private investment over the next one to three years, by acting as examples of track-record in this segment and promoting the creation of new social enterprises, especially from underserved and vulnerable segments of the population (e.g. the self-employed).

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the action 'Seeding social enterprises in Portugal' aimed to generate a minimum of EUR 7 million invested into 21 eligible seed investments. The project team has implemented a total of 18 seed investment activities, which have resulted in the financing of 18 social enterprises. These social enterprises include Student Finance (Portugal), Kitch (Portugal), Rnters (Portugal), tl;dv (Germany), Knok (Portugal), Vanilla Steel (Germany), Loc.tax (Belgium), Outmind (France), Ohne (Portugal), Careship (Germany), Leaf (Germany), Nui Care (Germany), Iconoclass (France), GoParity (Portugal), KETS (France), Kianava (Germany), Chatterbox (Portugal) and Clear (Netherlands). In addition, by the end of the project, three other social enterprises were in the final stages of the decision-making process: Tomorrow's Education (Germany), uMore (Portugal), and StudyTogether (Germany).

The project was able to effectively increase the total amount of resources, and therefore the quality of service deployed, into seed deals. More specifically, it:

- prepared founders through investment readiness sessions;
- built relationships with the right co-investment partners;
- supported social enterprises on their impact monitoring.

Traditionally, venture capital teams have tended to allocate their operating budgets into activities with the highest ROI, which are always later-stage deals. This project increased support for the earlier stages of social enterprises.

Some of the lessons learned from the project include:

- Early-stage impact investment is fundamental to increase access to finance for social enterprises in Portugal and Europe.
- There is enough of a pipeline for funds to invest in one seed social enterprise per month, but the process might take longer due to the need to undertake proper due diligence.
- COVID-19 has accelerated the flow and growth of social enterprises because the core of what they do is essential, and has therefore both (1) continued to be

relevant during the pandemic; and (2) will be even more important as we enter the recovery period.

- In addition to the equity instruments deployed at pre-seed and seed stage in social enterprises, it would be very useful to understand how suitable it would be to use other financing instruments.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the main good practice arising from this project is its focus on helping social enterprises to take their initiatives from idea to growth. There is a need for pre-seed and seed investments in social enterprises, as well as broader support for their founders in Europe. For example, the fund team assessed more than 1,500 social enterprises before finally investing in 18 of them. The fund team helped to prepare founders through investment-readiness sessions, as well as building relationships with the right co-investment partners and supporting social enterprises in their impact monitoring.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** for each of the 18 investments made, a detailed impact assessment was carried out and an impact factsheet created, using the Impact Management Framework. These helped to increase the transparency surrounding investments in social enterprises. This practice could also inspire others to adopt similar impact measurement frameworks when assessing and evaluating social enterprises in their own countries.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** traditionally, venture capital teams tend to allocate their operating budgets into activities with the highest ROI, which are always later-stage deals. This project has increased support to the earlier stages of social enterprises. The project lowered the opportunity cost of increasing support to earlier stages by easing the respective impact on the fund's budget of the additional support, leading to an effective increasing in support at EU level.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** as part of the project, the team prepared several reports, which are available at the MSM fund website. For each investment, they carried out a detailed impact assessment and created an impact factsheet using the Impact Management Framework. This helped to increase transparency surrounding investments in social enterprises.

**Transnational dimension:** the project resulted in the financing of 18 social enterprises in five EU countries – Portugal, Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

**Dissemination strategy:** for each investment, the project team developed a detailed impact assessment and impact factsheet using the Impact Management Framework. These reports are available at the MSM fund website, under the list of social enterprises funded.<sup>43</sup>

**European added value:** traditionally, venture capital teams have tended to allocate their operating budgets to activities with the highest ROI, which are always later-stage deals. The EU grant lowered the opportunity cost of increasing support to earlier stages, by easing the respective impact on the fund's budget of the additional support, effectively increasing support at an EU level.

**Horizontal objectives:** issues relating to employment were addressed through the investments in Iconoclass and Chatterbox, which respectively focus on the re-skilling and reintegration of displaced talent in the job market. The investments in Careship

<sup>43</sup> <https://msm.vc/portfolio/>

and Nui Care focus on elderly care through a platform and services related to informal caregivers. Clear and Kianava provide solutions that aim to improve user health care, while Leaf and GoParity focus on sustainability; the former via the issuing of electronic invoices, the latter through a platform for impact investment by individuals. Finally, KETS promotes secure information via quantum technology.

### 3. EaSI-funded organisations

The EaSI programme has a crucial role to play in promoting the involvement of civil society, through financial support for the key EU-level NGO networks. The programme supports these networks, with the aim of boosting their capacity to participate in and influence decision-making and policy implementation at both EU and national levels. Furthermore, such involvement fosters the accountability and transparency of authorities and increases the relevance of policy responses.

The table below describes the activities implemented in the period 2020-2021 by 14 organisations supported by EaSI that are active in the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction, microfinance and social enterprise finance. These organisations are major EU-level networks working in different areas of social policy or microfinance and social enterprise finance, and which hold four-year Framework Partnership Agreements with the European Commission.

The overall goal of the funded **organisations active in promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction** is to support the Commission's initiatives that contribute to the modernisation of social protection systems and the development of adequate social protection schemes, as well as the implementation of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#)<sup>44</sup>, [EU Structural and Investment Funds](#)<sup>45</sup> and the [Social Investment Package](#)<sup>46</sup>. These organisations also contribute to processes relating to the [European Semester](#)<sup>47</sup> and the [Open Method of Coordination](#)<sup>48</sup> (OMC) on social protection and social inclusion. Their activities have also paid particular attention to the key principles of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)<sup>49</sup> (EPSR) initiative, including gender equality, work-life balance, support for children, the inclusion of people with disabilities and requiring long-term care, as well as to the targets of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#)<sup>50</sup> in terms of employment and fighting poverty and social exclusion. To this end, the following types of activities were implemented in 2020-2021:

- **Analytical activities**, such as the collection of data and statistics; the development of common methodologies; the monitoring and assessment of relevant legislation, policies and practice; research, mapping projects and evaluations; the publication of guides, reports and educational materials; and various events including expert meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- **Training activities**, such as staff exchanges, workshops, seminars, capacity building activities, 'train the trainer' events, and developing online training tools.
- **Actions aiming at the creation and improvement of networks** through mutual learning, cooperation, awareness-raising and dissemination activities such as the identification and exchange of good practices, the organisation of peer reviews and mutual learning as well as conferences, seminars and media

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<sup>44</sup> For more information, please see [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en)

<sup>45</sup> For more information, please see [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds_en)

<sup>46</sup> For more information, please see <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/social-investment-package>

<sup>47</sup> For more information, please see [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en)

<sup>48</sup> For more information, please see <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-AaG-542142-Open-Method-of-Coordination-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> For more information, please see [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en)

<sup>50</sup> For more information, please see [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en)



campaigns, and the compilation and publication of materials and regular information about EU social and employment policy issues.

#### 4.1. ERGO – Roma Included in Social Europe 2020



*'The EU and its Member States must ensure that Roma are able to access their human and social rights like any other citizens. To ensure improved social inclusion and a more effective fight against antigypsyism, the dots between EU policies – especially in the areas of non-discrimination, poverty reduction and social inclusion – need to be connected.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0003
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0028
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion;</li> <li>• Poverty reduction.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma inclusion;</li> <li>• Youth employment;</li> <li>• Fight against poverty and social exclusion;</li> <li>• Guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection;</li> <li>• Combatting discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roma people and young Roma;</li> <li>• Roma civil society and Roma grassroots communities;</li> <li>• EU policy makers;</li> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Employers.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<p>Main activities implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input into the development of new Roma-related EU policies and funding programmes, as well as national Roma integration strategies post-2020 through the provision of grassroots evidence, good practices and platforms for dialogue;</li> <li>• Raising awareness of the situation of young Roma in the labour market, and motivating employers to create inclusive work places;</li> <li>• Addressing discrimination as a barrier to obtaining social and employment services;</li> <li>• Raising awareness of the potential of the social economy for community development and the financial empowerment of Roma;</li> <li>• Capacity-building for ERGO members, local activists and young people with regard to advocacy and EU processes;</li> <li>• Supporting Roma grassroots NGOs in the monitoring of policies and participation in local policy processes.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Netherlands
Participating countries	-

Coordinator	ERGO
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 415,612.00
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="https://ergonetwork.org">https://ergonetwork.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** most of Europe’s Roma belong to the poorest of the poor; they struggle with enduring poverty, stereotyping and discrimination, while remaining relatively powerless in local political arenas. Both individually and as a community, they often remain reluctant and ill-prepared to claim their proper place in civic life. Public authorities mostly see them as passive policy clients, not as equal citizens who can and should have their say. The poverty and social exclusion of Roma increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequences of which hit Roma people disproportionately hard.

Meanwhile, the employment of Roma is a key prerogative for social inclusion, as this not only raises people out of poverty but also increases social contacts between Roma and non-Roma. This reduces stereotyping and prejudice towards Roma among the majority population. Furthermore, in an ageing population with a lack of an active workforce in some Member States, the young Roma population can also increase the general productivity of a country.

Social inclusion and poverty reduction of Roma goes hand in hand with combatting discrimination. Addressing the effects of discriminatory treatment is necessary, but in and of itself does nothing to eradicate the ultimate source of the disadvantaged position of many Romani citizens: antigypsyism. Antigypsyism is the root cause for the failure of well-intended policies and programmes targeting Roma. It is a specific form of racism, and should be directly addressed by the anti-discrimination measures taken by the EU, the UN, the Council of Europe and other (inter)governmental bodies.

The 'Roma Included in Social Europe' project contributed to social inclusion and eradicating poverty among Roma, taking into account antigypsyism as an underlying cause of the many social challenges that Roma face. With this project, ERGO aims to ensure that EU social policies work for Roma.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the work programme 'Roma Included in Social Europe' aims to ensure that EU social policies work for Roma, Europe’s largest and most discriminated-against ethnic minority. Its main objectives include:

- Providing input from Roma at grassroots level to EU institutions and the Member States for the adoption of the post-2020 EU Roma Framework and the development of national Roma integration strategies;
- Providing recommendations on the design of future social and employment programmes so that they will have an impact on the living conditions of Roma;
- Monitoring the European Semester and feeding evidence of social problems into the process from a Roma perspective, as well as empowering local Roma CSOs to engage in the process;
- Empowering Roma CSOs to monitor the use of ESI funds in order to provide evidence of ineffectiveness and / or misuse, and providing recommendations for improvements to the EC and managing authorities;
- Providing recommendations on how to design more effective funding programmes in the area of Roma inclusion in the Member States through CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) and effective partnership agreements;

- Raising awareness of the relevance of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN SDGs to the social inclusion of Roma, and increasing the visibility of these strategies within civil society;
- Contributing to the defining of indicators and the implementation process for the SDGs and EPSR;
- Increasing the advocacy capacity of Roma CSOs and young Roma, in order to engage more effectively with EU and national decision-making processes;
- Raising awareness of the potential benefits of the social economy for community development and the economic empowerment of Roma;
- Contributing to the combatting of discrimination in institutions and in the workplace as an obstacle to the provision of social and employment services;
- Challenging stereotypes about Roma in the labour market;
- Raising awareness of the benefits of an inclusive workplace and encouraging employers to ensure workplace diversity;
- Inform (pro)-Roma civil society about developments in social inclusion and anti-discrimination policies, and raising their awareness of opportunities for input and participation in EU-driven policies;
- Creating a database of Roma-related policy documents and information online.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the main beneficiaries were Roma people in the EU, whose needs were better taken into account in policy processes and who were represented more effectively by civil society. With this project, ERGO achieved the following impacts:

- EU social policies better support the most marginalised groups in Europe;
- EU funds are better absorbed by Roma CSOs;
- National Roma integration strategies and partnership agreements are better at taking into account views of Roma civil society and address the needs of local Roma communities;
- Roma civil society has greater capacity, is better organised, and feels that they are listened to by decision-makers.

To achieve these impacts, ERGO focused on the results below:

- Four case studies were submitted to ERGO from Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia on the ineffectiveness of EU funds for Roma;
- Civil society input into EU Roma Framework was collected;
- Participation in the Digital High-Level Conference;
- National Recovery and Resilience Plans were drafted, and a comprehensive input paper was prepared for the launching of an EC public consultation on the Action Plan for the Social Pillar;
- Roma in the SDGs – ERGO implemented several initiatives to ensure the SDGs are implemented to advance Roma inclusion in Europe, and to bridge the SDGs and the Roma Framework;
- CLLD Quality Audit – ERGO Network members in three countries (BG, CZ, RO) undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the 2014-2020 CLLD cycle in their countries;
- Roma Youth Employment - ERGO provided inputs during many activities relating to Roma youth employment in various European structures;
- Coordinating the EU Roma post-2020 civil society coalition;
- Impact of COVID-19 on Roma communities – the ERGO Network worked on advocacy in support of Roma communities in the immediate and medium-term

COVID-19 response of the EU, and gathered evidence on the ground about the impact of COVID-19 on Roma communities;

- CLLD capacity-building activities were organised in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia and Romania including civil society and public authorities, on various topics aimed at increasing their knowledge and involvement in the process;
- Creating a position paper on the social economy and Roma inclusion;
- Anti-bias training for employment and social service providers;
- Implementing national grassroots advocacy academies;
- Establishing national Roma coalitions;
- Roma youth employment campaign;
- Public event 'Social Enterprises'.

**Identification of potential good practices:** one good practice that was implemented by ERGO as part of this project is the development of a training manual for 'anti-bias training' for service providers, e.g. in public employment offices. This training, which was trialled in 2021, will allow Roma civil society to support civil servants and other service providers in recognising their own biases against Roma and improving their service delivery towards Roma.

Another good practice includes engaging with and supporting member organisations in implementing their activities. For example, ERGO supported its member organisations in Germany and Bulgaria (Amaro Drom and Integro Association) to organise 'Roma Grassroots Advocacy Academies'. These focused on young people as agents for change in Roma communities, and on combating antigypsyism. Similarly, ERGO engaged its members in four countries to produce case studies on the ineffectiveness and / or misuse of EU funds for Roma inclusion projects. They supported the monitoring of funds and contributed to the better design of funding programmes.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the Anti-bias training developed by ERGO Network staff on the basis of their legal expertise as well as training and facilitation skills, could be transferred and applied to other countries. The curriculum provides a step-by-step description of how to conduct anti-bias training for public servants to promote equality and non-discrimination and to fight antigypsyism. The training focuses on the development of knowledge, attitudes and skills to improve responses to racism and discrimination against Roma and to promote equality and non-discrimination in a multi-day 'training the trainers' programme. Although the manual primarily targets public servants, it can be easily adapted and used to benefit other categories of professionals and audiences. The training manual does not contain any country-specific information, and can be adapted to the national context of the country in which the training is held.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** with COVID-19 creating difficulties in continuing 'business as usual', ERGO responded quickly by introducing regular 'solidarity calls' between its members. These addressed members' concerns in relation to the pandemic, and helped them to share experiences and good practices of support to local communities. These regular calls were crucial to maintaining motivation, learning from what worked in other countries, and developing common messaging towards EU recovery plans. These solidarity calls proved to be a great means of exchanging with and between members even more regularly than before the travel restrictions.

For its Youth Employment Campaign, ERGO developed an innovative approach to engage employers and relevant stakeholders by creating informative, interactive and

shareable content. It also prepared a guide for national members, explaining the aims of the campaign and providing tips and good practices on how to operationalise the campaign at national level. This included a template letter for national members to translate and use to approach employers. The campaign included the following elements:

- Developing and publishing the 'Place4All' pledge, committing employers to being inclusive employers, together with an infographic explaining how to sign up to the pledge and receive the 'Place4All' badge;
- Producing comics and videos that portray challenges and supportive elements in the career paths of five Roma and Traveller individuals, showing their contributions to society and the discrimination they had to overcome;
- When signing up to receive the 'Place4All' badge, employers signed a pledge committing to be an inclusive employer but also required to show evidence of how they already work towards greater inclusion and diversity in their staff;
- The website page [www.ergonetwork.org/employment](http://www.ergonetwork.org/employment) brings together the pledge, comics and ERGO's other work regarding employment.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** ERGO has generated the following policy evidence during the project's implementation:

- Report on the impact of COVID-19 on Roma;
- Position paper on the social economy;
- Evaluation report on the CLLD cycle from 2014-2020 in Romania, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic;
- Four case studies on the misuse of EU funds intended for Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia;
- An annual report, four newsletters, four press releases, one op-ed, and social media posts on Facebook and Twitter;
- Several case studies on successful social enterprises that employ and / or are run by Roma and Travellers.

**Transnational dimension:** the ERGO Network comprises more than 30 member organisations across Europe, and is Europe's biggest Roma network. The input of the network into EU policies is based on the opinions and evidence brought by ERGO members; all policy or position papers are based on their experiences and are agreed by the membership. Regular meetings are held at which members share their experiences, learn from each other, discuss developments at local, national and EU levels, and develop common European advocacy strategies.

ERGO has also worked closely with European and international strategic partners such as the Social Platform and its members, OSEPI, REDI, Phiren Amenca, ENAR, OHCRC, ERRC, ERIAC, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, the Central Council for German Sinti and Roma, European Environmental Bureau, EPHA, Eurodiaconia, ILGA European, the EDF, the Anti-Racism and Diversity Inter-group in the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, Council of Europe, ODIHR CPRSI, GCAP and others.

Moreover, ERGO has worked closely with national MPs' from different countries as well as political families, in order to connect the national reality with EU policy-making.

**New partnerships created:** throughout the project, ERGO collaborated with existing partnerships and established new partnerships including with Central European University, the Alliance against Antipsyism, the EU Roma Coalition, the National

Federation of Urban LAGS in Romania, Amaro Drom, the Integro Association, ad Idetartozunk.

**Dissemination strategy:** reports on policy issues, such as case studies and policy papers by members, were disseminated mostly to decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders at EU, national, regional and local levels. They were disseminated through the following means:

- Personalised e-mails to specific partners (staff of institutions, MEPs, media outlets);
- Mailing lists of institutional contacts and interested individuals;
- Articles on the [www.ergonetworg.org](http://www.ergonetworg.org);
- Press releases;
- Providing information and reactions to journalists (e.g. Euronews, Brussels Times, The Independent, BBC, WDR);
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram);
- Newsletter;
- In-person meetings and participation at conferences and events.

Two publications were also printed in 2020 – the report on the impact of COVID-19 on Roma, and the position paper on the social economy.

**Sustainability measures:** to secure the necessary co-funding for the grant and to ensure the sustainability of the network, the ERGO Network implemented a fundraising strategy that focusing on reaching out to private donors, as well as national governments and international institutions. Its fundraising successes ensured the co-funding of the Annual Work Programme and diversification of ERGO's work via the addition of new projects. This was achieved through:

- Successful raising of funds from the German Federal Foreign Office and the EEA and Norway Grants for Regional Cooperation;
- Preparing a large grant application to the J.W. Kellogg Foundation and the EEA and Norway Grants for Youth Employment (no results yet);
- Diversifying ERGO's work under EU funding, through successful fundraising from DG JUST and DG NEAR;
- Receiving fees for the provision of expertise to other civil society organisations on the subjects of Roma inclusion and combating antigypsyism, as well as fees for the facilitation of online meetings with other civil society organisations;
- Receiving small donations through Facebook fundraising.

**Horizontal objectives:** in relation to youth employment, ERGO Network staff provided input into the EC consultation and European Parliament Motion on the new Reinforced Youth Guarantee, pointing out the lack of outreach to and support for Roma youth in current YG measures. They also supported the European Youth Forum in developing quality standards for the Reinforced Youth Guarantee. The ERGO Network also rolled out its campaign, 'A Place for All', including an employers' pledge supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace, as well as several awareness-raising elements.

In relation to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, ERGO prepared and disseminated to its members a comprehensive briefing note about the workings of the European Semester and its implications for mainstreaming Roma rights and inclusion, taking into account the European Pillar of Social Rights. Capacity-building sessions with members, based on this document and the network's ongoing work, were carried out at several meetings.



## 4.2. Eurochild operating grant 2020

*'The right to participate in decisions that affect them is a fundamental right of all children.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0006
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0089
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion;</li> <li>• Diversity and anti-discrimination;</li> <li>• Gender equality;</li> <li>• Social security schemes;</li> <li>• Employment.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child and youth poverty and social exclusion;</li> <li>• Youth employment;</li> <li>• Principles of social security coordination;</li> <li>• Non-discrimination / equality mainstreaming;</li> <li>• Diversity management;</li> <li>• Equality legislation;</li> <li>• Equal treatment legislation;</li> <li>• Gender mainstreaming;</li> <li>• Specific measures for the advancement of women.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Media;</li> <li>• Children and young people.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and maintaining two databases;</li> <li>• Producing 11 reports;</li> <li>• Producing 41 evaluations and impact assessments;</li> <li>• One report on the transposition and implementation of Union law;</li> <li>• Organising four mutual learning and good practice sharing events;</li> <li>• Organising six conferences and seminars;</li> <li>• Organising seven events to support capacity building actions;</li> <li>• One event to support networking and cooperation;</li> <li>• Producing guides and other educational material;</li> <li>• Disseminating information and participating in networking and relationship building.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Eurochild (Belgium)
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 889,996.61
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.eurochild.org">www.eurochild.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** Eurochild advocates for children's rights and well-being to be at the heart of policymaking. The network strives for a society that respects the



rights of children, influencing policies, building internal capacities, facilitating mutual learning and exchanging practice and research. Eurochild influences relevant EU legislation, policy and funding programmes so that they have a positive impact on policies and practices nationally and sub-nationally. Eurochild contributes to improving the capacities of member organisations to strengthen the grassroots children's rights movement, and to enable members to influence and harness relevant EU legislation, policies and funding in their advocacy towards national (and sub-national) governments. Eurochild involves children and young people directly in its work, to help learn from their insights and to increase its impact.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the actions carried out within the frame of the EaSI grant enable the network of organisations to follow and provide input into EU policy processes relevant to its main strategic goals. These are:

- Better understanding of children's rights in political and public life in Europe
- Ending child poverty and social exclusion of children in Europe
- Ending institutional care in Europe for all children
- Comprehensive early-childhood development policies in Europe
- Build a sustainable, high-performance, responsive and recognised network

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** Eurochild, together with the Child Rights Action Group (CRAG), stepped up its work with members of the European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights, participating in roundtables, conferences and events.

Eurochild urged EU leaders and ministers responsible for both social affairs and for cohesion / regional policy and finance to influence the ESF+ Regulation. In April 2019, the European Parliament adopted Eurochild's position on the ESF+ by requiring Member States to invest at least 5% of ESF+ resources in tackling child poverty.

Eurochild, in cooperation with other organisations, developed a questionnaire for children, as well as organising child focus group consultations focusing on the EU Strategy on Children's Rights and the Child Guarantee. The survey received over 10,000 responses.

Eurochild worked on influencing the adoption of the European Child Guarantee Initiative (CGI) and related funding with a long-term time horizon. Eurochild worked to ensure that the CGI remains a priority for the EU and has the support of the Member States. Eurochild submitted three different reactions to the EC consultation on the Child Guarantee roadmap, and the Child Guarantee was at the centre of Eurochild's response to the open consultation on the Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Eurochild published, in cooperation with the EU Alliance for Investing in Children, multiple statements on the Child Guarantee, reacting to ongoing changes caused by COVID-19. It also issued a call for action for a comprehensive, sustainable Europe 2030 strategy with a strong social element.

Eurochild launched a one-week campaign calling on EU leaders to take action against child poverty via the future EU budget. Eurochild also sought to influence policy to end institutional care for children in Europe, and produced and developed 20 country profiles focusing on children in alternative care. This analysis also focused on child-protection developments and the use of EU funds, providing recommendations to national and EU decision-makers.

In March 2020, Eurochild launched the DataCare Project with support from UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office. The goal of this project was to produce a comprehensive mapping of child protection data systems across the EU Member States and the UK. This project provided an overview of the situation of children in

alternative care and inform EU efforts to agree comparable benchmarks and indicators to monitor the progress of child protection reforms.

Building on the previous experiences and successes of the Opening Doors Campaign – Lessons learned and recommendations for strengthening families and ending the institutionalisation of children, Eurochild set up the European Campaign on Early Childhood Development. Remote meetings were convened to build a common sense of purpose between national coordinators, and to inform their campaign activities. Partnership agreements were signed with each organisation.

Eurochild engaged 42 members in 25 countries to gather information on the impact of COVID-19 on children across Europe, leading to the publication of a report on the impact of the pandemic on children. Eurochild coordinated children's participation in the EU Forum on Children's Rights.

Building on experience from the Opening Doors for Europe's Children campaign, Eurochild worked to establish a new model of working, which included: 1) achieving ongoing influence over Regulations governing EU funding programmes and helping members to monitor their implementation on the ground; 2) tracking trends, analysing country contexts and identifying gaps in conjunction with the Eurochild thematic group on children in alternative care (CiAC); 3) capacity building for organisations working on children in alternative care and ongoing EU and national-level advocacy; 4) technical support to national organisations in three countries.

In addition, Eurochild organised numerous webinars (covering topics relating to COVID-19, children in alternative care, promoting educational success, and tools and practices for new challenges), as well as training events, coordination meetings with all national Eurochild forums, national partner networks meetings, the Eurochild General Assembly and Members Day, including workshops. Members were regularly informed and engaged in the process leading to the adoption of the CGI.

Eurochild has also focused on improving its awareness raising and dissemination activities, paying particular attention to ensuring that news from members and the EU are understandable and attractive to different audiences. This included planned work towards strengthening the Eurochild brand, messaging and achievements.

Eurochild had to learn how to adapt to the pandemic, shifting many of its events online. This had a positive impact on the frequency and reach of these events. Eurochild continued to innovate in its approaches to involving children and member organisations directly in the organisation's decision-making and in the delivery of its activities. The executive team has constantly monitored staff well-being. Eurochild's management board stepped up its engagement, initially meeting fortnightly to assess the impact of the crisis and the risks to Eurochild in relation to strategy, operations, finances, etc. The entire team reassessed their priorities, identifying gaps and needs, in order to adjust the 2020 work plan.

**Identification of potential good practices:** swift reaction to the pandemic, changing its working habits to accommodate a shift towards more regular online meetings. Good practices in reaction to the pandemic have been gathered from members and published on a dedicated page of the Eurochild website. The dissemination of the digital report was supported by social media-friendly GIFs (visuals) highlighting key achievements and progress in advocacy, communications, membership and child participation.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** developing and disseminating Eurochild's 'Childonomic' methodology and how it can help predict what course of action will be most cost-effective and will result in the best outcomes for children. Members had the opportunity to comment on how the methodology can be applied, and how it could be further developed.

Using the 'bottom-up, top-down' method of working, in which members inform the way in which Eurochild influences EU institutions, while Eurochild supports its members to leverage EU policy and funds at the national level. This model of work is applied in specific thematic priority areas as well as in the broader topics of child poverty and child rights.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** developing digital communications, partly as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The development of practices to involve children and member organisations directly in the organisation's decision-making and the delivery of activities, as well as taking advantage of the move to more regular online meetings. Innovative practices (e.g. Virtual Schools in England and the United Kingdom) were shared during webinars.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** a detailed assessment of the situation of children in 25 countries, 'Growing Up in Lockdown', featured inputs from 49 members. Its analysis shows how EU policies are impacting national legislation and policy. Eurochild also gathered evidence on data collection systems with regard to children in alternative care.

Other examples of policy evidence include the final report of the Opening Doors Campaign – Lessons learned and recommendations for strengthening families and ending the institutionalisation of children in Europe, as well as a joint position paper on the EU Strategy on Children's Rights.

The DataCare project will provide a comprehensive mapping of child protection data systems in Europe, and will inform EU efforts to agree comparable benchmarks and indicators to monitor progress on child protection reforms.

Eurochild provided information to various EU and national stakeholders via its public newsletters, webinars and other channels.

**Transnational dimension:** because Eurochild provides a bridge between EU policymaking and national realities, the organisation has a strong transnational dimension. Developing a 'bottom-up, top-down' method of working, in which members inform how Eurochild influences EU institutions, while Eurochild supports national members to leverage EU policy and funds, supports this transnational approach. This model of working is applied in specific thematic priority areas (early childhood development, children in alternative care) as well as in the broader topics of child poverty and child rights, where Eurochild works closely with its national partner networks.

Eurochild's transnational work is supported by meetings, as well as participation in public and consultation events. Eurochild's webinars were co-led by members in Spain, Finland and Bulgaria. Eurochild also sponsored member-led events in Ireland, Slovenia, the Netherlands and Portugal.

In addition, Eurochild involves children directly in its work through the national Eurochild forums and the Eurochild Children's Council, as well as facilitating children's involvement in key EU events and processes.

Eurochild also disseminates information by regularly publishing news and other resources via its communications channels. In 2020, significant effort was invested in reaching a wider audience, in particular through working with national media.

**New partnerships created:** one new national Eurochild forum has been set up in Ukraine. The General Assembly approved the admission of 15 new members, as a result of which Eurochild now has 185 members in 35 countries.

**Dissemination strategy:** the audiences for Eurochild's outputs differed depending on their objectives. Audiences included, but were not limited to: EU, national and regional policy and decision-makers, children's rights experts, social workers, allies in the NGO community, children and young people. The means used included direct email messages, website, newsletters, social media channels and events, including online webinars.

Activities included monthly e-newsletters aimed at the wider public, articles and blog posts, and an annual report highlighting the network's main achievements. The annual report was published in advance of the 2020 General Assembly. The dissemination of the digital report was supported by social media-friendly GIFs (visuals) highlighting key achievements and progress in advocacy, communications, membership and child participation. The annual report was also published on Euractiv, and was shared actively via numerous newsletters.

Particular attention was given to ensuring news from members and from the EU is understandable and attractive to different audiences, through the use of visuals, graphs and videos.

Eurochild also launched a new website, as well as monitoring its website activity and social media engagement. Facebook followers increased by 8.2 %, Twitter followers increased by 12.8 % and Instagram followers increased by 24.8 %.

**European added value:** Eurochild provides a vital link with civil society working with and for children across Europe, connecting important EU policy developments with national realities. Its work informs European civil society about EU developments such as the EU Pillar of Social Rights, the Child Guarantee initiative and the EU Recovery and Resilience Plans. Eurochild provides support and guidance to members regarding how to use EU policy and funding instruments to influence policies nationally. Eurochild models how to involve children in decision-making, with the right to participate in decisions that affect them being a fundamental right of all children. Eurochild gathers Europe-wide evidence to assess how EU policies impact national legislation and policy, and runs Europe-wide campaigns to support early childhood development.

**Sustainability measures:** Eurochild will continue to work with EU institutions and Member States to ensure the Recommendation for a European Child Guarantee delivers change on the ground. Eurochild will work with its members to monitor national Recovery and Resilience Plans and the extent to which they prioritise children and young people. Eurochild will continue to support members working on the thematic priorities of children in alternative care, as well as early childhood development, and will continue its direct work with children.

Eurochild has worked on building a sustainable, high-performing, responsive and recognised network, strengthening its brand and messaging, and increasing the number of members with improved capacity, effectiveness and transparency.

Eurochild has worked to diversify its income sources for the future, thus supporting the network’s financial sustainability.

**Horizontal objectives:** Eurochild’s work contributes to tackling specific thematic areas (early childhood development, children in alternative care) as well as the broader topics of child poverty and child rights. Eurochild has conducted a Europe-wide campaign with national partners to support early childhood development, paying attention to young children, especially those that are currently excluded or underserved. Eurochild focused on the deep-rooted existing social inequalities in European society, which were further exposed by the COVID-19 crisis.

### 4.3. Developing the role of social enterprise in the circular economy



*‘Despite the backdrop of the pandemic, there is a sense of cautious optimism with regard to future EU policy frameworks that can be supportive of social enterprises active in the circular economy.’*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0019
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0068
Policy area	Environmental services (re-use, repair and recycling)
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Economy Action Plan;</li> <li>• Circular Economy Action Plan;</li> <li>• EU Green Deal;</li> <li>• EU Renovation Wave;</li> <li>• Next-Generation EU / Recovery and Resilience Facility.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Specialist bodies provided for under Union law;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection, representation and mapping of social and circular enterprises from its network;</li> <li>• Recommendations, reports and position papers to policy makers together with related lobbying activities;</li> <li>• Organisation of roundtables, conferences and workshops;</li> <li>• Capacity building of members in EU policy making process;</li> <li>• Enhancing RREUSE's communication tools and outreach;</li> <li>• Participation in all relevant stakeholder platforms and coalitions.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	RE-USE and Recycling European Union Social Enterprises
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 273,025.00
Project duration	01 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.rreuse.org">www.rreuse.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on RREUSE’s members and their wider social enterprise networks have been profound. Across Europe, environmental service operations have been severely interrupted and

experienced significant pressures, not least for social enterprise staff members and social enterprise service beneficiaries, many of whom are vulnerable individuals. Yet in the face of such adversity, remarkable stories of resilience have emerged through the re-orientation of operations and new support services for local communities.

The RREUSE secretariat supported the sector through the pandemic by re-organising its staff capacity and certain activities in a variety of ways, including the organisation of regular collective meetings, contributing to numerous political actions linked to COVID-19 recovery, and connecting individual social enterprises with the European Commission.

The Green Agenda is growing in importance in Europe. The green and circular priorities of the European Commission, coupled with the upcoming Social Economy Action Plan, instil a sense of optimism that we are moving in the right direction. However, what is also evident is that more action is required to ensure social value is retained as an intrinsic part of green and digital transitions. In particular, 2020 saw a surge in interest in tackling 'fast fashion' and over-consumption in textiles, and RREUSE will continue supporting social enterprises active in this sector, following a number of policy proposals and interventions

**Aims of the project/organisation:** in addition to providing a supportive structure for social enterprises impacted by the ongoing pandemic, the main objectives for RREUSE were:

- To contribute to the EU's knowledge base on social entrepreneurship, quality jobs and social inclusion;
- To inform and improve the effectiveness of EU funding mechanisms in supporting the establishment and development of social enterprises active in re-use, repair and recycling;
- To contribute to the fulfilment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by monitoring and influencing the development and implementation of policy proposals under the EU Commission's Circular Economy Package;
- To raise awareness and address the need for EU action on the formalisation of informal, excluded and most vulnerable groups working in the field of waste management;
- To help facilitate concrete new partnerships and synergies between social enterprises themselves, as well as with the private sector;
- To ensure member organisations have access to the tools and information they need to understand, influence and engage with the EU policy-making process and implementation;
- To provide regular opportunities to help other stakeholders understand the role and needs of social economy enterprises in the circular economy;
- To further develop and enhance RREUSE's communications outreach, both internally and externally;
- To engage in targeted information and / or lobbying campaigns that focus on support for social inclusion and tackling poverty.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** key achievements of the network include:

- Acceptance of four new members into its network from Germany (Fairwertung and WIRD), Lithuania (Circular Economy Lithuania), and the UK (Now! Charity);
- The 2020 Member Survey and a network impact infographic covering the network's 2019 activities;
- Organisation of 34 policy working group meetings and seminars for its members;
- Organisation of three network meetings and a brand-new Innovation Forum focused on the exchange of best practice among social enterprises;



- Publication of 29 formal policy inputs, consultation responses, joint statements and official letters to the European Commission;
- Invited to speak at 14 international conferences, meetings and workshops, including the European Parliament's Social Economy Intergroup and a high-level roundtable on the contribution of social enterprises to the Pact for Skills, in the presence of EU Commissioner Nicolas Schmit;
- Participation as a member of four Commission expert groups: GECES, EIP Raw Materials, Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform and the Ecodesign Consultation Forum. Re-election for a three-year term on the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform Coordination Group;
- RREUSE joined the EU Social Platform as a new member;
- Organisation of RREUSE's first fully digital two-day online workshop, as well as a study tour and workshop on developing social enterprises in the circular economy;
- Strong outreach through communication activities and social media, the latter yielding significant increases in followers and engagement across the board compared with 2019 statistics.

The network plans to conduct an evaluation of lessons learned during the pandemic from both a policy and a practice perspective. This will include a quantitative analysis of the impacts of COVID-19 on RREUSE's membership base through its 2020-member survey, compared with figures for previous years.

Another lesson learned is that, while transitioning to digital means of communication was not easy for the RREUSE staff and its members, it generated positive learnings for the future. Going digital allowed the network to reach members who were maybe a little quieter, and made group meetings more inclusive. While digital meetings cannot fully substitute for in-person conferences or the hybrid equivalent of the future, RREUSE plans to retain the use of online and interactive web meetings and activities.

Similarly, during the pandemic it became clear that for social economy actors to be part of the industrial ecosystems eligible for recovery funds, the impacts of COVID-19 had to be quantified. RREUSE's annual member survey, combined with a variety of focus group calls, provided insights in this regard. In addition, for the future Social Economy Action Plan, it is clear that improvements must be made to the evidence base explaining why social enterprises should be supported.

**Identification of potential good practices:** several good practices emerged from this project. First, the importance of collecting and representing data relating to the socioeconomic impact of social enterprises working in the field of re-use, repair and remanufacturing. To this end, RREUSE carried out the following activities:

- Updated its internal database of individual members' facts and figures regarding 2019 activities;
- Created an infographic illustrating RREUSE membership data and impacts, and displayed it on the RREUSE website;
- Updated its internal guidance on filling in member survey and data collection;
- Encouraged its members to collect data, especially those who have not done so before, resulting in the improved harmonisation of statistics on an annual basis;
- Conducted an analysis of how many jobs social enterprises create on average per given number of products / materials handled.

Another best practice is the exchange platform launched by RREUSE, entitled the Innovation Forum. This aimed to improve connections between the members and to inspire innovative and replicable activities contributing to resilience throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Over 30 participants from 11 countries took part in the first edition, and two further editions took place in 2021.



Similarly, the creation of a searchable online best practice database for members to centralise all relevant knowledge within the network. The goal was to make the database an internal resource in the short term, and to externalise elements of it once they are up and running.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** one element of the project that could be replicated in other contexts and organisations is having a platform where members can share and learn from each other. For example, RREUSE invested heavily in creating new frameworks for internal exchanges with its direct and wider membership base. RREUSE's first internal Innovation Forum resulted in concrete follow-ups for the replication of good initiatives (for example, online sales platforms created by social enterprises that were presented during the forum from Ireland and France are now moving forward in terms of replication in Austria and Germany). Having such exchanges online also brings together social enterprises and social entrepreneurs, contributing to strengthening and building cohesion in the international network.

Another element of the project that could be transferred to different contexts is the online study tour and site visit for municipalities and public waste companies. This was a two-day paid workshop and virtual site visit for municipality representatives interested in supporting social enterprises active in re-use. Similar initiatives could be undertaken in other countries.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** the project contained several innovative components. One includes a 're-use study tour for public authorities', together with associated pedagogical materials including a workshop introduction pack and virtual tour. RREUSE designed and delivered a two-day paid workshop and virtual site visit for municipality representatives who wished to support the development of social enterprises active in re-use. The event raised a EUR 3,500 contribution to matching funds, and provides a replicable format for the future.

Another innovative aspect of the project is its mapping of innovative circular business models that involve social enterprises and lead to green and inclusive job creation. RREUSE used a collection of location and activity data from individual social enterprises in its direct and wider network to create an interactive map. This includes 304 data points of social enterprises across eight countries.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** as part of the project, RREUSE produced reports and position papers including a position paper on the new Circular Economy Package 2.0. These were sent to relevant desk officers in the European Commission as well as being disseminated to the wider stakeholder community, accompanied by press releases, where appropriate.

The project team conducted surveys such as RREUSE's annual member survey and a survey conducted with members on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also created several databases, including (a) the RREUSE Member Survey Database; b) a database of RREUSE's wider social enterprise network; and c) a database of social enterprise contributions to circular quality standards.

**Transnational dimension:** RREUSE is an international network of 31 members from 26 countries. It represents over 850 social enterprises across Europe working in the re-use, repair and recycling sector, with a significant impact on the environment and the lives of thousands in local communities.

**New partnerships created:** during the period of the project, RREUSE welcomed four new members to its network, namely two German networks, WIRD and Fairwertung as well as Circular Economy Lithuania and Now! Charity UK.

**Dissemination strategy:** the reports, analyses and position papers produced during the project were disseminated via the following means:

- Directly submitted to the relevant desk officers at the European Commission;
- Published on the organisation's website and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn;
- Public newsletters and press releases;
- Via its member organisations, who act as vehicles for dissemination and sharing directly with their memberships;
- Presented at international conferences, workshops and seminars.

**European added value:** the EASI grant was crucial to RREUSE, as it allowed the network to expand its services and deliver real impact to its members and added value for the EU.

**Sustainability measures:** RREUSE will continue its active engagement in providing input to the Social Economy Action Plan, as well as helping to implement numerous actions contained within the revised Circular Economy Action Plan, such as the creation of a new Sustainable Product Policy as well as the EU Strategy for Textiles.

In addition, RREUSE plans to conduct a second and third edition of its online study tour and site visit for public authorities, focused on developing re-use activities using a social economy model. This will be easy to implement as there is already a replicable format.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project addressed issues such as youth employment, combating long-term unemployment, fighting poverty and social exclusion, and promoting high-quality, sustainable employment. These issues were addressed through RREUSE's work in promoting an enhanced policy framework for social enterprises to develop their activities in the circular economy, notably re-use and repair. In particular, RREUSE aimed to support its members by using existing policies or updates to EU policies and programmes to help leverage new partnerships and activities for its membership base that will help to develop their activities and achieve their social goals.

#### 4.4. Together for Social Europe

*'By implementing the activities of the 2020 Together for Social Europe work programme, the SOLIDAR network has had the opportunity to develop policy messages and recommendations on the most relevant developments of social and employment policies in the EU.'*



Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0020
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0052
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstreaming SPSI</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and impact assessment;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened the structure of 17 national strategy groups;</li> <li>• Published the Social Rights Monitor 2020;</li> <li>• Organised a roundtable, a conference and a summit;</li> <li>• Published a thematic publication;</li> <li>• Set-up an online training hub;</li> <li>• Organised study visits, a members' regional workshop, monitoring missions, and meetings of the social affairs members forum;</li> <li>• Maintained and updated SOLIDAR's online platform;</li> <li>• Disseminated 12 social affairs newsletters.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	SOLIDAR
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 383,950.00
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.solidar.org">www.solidar.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** since the launch of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) in 2017, SOLIDAR has been involved in following the process of implementing the various elements of the European Pillar of Social Rights, particularly in relation to the coordination of social security systems and its monitoring in the European Semester process. SOLIDAR's objective is to make social justice and decent work a reality for all in Europe. To achieve this, SOLIDAR calls for a strong social dimension and upward social convergence in the framework of the main EU-driven initiatives and

processes, most notably the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Semester and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Together for Social Europe has been the cornerstone of SOLIDAR's activities on EU social affairs, and an extraordinary opportunity for SOLIDAR members to expand their networks, enhance cooperation with other CSOs and decision-makers, obtain insightful expertise, participate in international activities, and develop their capacities to contribute to and monitor EU-led policy processes. SOLIDAR occupied a strategic role in working as a bridge between its national members and European institutions, academia and social partners.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the overarching aims of the project were to:

- Support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives undertaken towards the policy objectives of, among others, the political guidelines of the Commission, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Social Investment Package (SIP).
- Support the capacity of SOLIDAR national members to influence and be involved in the main EU-driven political processes, and to encourage cooperation with other civil society organisations and social partners at EU, national, regional, and local levels.
- Provide data on policy developments and trends in the field of social policy in the Member States, including information on the impact of various policies on citizens; collect relevant information regarding citizens' concerns; and share good practices, all in order to contribute to better policy making.
- Create a more resilient network with sustainable financing, efficient organisational functioning, and strategies to further develop SOLIDAR membership.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** Together for Social Europe has contributed to supporting the creation of civil society-led tools to collect data on policy developments and support the sharing of good practices and innovative policy solutions in the social field. The Social Rights Monitor (SRM) 2020 shed light on the long road towards a social Europe, also highlighting the similarities and disparities between and within European countries, generations, genders, etc. Meanwhile, the project has also supported the creation of a more resilient network with sustainable financing, efficient organisational functioning, and strategies to further develop its membership to allow SOLIDAR to remain a key civil society actor at EU level. Moreover, its thematic publication and the outcomes of its roundtable called for a stronger focus on job quality when looking at inequalities.

The impact of the project's actions has also been multiplied by SOLIDAR members, who continue to bring their expertise to their respective organisations, networks, and countries. The Social Rights Monitor is now a well-established tool in which SOLIDAR members are eager and proud to participate, and which EU-level decisionmakers and experts both know and value.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the project adopted a diversified and flexible approach to maintaining and improving the network's capabilities through various channels such as policy briefs, news updates, personal interactions and policy training, amongst others. To maintain such levels of coordination, it was vital to bring the network together regularly on specific matters, which also guarantees the sustainability and strength of the organisation. Moreover, the project promoted consolidated policy recommendations on relevant aspects of social, economic, and

fiscal policy that were based on concrete observations and practices that have developed in a bottom-up fashion.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** the project's dissemination strategy is a model for other projects and organisations to follow. This includes its use of both onsite and online outreach activities, including high-level events that were livestreamed; regular updating and expansion of the project's network and database of relevant contacts; the translation of key publications into different languages; and the dissemination of both digital and printed materials. All of these were effective strategies that can be adopted and further developed by similar projects.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** the project's innovative approach lies in the diverse activities that were offered and in the extent of their reach. In 2020, this reach was multiplied in particular through interpretation and translation. The SRM 2020 was translated to 12 national languages, guaranteeing broader dissemination of its content. Moreover, the obligation to hold events online had the beneficial consequence of the conference and the roundtable being livestreamed. A recorded version was also made available for anyone to watch later.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the project's activities included the publication of:

- Four briefing papers;
- A thematic publication;
- The second edition of the Social Rights Monitor 2020;
- A civil society-led tool that contributed to monitoring the state of social Europe and complements the European Semester;
- SOLIDAR has also published a variety of shorter statements, articles and analyses throughout the project's duration.

All data were made publicly available on the SOLIDAR online platform, as well as for members on the Training Hub platform.

**Transnational dimension:** Together for Social Europe is a transnational programme that brought together SOLIDAR members and partners across Europe, including not only EU Member States but also candidate countries and the UK. The transnationality of the activities comes not only from bridging between the EU institutions and those at national level, but also from horizontal bridging between civil society organisations in different European countries.

**New partnerships created:** SOLIDAR has maintained its reputation as a leading network in the field of social affairs, and established further contacts with policymakers, as well as new partnerships such as those with networks and CSOs working on climate justice issues. In particular, SOLIDAR has strengthened its cooperation with MEPs and the EESC. Furthermore, with the reinforcement of the National Strategy Groups in 17 countries, strong partnerships have been either established or sustained with various local stakeholders.

**Dissemination strategy:** with the reinforcement of 14 National Strategy Groups (NSGs) and the establishment of three new ones, more countries were covered in the Social Rights Monitor (SRM) 2020, reaching a wider audience and supporting the building of partnerships in more countries. Meanwhile, SOLIDAR has further developed and updated its database of 544 targeted contacts at European and national levels, to successfully disseminate the project's outputs to the relevant policymakers and other stakeholders. Debates and exchanges of views were also fostered by the high-level events organised such as the European conference, the

roundtable, and the experts' seminars. These events were livestreamed, reaching thousands of online viewers. In addition, media releases were sent out at key moments to raise awareness among a wider audience.

Furthermore, the project's publications have been broadly disseminated on both SOLIDAR and the Training Hub websites, as well as on various social media platforms. Relevant information and materials were also shared with members in the monthly newsletter, and with the project's partners in the relevant forums. In addition to those electronic means of dissemination, SOLIDAR has also published paper copies, including of the SRM, which was made available in 13 different languages.

**European added value:** the project has managed to bring together SOLIDAR members to discuss, support, assess and shape EU legislation, and to share their best practices, creating networking opportunities that would not otherwise have been possible. EU funding has therefore been a crucial enabling factor in realising the project's objectives. Moreover, the project affirmed SOLIDAR's position as a key civil society actor at EU level – one that is well-respected and consulted by the relevant institutions. Furthermore, the project resulted in raised awareness at local level regarding the potential impacts of the EU's legislative and non-legislative proposals, and about opportunities to influence their design and implementation.

**Sustainability measures:** the project included elements that will be maintained beyond its implementation period, such as the Training Hub and the National Strategy Groups, which are expected to be retained and further strengthened. Moreover, SOLIDAR intends to continue to monitor the development of social rights in Europe through its annual Social Rights Monitor. SOLIDAR is also working to expand and intensify its membership, widening the network to cover all EU Member States as well as accession states and other neighbouring countries.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project's activities highlighted the necessity for social investment to tackle inequality and poverty, as well as advocating for a strong framework that would support the introduction of a set of enforceable social rights that can be implemented to achieve upward social convergence. Moreover, the project's activities included monitoring and contributing to policy developments related to migration, asylum and integration. Particular attention was paid to the increased vulnerability of migrants in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the project strived to combat discrimination against women, and ensured, as far as possible, equal representation and participation of men and women in the project's events, especially in terms of speaking invitations.

#### 4.5. Be wise in supporting the development of WISEs 2020

*'ENSIE contributed to policy recommendations, proposals for legislative changes, feedback and consultations in order to share its expertise and improve the EU and national legal frameworks for WISEs.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0025
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0061
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion;</li> <li>• Social security schemes;</li> <li>• Diversity and anti-discrimination;</li> <li>• Gender equality.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth employment;</li> <li>• European Employment Strategy;</li> <li>• Social Services of General Interest (SSGI);</li> <li>• Active inclusion;</li> <li>• Non-discrimination / equality mainstreaming;</li> <li>• Positive action;</li> <li>• Equality legislation;</li> <li>• Equal treatment legislation.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment;</li> <li>• Media;</li> <li>• National, regional and local WISEs;</li> <li>• EU representatives (e.g. desk officers, European Semester officers, EC representatives, MEPs);</li> <li>• EU / national civil society organisations.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing or maintaining 20 quantitative and qualitative databases;</li> <li>• Developing common benchmarks;</li> <li>• Producing 21 position papers, 11 reports, 17 evaluations and 56 monitoring or assessment reports;</li> <li>• Participating in 73 EU meetings;</li> <li>• Organising training sessions, exchanging good practices, organising conferences and seminars (webinars);</li> <li>• Producing guides and educational material;</li> <li>• Organising 19 events to support capacity building actions;</li> <li>• Organising 22 events to support networking and cooperation;</li> <li>• Organising 2 exchanges of personnel with civil society organisations;</li> <li>• Using EU multilingual digital platforms and disseminating information to all relevant parties and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-



Coordinator	European Network of Social Integration Enterprises
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 151,777.33
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.ensie.org">www.ensie.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** ENSIE supports and represents national, regional and local networks of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs), and works on the development, maintenance and representation of these networks and their members, with a focus on the social and circular economy sectors. ENSIE works to ensure their viability and visibility, as well as to increase the capacities of WISEs in the context of the green and digital transitions.

The main areas in which ENSIE works are social inclusion and access to the labour market through work integration. ENSIE's sub-areas of interest are: active inclusion, poverty reduction, social innovation, social services of general interest, European employment strategy, EPSR, SDGs, job creation for disadvantaged people (low-skilled, migrants, Roma, long-term unemployed, NEETs, young people, ex-offenders, people with disabilities, women), vocational skills, upskilling / reskilling, sustainable growth, participation and citizenship, digitalisation and artificial intelligence, fundamental rights, access to EU funds, social and circular economy, the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on WISEs, as well as the integration of WISE into the European Semester process.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the organisation aims to achieve multiple objectives:

- To obtain recognition for ENSIE and its national and regional members as strategic and relevant stakeholders within the two main EU-driven processes (Social OMC and the EU Semester process);
- To contribute to a positive legislative European framework for the development of the work integration social enterprises (WISEs) whose main aim is the social and professional integration of disadvantaged groups, for the development of equal employment opportunities and access to the labour market, in order to support the development of adequate socially 'active' inclusion schemes throughout Europe;
- To include WISEs in the 'European Action Plan for the Social Economy and Social Enterprises' as promoters of innovative solutions and inclusive labour markets, and valuable contributors to meeting the objectives of the EU2020 Strategy and the principles and rights of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR);
- To provide evidence-based data for the recognition of WISEs, which are promoted as labour market activation measures, and their specific schemes towards combating youth unemployment, long-term unemployment and fighting poverty and social exclusion;
- To offer capacity building in relation to members' involvement and use of EU Funds (ESF+ EaSI, Erasmus+ etc.);
- To strengthen the capacity of the members in their advocacy and monitoring activities, in order to support the implementation of the main EU priorities;
- To foster synergies among and between its members and other stakeholders to promote social and economic policies related to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, job creation and sustainable growth;
- To raise awareness and transfer knowledge on EU social and employment policies in relation to the social and professional reintegration of vulnerable groups into

the labour market, as well as social enterprises and sustainable development, enhancing the external ENSIE communication process;

- To enhance the ENSIE communication process: internal, external and between members;
- To raise awareness and improve the visibility and promotion of WISEs, voicing the interests of WISE managers, national representatives and workers, including information on the impact on them and their social situation of various policies;
- To share with the general press and media data and evidence-based analysis, policy recommendations and the results of network activities related to the social and professional inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market;
- To strengthen ENSIE's capacity to meet its priorities and to implement activities reported in the framework of this operating grant through adequate management and efficient coordination of the network. ENSIE develops and implements its long-term fundraising strategy;
- To increase ENSIE's representation and membership in all the European area countries with new members, and to support its members who do not yet have a national dimension (or have one that is fragile), to reinforce their network and capacity.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** ENSIE led activities to achieve the objectives of the EU2020 strategy, the European Green Deal, the UN agenda for 2030 (SDGs), as well as the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. In addition, it contributed to the European Semester process. ENSIE also worked on the recommendations for the Social Economy Action Plan, on measuring the social and economic impacts of WISEs, and on the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on the WISE sector.

ENSIE attended 97 events and conferences related to its policy areas and which contribute to inclusive social and employment policies. ENSIE participated as a speaker at 14 European and two national-level conferences and meetings. ENSIE also participated in 73 EU-level meetings, and had 17 virtual face-to-face meetings with EU representatives. In addition, during the Portuguese Presidency, ENSIE collaborated with Portuguese officials on the EPSR action plan and the Social Summit, and improved its work structure and cooperation with the European Parliament by employing the ENSIE-EP Engagement Dashboard. ENSIE also participated in five GECES meetings.

ENSIE produced 21 position papers on the policy areas that are of greatest concern to the network and to WISEs, and was fully involved in all stages of the European Semester process to ensure inclusive dialogues between EU and national stakeholders. ENSIE drafted five analyses of the main documents of the European Semester, and contributed to the development of favourable national policies for WISEs. Within the framework of its work on the EU Semester process, ENSIE contacted SPC / EMCO representatives, sharing with them its recommendations for the next EU Semester cycle and other relevant contributions. As the EU Semester was reshaped and the publication of the ASGS introduced into the RRF, ENSIE adapted its work and action plan according to the EC's priorities.

Furthermore, ENSIE contributed to inputs on what measures to undertake to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and post-2020 challenges. Faced with COVID-19, ENSIE also worked on the support of the WISE sector and led activities within this framework. The network began started its activities with the publication of a specific call for support.

ENSIE led its annual 'IMPACT WISEs' study, which showcased the importance of WISEs. The results of the study were disseminated during the General Assembly meeting and during the GSEF Global Virtual Forum. A new national WISEs benchmark was created and updated, which helps to share and improve practices. The new data will be published on a new platform, which is under construction.

ENSIE monitored EU institutions and legislative decision-making processes, employing its updated EU relations action plan and its EU institutions monitoring tool. ENSIE contributed to 18 online EU consultations, 16 EU feedbacks, and proposals for legislative changes through its contribution to the Social Economy Action Plan.

To increase financial support for activities in the area of social inclusion and poverty reduction, as well as to increase WISEs' understanding and access to EU funding, ENSIE led several activities and actions (e.g. attending the Social Platform's task forces on EU funds, and contacting its members at key moments to draw their attention to the Multiannual Financial Framework). ENSIE was in contact with EU-level stakeholders, and published two position papers relating to EU funds. It also organised an external evaluation for its members to comment on the improvements needed with regard to their understanding, access and use of EU funds. Some 85% of participants felt that their understanding of EU policies had improved as a result.

ENSIE launched an action and guided members to be better involved in the Semester process and in the analysis of their country reports. Based on Country-Specific Recommendations, ENSIE helped members to contribute to EU and national policies, and the European network produced a document with its main recommendations.

ENSIE also organised webinars; 15 for its members, and one on the contribution made by WISEs to the implementation of the principles of the EPSR. ENSIE organised mutual learning seminars on EU funding and programmes and training on EU proposal writing for its members. In addition, ENSIE published a toolkit on engaging civil society organisations at national level, which helps in evaluating policies for social inclusion.

Lastly, ENSIE also developed its communication and dissemination practices and capacities, management practices and fundraising strategy.

**Identification of potential good practices:** using an Engagement Dashboard to follow the work with MEPs. Use of other digital tools (e.g. Trello) to organise work and monitor the implementation of work programmes. In addition, ENSIE produced five short video reports from events and conferences with thematic focuses, for wider dissemination and increased awareness. ENSIE produced an introductory video / course for new members joining the network, explaining and informing them about the ENSIE network and its work with members.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** various monitoring tools were employed by ENSIE. In addition, see other potential good practices.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** WISEs are recognised as effective and innovative actors with regard to the socio-professional inclusion of vulnerable people. ENSIE also established a WISEs Manager Award campaign to raise awareness about the innovativeness and resilience of WISEs and their work, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis, when they hit as hard by the crisis as other enterprises, but were often left outside support programmes. A lot of WISEs demonstrated, once more, their ability to adapt and innovate in order to maintain their activities.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** ENSIE produced 21 position papers on policy areas of concern to the network and to WISEs. These included papers on the reinforcement of the Youth Guarantee, joint statements with other EU partners and

networks to support inclusive markets and decent jobs for people with support needs, and various collective statements underlying the enterprises' needs and problems due to the pandemic. ENSIE led the initiative 'Call for specific support measures for inclusive and integrated forms of employment during the coronavirus crisis'. ENSIE also worked on its position with regard to the contribution made by WISEs to the implementation of the principles of the EPSR: a booklet has been published demonstrating good practices by WISEs in implementing the Social Pillar. In addition, ENSIE drafted five analyses of the main documents of the European Semester process.

ENSIE provided four policy recommendations on the following subjects: the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER); two contributions regarding preparations for the Social Economy Action Plan; and on the specific support measures for inclusive and integrated forms of employment during the COVID-19 crisis. With regard to funding, ENSIE published two position papers relating to EU funds, one on the 'Agreement on the EU budget 2021-2027', the other on the ESF+. ENSIE also contributed to two EU feedback exercises and two EU consultations in relation to EU funds.

In addition, ENSIE led its annual IMPACT-WISEs study. Although the COVID-19 crisis had an impact on data gathering, the results of the study showed that 79% of disadvantaged workers successfully found a job in the same WISE, another WISE or on the conventional labour market; 2% became self-employed or found professional training; while 19% of disadvantaged workers did not find a job solution. New national WISEs benchmarks will be published in the future.

ENSIE published Country-Specific Recommendations that included policy recommendations at a national level. It also led an external evaluation, which demonstrated the added-value of the EaSI 2020 work programme.

**Transnational dimension:** ENSIE collaborated with EU partners and EU bodies / representatives to better tackle the current challenges faced by WISEs and to achieve a bigger positive impact. ENSIE also supported representatives of WISEs in becoming more involved in policy-making dialogues with EU representatives, national ministries and other EU partners / actors. The European network supported national / regional WISE organisations through the sharing of expertise on EU policies, tools, initiatives and funding opportunities, but also through various type of awareness-raising campaigns concerning WISEs in countries with a low level of development of the social economy.

**New partnerships created:** in 2020, ENSIE established new contacts with networks of WISE representatives in eight countries (Georgia, Albania, Israel, the Netherlands, Palestine, Lithuania, Estonia and Norway), and welcomed new members from Latvia (the Social Enterprise Association of Latvia), Italy (Idee in Rete), Czechia (TESSEA) and Slovakia (Asociacia subjektov socialnej ekonomiky). Non-EU countries in the Western Balkans were also supported by ENSIE, and partnerships were established. New contacts were established and campaigns to raise awareness about WISEs were organised in two countries (Hungary and Lithuania).

**Dissemination strategy:** ENSIE updated its communication strategy to be more efficient, more consistent and to more easily reach its target groups. ENSIE prepared new, more accessible leaflets and documents. ENSIE successfully led its internal / external communication plans through regular updates on its website, the sending of quarterly and monthly newsletters, the dissemination of the activities through its social media channels and the drafting of the annual report on ENSIE's activities.

ENSIE used multilingual EU digital platforms and electronic exchanges to disseminate information to members, as well as EU, national and regional authorities, civil society organisations and other stakeholders concerned with the social economy and WISEs. The provision of information was carried out through online tools (social media, newsletters and emailing), which were used to share information with members and EU, national and regional authorities.

ENSIE contributed to EU legislation through its policy recommendations, (joint) statements, position papers, contributions to EU consultations, legislative changes proposals, etc. These documents target mainly EU and national public institutions, as well as other CSOs, and were shared through its communication channels.

Capacity-building actions, sessions and webinars were organised virtually in order to increase members' knowledge about EU policies / EU funds, to share expertise with and among members, and to increase members' capacities to manage EU proposals. These exchanges included EU representatives and policy-makers as well as civil society organisations (both European and national).

Networking and cooperation meetings and events were organised. These gathered together EU and national / regional / local representatives as well as actors working in the field of the social economy.

**European added value:** the EU added value of this EaSI WP was demonstrated in multiple ways during 2020. EU funding allowed the network to operate with sufficient human resources to implement all of its planned activities for the year, but also to empower its members. Without EU financial support, it would have been difficult to realise the same quantity and quality of activities. Other added-value impacts include:

- Its uniqueness in the fight against social exclusion, in particular when it comes to vulnerable groups excluded from the labour market, and its support for WISEs in addressing this matter;
- Its efforts to keep in touch with WISEs throughout the COVID-19 crisis and to develop a two-way communication channel between WISEs and the European Commission;
- Strategic guidance, advice and networking opportunities;
- With the arrival of the pandemic, the EaSI 2020 work-programme was a source of additional motivation to ENSIE employees;
- As was the case with its predecessors, the EaSI 2020 work programme had a sustainable impact on ENSIE's members through the exchange of learning. This in turn leads to the professionalisation of the sector via the development of new skills and competences, or the exploitation of project results across the sector.

**Sustainability measures:** new members joined ENSIE; its policy and activities were updated; four working groups were established to revise ENSIE's strategic objectives for 2021-2024. The project B-WISE, the blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills for the WISE sector, was co-led with EASPD and will start in 2021.

ENSIE will continue to collaborate with EU, national and regional representatives and other relevant and interested stakeholders, and will continue to closely and regularly follow the development of new EU policies, funds, tools and initiatives.

It will also continue to advocate for SMEs/WISEs to have access to mixed sources and types of funding, so that actors on the ground are not dependent on EU grants.

ENSIE will continue to produce its 'Impact WISEs' studies, which demonstrate annually the positive socioeconomic impact of WISEs. ENSIE will also regularly upskill its team to increase their competences. ENSIE is working on constantly improving and implementing its fundraising strategy to become less dependent on EU funds.

**Horizontal objectives:** in terms of capacity-building activities, ENSIE organised 15 webinars for its members on policy priorities such as gender equality, green policies, skills, the social inclusion of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, the inclusion of young people, and so on. Awareness-raising campaigns about WISEs were launched in countries with a low level of development of the social economy.

ENSIE also aggregated inputs and good practices in terms of the contributions made by WISEs to the EPSR principles, and published a booklet together with its recommendations. ENSIE also carried out a great deal of work on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the WISE sector, sometimes in collaboration with other EU partners. Furthermore, ENSIE collected data (economic and in relation to skills and employment) from its members to create an analysis / report on the national situations.

#### 4.6. Eurodiaconia Work Programme 2020

*'As the capacity of our members is strengthened, so our work will be strengthened and become more effective and impactful'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0066
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion;</li> <li>• Diversity and anti-discrimination;</li> <li>• Gender equality.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Employment Strategy;</li> <li>• Local development;</li> <li>• Youth employment;</li> <li>• Social Services of General Interest (SSGI);</li> <li>• Active inclusion;</li> <li>• Child and youth poverty and social exclusion;</li> <li>• Non-discrimination/equality mainstreaming;</li> <li>• Equality legislation;</li> <li>• Specific measures for the advancement of women.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Specialist bodies provided for under Union law;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Media;</li> <li>• People living in Europe.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing policy papers, action plans, recommendations and evidence;</li> <li>• Board meetings and general assemblies;</li> <li>• Organising and participating in network meetings, conferences, seminars and trainings;</li> <li>• Communications to relevant parties and stakeholders;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys;</li> <li>• Information dissemination and promotion of activities.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Eurodiaconia AISBL (Belgium)
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 589,749.01
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="https://www.eurodiaconia.org/">https://www.eurodiaconia.org/</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** Eurodiaconia is a European network of churches and Christian NGOs providing social and health care services and advocating for social justice by addressing the root causes of inequalities, poverty and exclusion. Eurodiaconia represents the needs and unique experiences of 52 national and regional organisations in 32 countries. Eurodiaconia engages in the main EU-driven social policy processes at EU level on behalf of and with their members, ensuring awareness of policy, leading to action and participation, and supporting members to engage at national, regional, and local levels. Eurodiaconia considers specific policy areas as well as global approaches such as the European Semester or the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the project proposal focused on engaging members, providing evidence-based policy input, working across people’s lifecycles, as well as promoting and participating in the main EU-level social initiatives. Increased capacity on the part of members will lead to strengthened and more effective and impactful work. The aims of the organisation included:

- A focus on investment in social services and policies that support inclusion across people’s lifecycles and life situations;
- Supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights through the proposed action plan;
- Creating a better understanding of and capacity to engage in European Economic Governance and the European Semester, its added value, and how it relates / affects national social policy aims and promotes investment;
- Building the capacity of members to follow the Semester process more effectively, provide more timely and relevant input at the various stages of the process. Further building capacity with regard to the role the European Union plays in ensuring a social Europe;
- Working to align EU social goals and the UN Sustainable Development Goals through the post-Europe 2020 agenda, so that there can be a clear relationship and reporting between the Semester, the SDGs and the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- Providing data and strong evidence-based policy proposals on the social situation in the Member States as well as emerging trends relating to the European Pillar of Social Rights and the implications of economic governance decisions;
- Advocating for the adoption of a social MFF and providing members with tools for advocacy on the MFF at national and EU levels, as well as building capacity with regard to using the programmes of the adopted MFF;
- Upskill the members of Eurodiaconia to become increasingly active as knowledge-bearers and information channels at national, regional and local levels, equipping them with tools for the effective and timely reporting of the impacts of social policies on citizens and their social situation, and providing tools and content for the effective dissemination of information among their constituents;



- Provide specialist knowledge on specific challenges such as cohesion in urban areas; the experience and impact of extreme deprivation, particularly among children, the homeless and the over-indebted; assistance in returning to employment for the long-term unemployed; the role of social and health care services in reducing exclusion and inequality; and the sustainable, holistic social integration of Roma and migrants;
- Identifying innovative practices across all policy areas in which Eurodiaconia works, and providing these to partners, policymakers and other members as examples that could be suitable for scaling up and achieving maximum impact.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** Eurodiaconia engaged members, provided evidence-based policy inputs, promoted and participated in the main EU-level social initiatives. Eurodiaconia considers national and specific policy areas, as well as global approaches such as the European Semester or the Sustainable Development Goals. The attainment of objectives, which links to Eurodiaconia's work in the main EU-driven social policy processes at EU level on behalf of and with its members, results in measurable impact and helps to provide a wider evidence base for innovative and effective social policies – which is supported by multiple policy papers and other evidence produced by Eurodiaconia.

Eurodiaconia also reinforced the capacity of its network and supported the participation of national and regional networks. Eurodiaconia has also developed nationally tailored advocacy activities (e.g. roundtables and training sessions). These broaden both participation and knowledge at national level, helping to better connect Eurodiaconia's members to important European actors. Eurodiaconia has also enabled members to visit Brussels and develop programmes.

Eurodiaconia has published policy papers and research on issues relating to investment in social services and policies that support inclusion across people's lifecycles and life situations. Eurodiaconia supported the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights through the proposed action plan. Eurodiaconia also focused on the situations of migrant women and Roma people, while paying special attention to the general effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eurodiaconia organised and attended multiple seminars, webinars and training sessions, which helped improve the capacities of its members, as well as increasing access to knowledge and sharing good practices and policy recommendations. Members were informed about ongoing developments with regard to EU funding and budget developments.

Eurodiaconia's communication strategy ensured that all communication activities and materials worked in harmony to help achieve the desired changes. It also contributed to recreating and restoring institutional legitimacy and ensuring social and health care policy remained a priority both at EU and national levels.

The pandemic prompted a move to an online environment, which affected some activities; however, at the same time, the crisis increased solidarity and the capacity to enter into dialogues based on solidarity to assess what kind of political action was required. The pandemic also contributed to a rethinking of what constitutes resilience, particularly with regard to social services and health care systems.

**Identification of potential good practices:** the COVID-19 pandemic raised questions of resilience, which required the ability to be agile, to re-engineer services and to respond quickly to emerging crises. The pandemic and its long-term effects require additional measures to build resilience into social protection systems and

welfare services over the coming years, in order to handle such situations sustainably rather than only for a short period. This is where initiatives such as Adequate Minimum Income will become essential.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** flexible membership criteria that allows members to come from local, regional and national levels. This allows Eurodiaconia to cut through the barriers that can exist with national platforms, and to reach more practitioners and experts. It also allows Eurodiaconia to reach more grassroots organisations that work daily with people experiencing poverty and exclusion, and which provide innovative and effective services that enable them to transform their life situations.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** Eurodiaconia provided data and strong evidence-based policy proposals on the social situation in the Member States, as well as emerging trends. The evidence generated by the project includes:

- A paper on how the new action plan and various EU initiatives have tackled the integration and inclusion of migrant women;
- A policy paper on the benefits of private sponsorship programmes for the integration of refugees and for social cohesion, showing the positive impact that community sponsorship schemes can have on long-term integration outcomes;
- Evaluation of the Eurodiaconia Migration Network meeting, focusing on the impact of the pandemic on migrants and refugees, and how issues are addressed;
- Evaluation of the Roma network meeting, informing members about the new EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation;
- Eurodiaconia input into the roadmap on the EU Roma Strategic Framework;
- Eurodiaconia EPSR Action Plan Consultation Response;
- Eurodiaconia assessment of the 2020 Winter Package, including country reports.
- Boosting sustainable and inclusive growth through the European Semester (an analysis by seven members of the 2020 country-specific recommendations);
- Meeting report on Eurodiaconia's Access to Employment network;
- A policy paper on how to ensure financial inclusion for the most vulnerable;
- Policy papers relating to the COVID-19 crisis and its effects;
- The EPSR action plan proposal;
- Templates and recommendations for national advocacy efforts;
- An updated policy paper on minimum income.

In addition, Eurodiaconia organised and participated in meetings and conferences and provided inputs to the European Commission on, for example, the development of the new Action Plan for the integration and inclusion of migrants.

**Transnational dimension:** the vast and expanding network of over 30,000 service providers, almost 800,000 employees and an estimated 1,000,000 volunteers in 32 countries ensures Eurodiaconia's transnational dimension, with an increasing number of partnerships, exchanges and mutual learning.

**New partnerships created:** Eurodiaconia has widened its partnerships, taking the debate about social policies beyond the usual stakeholders. It has strengthened its relationships with the European Parliament, EU Presidencies and the European Commission, and found ways to have an impact even from a virtual standpoint.

**Dissemination strategy:** Eurodiaconia employed an integrated communications strategy that supports dissemination. This includes publicising advocacy and expertise, as well as key information about EU-driven processes. Visits to and from its members, including study visits and learning exchanges, are also organised.

Reports, policy papers, recommendations and other documents were circulated predominantly by e-mail to targeted stakeholders. A limited number of paper copies were produced, but COVID prevented their distribution. When a document is launched, its initial circulation is supported by social media tools, placed on Eurodiaconia's website and highlighted in the weekly update to members and in the fortnightly Enews to external stakeholders.

**European added value:** receiving support from the European Commission through the EaSI programme allowed Eurodiaconia to develop its pan-European network and to bring experience, innovation and concrete policy inputs to the European level, as well as sharing and promoting EU-level social policy initiatives with their members and partners. In addition, Eurodiaconia brings in various comparative perspectives from around the EU, providing essential data for policymakers. It also arranges opportunities for policymakers to discuss issues directly with Eurodiaconia's members. For Eurodiaconia, the European added value is clear: bringing together expertise, constructive and regular dialogue and partnership in policymaking and information sharing.

**Sustainability measures:** the agreed-upon multi-annual financial framework will contribute to sustainability and enable Eurodiaconia to work with members to help them understand the organisation of funds at national level, as well as how to access them. Eurodiaconia will follow the development of operational plans to see how earmarking and various recommendations regarding the use of funds have been adopted.

Eurodiaconia will continue to work on the specific elements of the action plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights, and will continue to advocate for an additional horizontal approach to the EPSR to underpin the need for enabling conditions such as investment in quality, accessible social services. Eurodiaconia will follow the development of the social scoreboard carefully to see how it can identify additional data sources. It will also work with both the Commission and Eurostat on how complementary data could be shared.

Eurodiaconia will continue its active inclusion, outreach and targeted policy work, ensuring active outreach to specific groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, Eurodiaconia will continue to stress the many intersectionalities of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, and aim to increase both visibility and action in these areas.

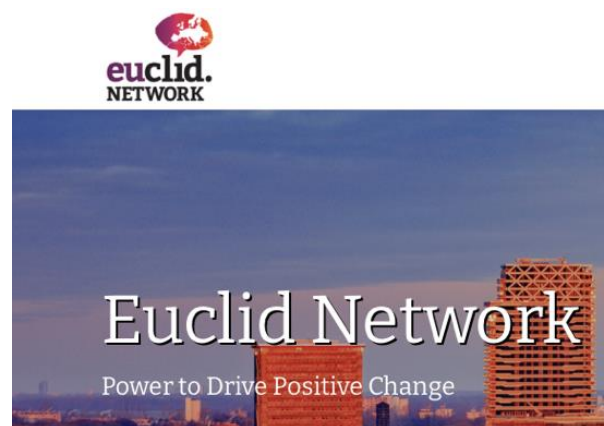
Social services, the social economy, the Sustainable Development Goals, the green and digital transitions and recovery and resilience are areas in which Eurodiaconia will continue its work, while re-engaging its members in the European Semester.

Eurodiaconia will continue to use its KPI dashboard to monitor and evaluate its work on a regular basis, and will use its annually reviewed risk management matrix and plan to evaluate and mitigate any potential risks.

**Horizontal objectives:** Eurodiaconia has addressed policy issues across its work programme. Its continuing work on employment, particularly in terms of access to the labour market, places employment issues front and centre with Eurodiaconia's members and partners. Eurodiaconia's focus has also expanded to include Roma people and migrants. Eurodiaconia has continued to pay attention to gender issues, and has developed working practices on the intersections of social inclusion and anti-discrimination, widening partnerships in the process. Eurodiaconia continues to

advocate for accessible, affordable and high-quality social services as part of modern social protection systems, as well as for social benefits that support a dignified life for the recipient. An added dimension in 2020 was the COVID pandemic and the particular vulnerabilities experienced by specific groups. This dimension was also accounted for in Eurodiaconia’s work.

#### 4.7. Euclid Network – Empowering Social Enterprises for a vibrant social enterprise finance market 2021



*'Our vision is to see civil society and social enterprise empowered to drive positive change.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0027
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0194
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion;</li> <li>• Poverty reduction;</li> <li>• Microfinance;</li> <li>• Social enterprises.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurship;</li> <li>• Financial resilience;</li> <li>• Access to finance;</li> <li>• Access to markets;</li> <li>• Microfinance;</li> <li>• Access to skills;</li> <li>• Transnational cooperation;</li> <li>• European integration;</li> <li>• Labour market integration;</li> <li>• Inclusive economy;</li> <li>• Migration;</li> <li>• Climate change;</li> <li>• Poverty (reduction);</li> <li>• Gender;</li> <li>• Tech (for good);</li> <li>• Social innovation.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential social enterprises;</li> <li>• social investors (including EN Members);</li> <li>• EU institutions;</li> <li>• universities (including EN Members);</li> <li>• Member States (national governments);</li> <li>• regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• mainstream businesses;</li> <li>• European consumers / citizens.</li> </ul>

Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producing and organising policy papers, round tables, bootcamps, roadmaps and training modules;</li> <li>Organising SE Finance Market Summits, SE Finance Market Knowledge Centre, member engagement, new member outreach;</li> <li>Creating short films, toolkit for stakeholders, engagement &amp; dissemination plan;</li> <li>Conducting SE Europe Market Monitor and contemporary research briefings.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Netherlands
Participating countries	Germany, Sweden, Portugal, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Spain and the United Kingdom.
Coordinator	EUCLID Network
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 256,025.00
Project duration	01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.euclidnetwork.eu">www.euclidnetwork.eu</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** while social enterprises run resilient, innovative and sustainable businesses to the benefit of society and the climate, they face serious challenges in accessing business support and finance due to a lack of visibility and recognition. Social enterprises (SEs) experience a gap between their need for finance and the capital that is currently available to them. Hence, it is crucial to improve the availability of and access to seed money and patient capital, as well as to provide SEs with dedicated business support to attract funding, access markets and increase investment readiness. Moreover, SEs would benefit from working more systematically with the SDGs, as well as better communicating the societal impact of their business. Social enterprises are pioneers in finding sustainable solutions to societal challenges in an entrepreneurial way.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the main objective of the programme is to improve access to social finance for social enterprises. To deliver on this objective, the project is structured around four strategic pillars:

- Supporting the implementation of European policies in the social enterprise (SE) finance market, with a focus on the demand side;
- Reinforcing the capacity of Euclid Network (EN) members to empower SEs to access the social finance market and to repay social finance, thanks to a sustainable business model;
- Voicing the concerns and expectations of SEs and potential future social entrepreneurs, including those from disadvantaged groups;
- Providing high-quality data and research on developments in SE finance, with a focus on the demand side.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** together with the European Commission, the Euclid Network works to increase access to social finance for social enterprises in Europe. Social investment offers a significant opportunity to empower social enterprises to drive positive change. This is why EN has supported and strengthened capacity on the demand side of the social finance market across Europe, focusing on the frontline organisations that could benefit from this investment. These include social enterprises and their support structures such as national federations, networks, universities, social funds, accelerators and incubators.

SEs still face significant challenges in receiving dedicated business support and accessing finance, due to a lack of visibility and recognition. A gap remains between the finance needs of SEs and the capital that is currently available. In general, SEs

would benefit from more available seed money, patient capital, and dedicated business support in attracting funding, accessing markets and increasing investment readiness. In addition, SEs need support in working more systematically with the SDGs, e.g. by communicating the societal impacts generated by their businesses.

There is a need for networks such as EN to facilitate cross-border learning, cooperation in common projects, and the sharing of best practices. These activities strengthen the capacity of SEs to provide high-quality business support and finance for SEs. Similarly, networks such as EN can help to disseminate information from the European level to practitioners, specifically about EU funding opportunities. Such networks can also help voice the expectations and concerns of practitioners to both social finance providers and legislators. In addition, networks such as EN can connect SE researchers and SE practitioners and facilitate cross-country data collection, as well as the systemising the data collected to make it available for benchmarking at an international level. Such networks can also bring their members together with governments and corporates to cooperate on topics such as social procurement.

**Identification of potential good practices:** EN used the COVID-19 pandemic to expand its outreach and impact by increasing the number of its activities and its membership. While it could not organise in-person meetings, it capitalised on the situation by delivering a greater number of online events, workshops and conferences, reaching a greater number of stakeholders than was initially expected.

EN launched the Top 100 Women in Social Enterprise initiative celebrating women in the SE sector, spotlighting their impact journey and achievements, and connecting them in order that they could learn from and inspire each other.

In 2020, EN also launched the European Social Enterprise Monitor, a cross-country survey aimed at uncovering social enterprise insights for evidence-based policymaking and investor decision-making. A total of 1,990 responses were collected from social entrepreneurs, which led to creation of one European report and two national reports, which were presented and launched at the European Commission European Social Economy Summit on 26 May 2021. In total, nine Monitor reports are expected to be produced.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** EN has collected high-quality data and research on developments in social enterprise finance, with a focus on the demand side. It has produced the SE Europe Market Monitor and contemporary research briefings, all of which can be used and applied in other contexts and in similar projects. Similarly, EN's Knowledge Centre is another source of useful resources and examples of good practice that can be transferred to other projects and contexts.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** as part of the project, the EN team developed the European Social Enterprise Monitor (ESEM), a cross-country survey aimed at uncovering social enterprise insights for evidence-based policymaking and investor decision-making. The World Economic Forum COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurs selected the European Social Enterprise Monitor project as a highly relevant and important member-led project for systemic change, and mentioned the project in an Alliance article for Davos 2021.

During 2020 and 2021, EN has also demonstrated resilience and the capacity to innovate by swiftly adapting its projects and services to meet the needs of its members amid the COVID-19 pandemic. EN implemented a range of new initiatives to support its members, including:

- A dedicated COVID-19 response page on the Knowledge Centre;



- The 'Driving Positive Change' webinar series;
- The 'Financing your Social Impact' webinar series.

EN also adapted a range of its services into hybrid or virtual formats, including the annual general meeting, EU project-building workshop, on-the-spot assessment of policies in a given territory using the Better Entrepreneurship Policy Tool, and peer exchange methodology.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** in total, 11 reports including surveys, studies, analyses and expertise were produced during the project. This also includes the European Social Enterprise Monitor reports – one European report and two national reports, which were presented at the European Commission European Social Economy Summit on 26 May 2021. Six additional Monitor reports are planned to be produced. Similarly, the Knowledge Centre was regularly updated with materials such as presentations, publications, videos, interviews, reports and webinars. These were promoted as open-access data to the public, especially to social enterprises.

**Transnational dimension:** during the project, EN experienced 25 % growth in its membership, adding nine new members from nine countries, three of which were new countries. It also welcomed one new CEE country, Estonia. EN members presented at 14 international conferences and participated in 43 international conferences.

Moreover, in 2020 EN launched the European Social Enterprise Monitor, a cross-country survey aimed at uncovering social enterprise insights for evidence-based policymaking and investor decision-making. In its first year, it reached 35 participants from 19 partner organisations across eight countries. These included Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The 19 partners were national networks of social enterprises and leading universities, e.g. Social Entrepreneurship Network Deutschland (SEND), the Estonian Social Enterprise Network, the Forum for Social Innovation Sweden, Social Enterprise UK, the ESADE Business School, the Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics, the University of Zagreb, Roskilde University, and Tallinn University.

**New partnerships created:** during the project EN established three strategic partnerships for the benefit of its members, with ImpactCity, the Social Enterprise World Forum, and the World Economic Forum COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurs. Other partnerships also include those with organisations such as Ashoka, Impact Hub and Ecopreneurs.

**Dissemination strategy:** the databases, policy reports and impact assessments produced by EN were primarily targeted at social enterprises (support organisations) and disseminated via a range of means, including:

- EN website;
- General and members' newsletters;
- Social media, including Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook;
- Webinars;
- Presentations at international events involving relevant stakeholders, e.g. EUSES Roadmap events, GSEF, Social Value Matters and the SEWF;
- One-on-one meetings with a member of the European Parliament, members of the European Economic and Social Committee, and staff of the European Commission;
- Direct contact via e-mail and telephone;
- Through partners such as Pioneers Post and the World Economic Forum COVID Response Alliance for Social Entrepreneurs.



**European added value:** EU funding was an important source of income for EN members, and made this project possible. As revealed through the EU funding survey and EN member consultation, public grants are the most important source of income for 80 % of EN members.

**Sustainability measures:** with the help of an external expert, EN developed its theory of change in alignment with the strategy of the organisation over the coming years, to further professionalise its impact measurement. Also, through this project, EN has increased its membership by 25 %, welcoming nine new members from nine countries, three of which are new countries. Moreover, the EN Knowledge Centre was updated with 83 knowledge resources and 212 researchers, increasing its total number of knowledge resources from 152 to 235, and its researchers from 75 to 287. These are open-access resources that remain available both to the relevant stakeholders and to the public at large.

**Horizontal objectives:** through its activities, EN has been able to support social enterprise leaders to run their businesses in a financially sustainable way; to learn from best practices across borders; to be heard by public officials and social finance providers; and to become more visible among businesses, academia, government and wider society. These social enterprises work towards an inclusive and circular economy and a more cohesive society. In particular, they address issues such as youth employment; combatting long-term unemployment; fighting poverty and social exclusion; promoting equality between women and men; promoting high-quality, sustainable employment; adequate and decent social protection; and combatting discrimination.

#### 4.8. FEANTSA – Delivering on renewed EU ambitions on homelessness

*'We will continue to promote Housing First, but embed it into more integrated strategies to address and prevent all forms of homelessness. We will pitch Housing First more as systemic change rather than a policy innovation.'*



Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0029
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0059
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGBTIQ homelessness;</li> <li>• Housing;</li> <li>• Health;</li> <li>• Migration;</li> <li>• Human rights;</li> <li>• Climate;</li> <li>• Promoting equality between women and men;</li> <li>• Youth unemployment and homelessness;</li> <li>• Fighting poverty and social exclusion;</li> <li>• Guarantee adequate and decent social protection;</li> <li>• Combatting discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• National statistical offices;</li> <li>• Media;</li> <li>• Diverse set of social services working with homeless people or people at risk of homelessness;</li> <li>• Social housing associations;</li> <li>• Public health organisations;</li> <li>• Human rights lawyers;</li> <li>• Social impact investors;</li> <li>• European social NGOs;</li> <li>• People affected by homelessness.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research: European Journal of Homelessness, Comparative Study;</li> <li>• Events: policy and research conferences;</li> <li>• Learning: training (new: on LGBT), toolkits (new: homeless strategies), best practice guides;</li> <li>• Policy work: lobbying, monitoring, contributing to policy-making at EU and Member State level;</li> <li>• Networking: European transnational and inter-sectoral networking;</li> <li>• Awareness-raising: campaigning and communicating on homelessness.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-

Coordinator	Fédération Européenne Des Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans-Abri
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 999,327.12
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.feantsa.org">www.feantsa.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** Homelessness has increased over the past decade in almost all EU Member States. Although numbers have been stabilising and some positive developments were seen due to the pandemic, homelessness remained an urgent issue in most Member States. An estimated 700,000 people experienced homelessness on any given day in the EU area in 2019 – an increase of 70 % compared with 2009. The work of FEANTSA therefore aimed to better understand the dynamics underpinning this increase. FEANTSA used the pandemic as a lever to push for housing-led approaches to homelessness. Never before has it been so easy to pitch homelessness as a public health problem. Housing people is the most effective public health intervention to stop the spread of infections among very marginalised groups such as homeless people.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** during the project period, FEANTSA focused on a handful of key policy areas including housing, health and migration. It looked at the changing profile of the homeless population, focusing on some of the most vulnerable groups such as women, young people, migrants, LGBTIQ and families, as well as on the key elements of effective strategies against homelessness such as funding, human rights-based interventions, data collection, and housing-led approaches. The project's main goals include:

- Increasing knowledge to help stakeholders improve policies / services;
- Increasing the capacity of stakeholders to anticipate trends in homelessness through the analysis of data / statistics;
- Increasing the number of public homelessness strategies that use evidence provided by FEANTSA;
- Increasing the take-up of Housing First as the most promising approach to end chronic homelessness;
- Driving innovation in the provision of affordable housing for vulnerable people;
- Mitigating the impact of migration policies on homelessness;
- Mobilising health actors to fight homelessness;
- Rallying support to tackle homelessness as a breach of human rights;
- Ensuring EU policies capture the reality of homelessness;
- Ensuring the EU Semester and Pillar of Social Rights become levers for better action against homelessness;
- Ensuring EU2030 strategy includes a commitment to ending homelessness;
- Increasing the take-up of ESIF to fight homelessness.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** during the project period, FEANTSA mainstreamed homelessness in sectoral EU policies. In particular, it managed to:

- Include a strong reference to homelessness in the EU Disability Strategy;
- Convince the Commission to make homeless children one of the five priority groups of the draft Council Recommendation on the Child Guarantee;
- Include a strong reference to homelessness in the EU LGBTIQ Strategy, with the support of ILGA-Europe;
- Include a strong reference to Roma homelessness as a priority issue in the new EU Roma Framework (Council Recommendation);
- Include an indirect reference to homelessness and an explicit reference to housing support in the reinforced EU Youth Guarantee;

- Convince Commissioner Schmit to commit to the development of an EU Homelessness Platform;
- Include a strong reference to homelessness and the Homeless Platform in the Action Plan of the Pillar;
- Secure strong support from the European Parliament for more EU action on homelessness at EU level in the framework of the Pillar;
- Secure support from key European stakeholders (Housing Europe, Eurocities, Red Cross EU office, etc.) for the Homelessness Platform;
- Mobilised its members to lobby for the inclusion of homelessness in the National Reform Plans;
- Support the European Commission in the drafting of the Country Reports;
- Help secure the inclusion of a reference to homelessness in the Country-Specific Recommendations for Ireland and Bulgaria;
- Support the Commission in the drafting of the Joint Employment Report. The fight against homelessness was included as one of its key messages;
- Include homelessness in the European Parliament reports relevant to the (social aspects) of the Semester;
- Advocate successfully with the future Presidencies of the EU (Portugal and France) for a strong focus on homelessness.

**Identification of potential good practices:** one of the best practices implemented by FEANTSA includes its initiative 'Housing First'. By making the evidence on Housing First widely available, FEANTSA was able to convince Member States and local authorities not to carry out their own research and evaluations and to move on immediately to bringing Housing First to scale, and thus avoiding duplication of work. Housing First seems the most effective approach to ending homelessness – not only chronic homelessness, but also youth homelessness. Here, FEANTSA's focus towards making use of EU Funds is also important, as it enables it to finance housing projects, which can be a controversial issue in some of the Member States. FEANTSA had provided training on Housing First to more than 100 trainers from a dozen different countries. Many of these trainers organise training for civil servants and practitioners in their own countries as well as abroad. This has resulted in an increase in the number of countries / cities experimenting with or scaling Housing First. FEANTSA also started to promote Housing First for sub-groups among the homeless such as homeless young people and homeless women fleeing domestic violence.

**Transferability element(s) of the project/activities:** one element of the project that can be applied in other countries is the Housing First initiative. For instance, after being trained by FEANTSA, national and local trainers can organise training in their own country for civil servants and practitioners, who can promote access to housing to the homeless.

**Innovativeness of the project/activities:** some of the innovative practices that FEANTSA implemented and promoted include Housing First, psychologically informed environments (PIE) for homeless women who are victims of gender-based violence, effective discharge protocols for the homeless in hospitals, and access to innovative housing solutions.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** as part of the project, FEANTSA produced the following publications, which are available on its website ([www.feantsa.org](http://www.feantsa.org)):

- Annual Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe (in paper and online / French and English). Helped to map and understand the trends in homelessness and the impact on homelessness of flaws in asylum policies;

- Report on investing in housing solutions for homelessness. Helped to link interesting projects with EU financing and investment opportunities;
- The European research report on staffing issues in the homeless sector. Helped to understand how staffing issues impact the quality of homeless service delivery;
- Four editions of the *European Journal on Homelessness* (two standard editions and two guest editions). Helped to disseminate the most recent research findings on homelessness and homeless policies / services to a wide audience of academics, service providers and policymakers;
- Research on the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness. Helped to better understand the challenges and opportunities brought by the pandemic;
- Three editions of *Homeless Magazine*. Helped to disseminate interesting practices / analysis on homelessness to a wide and diverse audience;
- Eleven editions of FEANTSA Flash (in English and French). Helped to disseminate relevant news on homelessness from Member States and the EU to a wide and diverse audience;
- Eight new / updated country profiles on homelessness. Helped to understand country-specific developments on homelessness within a comparative framework.
- State of knowledge on women's homelessness. Helped to understand what works in relation to addressing women's homelessness;
- The impact of COVID-19 on migrant homelessness.

**Transnational dimension:** FEANTSA is the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless. It comprises over 130 member organisations from 30 countries.

**New partnerships created:** during the project's implementation, FEANTSA welcomed a dozen new members including local authorities and a foundation, which helped FEANTSA to progress towards becoming a multi-stakeholder platform on homelessness.

**Dissemination strategy:** all of the reports and publications produced during the project were disseminated via the following means:

- An online press conference on the launch of the OHEE;
- Press coverage by platforms such as Politico, Euractiv, Euronews, Parliament Magazine, Agence Europe and others;
- Thematic news briefs;
- The websites of FEANTSA and other relevant initiatives;
- Social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, as well as podcasts;
- By mail;
- At events and conferences.

**Sustainability measures:** to ensure the continuation of its work, FEANTSA secured financial support from True Colours United and raised external funding for 2021 from sources including:

- Housing Rights Watch – EUR 30,000 (FAP);
- OHEE – EUR 50,000 (FAP);
- Housing Solutions Platform – EUR 150,000 (FRB, Scheider, OSIFE and ECF);
- Housing First Europe Hub – EUR 250,000 (from partner organisations and Y-Foundation);
- Applied together with the University of York and the Metropolitan Research Institute to a call for tenders for the development of an EU toolkit on homelessness;

- Joined a tender for the ESF Transnationality Platform, in which FEANTSA is responsible for homelessness.
- Helped the Brussels Region to apply under the DG EMPL social innovation call, as a partner in the application.

FEANTSA also began work on the 6th edition of the OHEE, which will focus on youth homelessness and young people in precarious housing situations, and the impact of COVID-19. In close cooperation with its board members, FEANTSA began to contact the responsible civil servants in EU Member States and the countries' PermReps to secure national support for the EU Homelessness Platform. In addition, FEANTSA began working on a concrete FEANTSA proposal for the EU Platform. FEANTSA plans to continue its work towards an EU strategy within the framework of the EU Platform on Homelessness, and to continue promoting the systemic embedding of Housing First into more integrated strategies to address and prevent all forms of homelessness. It will also continue its work toward ensuring (research) evidence feeds into policies and services for homeless people.

**Horizontal objectives:** the FEANTSA team worked extensively on particularly vulnerable groups among the homeless such as women, children (families), LGBTIQ people, people with disabilities, migrants, and Roma. It helped to mainstream homelessness in new EU policies / initiatives targeting these groups. FEANTSA also commenced cooperation on homelessness with European NGOs representing these groups, including such as ILGA, the EWL, and the Youth Forum.

All of FEANTSA's work on homelessness (research, training, advocacy,) has also contributed to the fight poverty, as homelessness is one of the most severe and urgent forms of poverty.

With regard to gender, FEANTSA prepared a webinar on women's homelessness, which was postponed to March 2021 due to COVID-19. FEANTSA also produced a guide to developing effective gender-responsive support and solutions for women experiencing homelessness, as well as a review of the evidence on what works in reducing women's homelessness. Both of these publications are available on FEANTSA's website.

On youth, FEANTSA partnered with the Youth Forum and included a thematic focus on youth homelessness in its report on the future of the Youth Guarantee. Together with the FEANTSA Youth Network FEANTSA also organised five breakfast webinars on aspects relating to youth homelessness.

In relation to LGBTIQ youth, FEANTSA published research on LGBTIQ youth homelessness, focusing on understanding the challenges that services face in working with LGBTIQ youth. This was based on input from an online survey of FEANTSA members. FEANTSA worked extensively with the FRA to get data on LGBTIQ homelessness from within the framework of a larger survey in LGBTIQ community. It also supported its dissemination with briefings for members and the Youth Network to capture the extent of LGBTIQ homelessness in their respective countries. FEANTSA helped ILGA-Europe to organise workshops at the latter's online conference on LGBTIQ homelessness, and was involved in an ILGA-Europe survey on youth homelessness. Moreover, FEANTSA managed to get LGBTIQ youth homelessness added as an issue in the new EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy.

#### 4.9. FEBA – Reducing poverty through food redistribution 2020 actions



*'Thanks to this action, FEBA strengthened, reinforced and expanded its membership, improved the efficiency and effectiveness of its actions, and increased the sustainability of its daily operations during the challenging period of COVID-19.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0031
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0030
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	Active inclusion
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• European authorities.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established the FEBA COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund;</li> <li>• Launched a survey on FEAD implementation;</li> <li>• Built stronger relationships with key EU-level networks active in areas of employment and social protection and inclusion;</li> <li>• Held an Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion;</li> <li>• Expanded its network to support more vulnerable people;</li> <li>• Delivered eight monitoring reports on the implementation of EU2020 priorities relating to FEBA's activities;</li> <li>• Organised a virtual event on the occasion of the first 'International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste';</li> <li>• Organised two skills-sharing sessions;</li> <li>• Organised an Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion, entitled 'European Food Banks Federation: competences and creativity to feed the future'.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	-
Participating countries	Belgium
Coordinator	FEBA – European Food Banks Federation
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 250,172.01
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.eurofoodbank.org">www.eurofoodbank.org</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** FEBA brings together 430 food banks and branches that are committed to preventing food waste and to supporting charitable organisations dealing with food aid and assisting the most deprived in Europe. In 2019, organisation members redistributed 768,000 tons of food to 9.5 million of the most deprived people, through collaboration with 45,283 charitable organisations and thanks to the professionalism of 32,280 co-workers (84 % of them volunteers).



**Aims of the project/organisation:** the key objective of this action is to strengthen the activity of the European Food Banks Federation (FEBA) and its members, which contribute to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion through the redistribution of food in partnership with charitable organisations that assist the most deprived in Europe. To achieve this objective, the following main activities were planned:

- Collaborating with European institutions and stakeholders to support and disseminate EU and national policies relating to the reduction of poverty, in particular food poverty;
- Optimising the participation of FEBA and its members in the EU social dimension by reinforcing the knowledge and understanding of social policies, in particular the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD);
- Bringing the realities encountered by FEBA members to the attention of European and national decision-makers;
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the FEAD and the social impact of the activities of FEBA members;
- Empowering FEBA members through capacity building and the promotion of best practices, to develop their expertise and make a difference at European and national levels;
- Expanding FEBA's memberships by creating new food banks where they are most needed;
- Improving the internal and external dissemination of information and knowledge.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** in 2020, FEBA carried out a survey regarding the implementation of FEAD during 2019, involving 12 Member States that benefitted from the FEAD (Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain). The survey yielded information and knowledge from the largest network of partner organizations in the programme: results, key findings, successes and hurdles and issues, as well as proposals to improve its impact. Moreover, at the request of the European Commission, another consultancy firm was appointed to carry out a study on EU-level Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) on food donation under ESF+. FEBA and some of its members were interviewed and shared their knowledge about data collection and operating costs for food donation. In this context, FEBA invited DG EMPL and the consultancy firm to join a webinar on economic indicators organised on 23 June 2020 within the framework of the project 'Quantifying the Impact of European Food Banks – From Farm to Fork', financed by DG SANTE.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020, FEBA decided to concentrate its main efforts on supporting and strengthening its membership to respond to COVID-19. Therefore, FEBA monitored and assessed COVID-19 and its impacts on FEBA members, conducting three surveys and releasing four reports to tell the story of its members' experiences. In particular, it highlighted the challenges faced, urgent needs, and members' concrete responses to preventing food waste and supporting charities helping people in need.

On 17 December 2020, FEBA held its Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion, entitled 'European Food Banks Federation: competences and creativity to feed the future'. The Annual Forum provided an opportunity for FEBA members and stakeholders to come together, discuss and take stock of the current situation, as well as shining a light on future trends, especially in relation to what was needed at EU level. The panel of speakers included representatives from academia and the European Commission, as well as FEBA members.

In 2018, FEBA's board of directors decided to create an EU working group. By 2020, this comprised 29 representatives of food banks from 19 FEBA members (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Spain). FEBA drafted and further disseminated three reports from the EU working group's meetings, with a modern and interactive design.

FEBA also organised two skills-sharing sessions. The first of these explored opportunities to establish future set of actions to be implemented in subsequent months and years with regard to partnerships between corporates and food banks in relation to the UN SDGs. The second session, 'Food Collections at the time of COVID-19', provided a platform to discuss the topic of food collections during the pandemic, and to take stock of the situation in each country and exchange experiences.

FEBA successfully organised the first ever 'International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste', which took place on 29 September 2020. The event aimed to raise awareness of the importance of food loss and waste prevention, and the key role played by European food banks in managing surplus food, preventing food waste, and reducing food insecurity.

To meet immediate needs and provide a concrete response to the emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Food Banks Federation decided to launch an open call for solidarity to establish a 'FEBA COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund' with the aim of securing the activities of FEBA and its members. The response to this call exceeded all expectations. During 2020, FEBA had contacts with more than 120 corporations, foundations and other organisations. Over 50 organisations committed to donating over EUR 4.4 million to sustain the daily activities of FEBA and its members. Thanks to this concrete engagement between March and December 2020, the European Food Banks Federation supported 27 members with over EUR 4.2 million for COVID-19-related actions. These funds were used to meet concrete needs: the increased costs of the daily activity (rent, utilities, etc.), additional staff for handling the increased volumes of food, new vehicles to ensure food redistribution, digital tools to facilitate communication, new equipment for the warehouses, PPE to protect volunteers and employees, new warehouse IT systems, and much more.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** in 2020, FEBA conducted surveys, analysed information and data, drafted reports and released publications mainly focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on its membership and the work carried out by the FEBA EU working group.

To improve its members' knowledge with regard to EU objectives and Europe 2020 priorities, FEBA delivered eight monthly monitoring reports on EU political and regulatory topics linked to the activity of food banks, with a new, modern and interactive layout. This tool was disseminated to the board of directors, the FEBA EU working group and FEBA members, as well as to external stakeholders via the newsletter, to promote better knowledge of EU-driven processes on food insecurity, poverty and social exclusion, food donation and redistribution.

Furthermore, FEBA drafted, published and disseminated briefings on major topics (e.g. the European Green Deal, REACT-EU), one position paper on the Farm to Fork strategy, and submitted feedback to five open consultations published by the European Commission. In 2020, FEBA carried out a survey on the implementation of FEAD in 2019 involving 12 FEAD members. The findings were presented in a report published in October 2020 and translated into 11 languages. Lastly, FEBA developed

its third 'Members Satisfaction Survey' at the end of 2020 to gather information and inputs regarding the organisation's future strategy and action plans.

FEBA also produced four reports in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the organisation's members. The first of these, 'Present challenges and urgent needs of European Food Banks due to COVID-19', was published in April 2020 and stressed an increased demand for food, a shortage of volunteers and a drop in financial resources. The second report, 'European Food Banks in a post COVID-19 Europe', was published in July. The third report, 'European Food Banks today: commitment, creativity, and openness to change' was published in September 2020. A fourth report, 'European Food Banks: a wave of solidarity to face COVID-19', was released on the occasion of FEBA Annual Forum on Food Aid and Social Inclusion (Activity 1.5), which was held on 17 December 2020. This last report was translated into 22 languages.

**New partnerships created:** in 2020, FEBA successfully reinforced and renewed collaborations with long-term partners, signed nine donation agreements with corporations, foundations and other organisations, set up new European partnerships with three companies, and submitted seven applications to confirm or renew FEBA eligibility for global grant-making organisations.

**Dissemination strategy:** because most of the in-person meetings planned in 2020 were cancelled, FEBA decided to disseminate most of its publications online via its website and then through social media. Printed copies of reports were also sent by post to its membership as well as to external contacts and stakeholders, and to European institutions.

FEBA also created several webpages linked to its main website to promote and share information, video recordings and follow-up materials linked to various online events. Since March 2020, FEBA has created a dedicated webpage for the newly launched FEBA COVID-19 Social Emergency Fund to secure the activity of European Food Banks in such a challenging and hard period, as well as publishing interviews with the FEBA president, plus reports and the list of donors. FEBA also created tailored webpages for online fundraising campaigns.

FEBA continued to use MailChimp for the dissemination of e-mails and newsletters, increasing its contact list, which is divided into three target groups: European institutions, food bank members, and external partners. During 2020, FEBA disseminated 11 external newsletters to an average of 2,768 recipients per newsletter (average open rate: 20.5 %). In addition, FEBA circulated eight internal newsletters to an average of 630 recipients (average open rate: 37.3 %); eight emails relating to events (average open rate: 26 %); nine information e-mails (average open rate: 26 %); four press releases (average open rate: 28 %). In addition, FEBA created and published two different videos: one about the role of the European Food Banks Federation, and a second one entitled 'Food donation is the best destination for the people, for the planet', which was made available in 19 different languages on a dedicated playlist on the FEBA YouTube channel.

**European added value:** the financial support received from the European Commission allowed FEBA to continue implementing its activities even during the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought many unexpected changes and turbulence to the overall governance of the organisation. The funding helped to address the food emergency, in which an increased demand for food assistance was largely ignited by the pandemic.

**Sustainability measures:** FEBA is determined to catch up with the delay in the implementation of some activities foreseen for 2020, and to roll out its 2021 Work Programme to further strengthen and reinforce its network for the benefit of the most deprived in Europe, taking into consideration the current situation and therefore implementing activities using the support of technology and digital tools.

**Horizontal objectives:** the project addressed the fight against poverty and social exclusion by strengthening and reinforcing FEBA and its membership – in particular, through the following activities:

- Strengthening the governance (board of directors, general assembly, and president's conference) and the structure of the organisation, in order to define its Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and professionalise its activity;
- Developing the capacity building of its membership as regards EU-driven processes, through the reinforcement of the EU working group of representatives from the FEBA membership, focusing on EU topics;
- Providing concrete support to the network in relation to all of the challenges faced by food banks after the outbreak of COVID-19;
- Improving the internal and external dissemination of communication, as well as implementing digital tools.

#### 4.10. BRIDGES Year 3 Better Results for Inclusion of Disadvantaged – Good practice and policy from European Services



*'Social services – in particular, services addressed at people with disabilities – should be considered essential services under all funding programmes addressed towards helping with the consequences of COVID-19.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0034
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0045
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care;</li> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Service providers and social service professionals;</li> <li>• General public.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a briefing paper, 'COVID-19 and Mental Health: Delivering Mental Health Services Under the pandemic';</li> <li>• Conducted a study on 'Quality Services for Social Inclusion: Mapping Quality Regulations, Requirements and Trends in Vocational Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities';</li> <li>• Published a report 'From Care to Employment: A Short Study on Programmes Supporting Return-To-Work';</li> <li>• Organised three study day events focusing on topics such as (1) services on social inclusion and early intervention for children; (2) homecare and community-based services; and (3) technology for social inclusion;</li> <li>• Organised two webinars to raise awareness about the most useful funding programmes in the disability sector;</li> <li>• Organised three awareness-raising events focusing on topics such as the active inclusion of persons with disabilities and quality services for social inclusion;</li> <li>• Held an annual conference, 'Embracing Digital Transformation: Inspiration and Innovation for Quality Services'.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-

Coordinator	EPR – European Platform for Rehabilitation
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 157,862.30
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.epr.eu">www.epr.eu</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the activities of the European Platform for Rehabilitation go beyond traditional mutual learning exchanges. Professionals from EPR member organisations gather to benchmark and analyse effectiveness in service provision. EPR also aims to improve the quality of services and quality of life for clients, as well as positively impacting their daily work experience. In addition, EPR members co-create and pilot innovative products, tools and methods to better meet the needs of clients, employers and funders. For the period 2018-2021, the organisation set four strategic priorities:

- To provide and facilitate valuable learning and development opportunities for members;
- To equip members to address trends impacting service delivery;
- To grow the network of EPR;
- To contribute to policy discussions based on members' expertise.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** in 2020, the European Platform for Rehabilitation set the following objectives:

- To increase the number of members in the organisation, and boost engagement in strategic partnerships with other NGO networks;
- To produce two studies on the quality of services and on services that support the transition from rehabilitation to employment;
- To engage national and local actors in understanding and implementing EU policy objectives, and to facilitate improvements in service through in-depth benchlearning activities, the publication of good practices, and capacity-building sessions on EU policies and funding opportunities;
- To organise three wide-reaching national awareness-raising events;
- To grow and improve the EPR's communication strategy.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** as a starting point, the EPR conducted a study on active inclusion from care to employment. The study analysed good practices, focusing on the transition from care to employment. These practices were gathered from EPR members, related to the return to work. The study was combined with the process for deciding the winner of the EPR prize. As part of the study, recommendations were provided that focused on improving legislation and possible government support actions to facilitate the active inclusion of persons with disabilities into the labour market. On 2 December 2020, the EPR held an online public affairs event at which the findings of the study, as well as good practices in the transition from care to employment, were presented to a wider audience. The public affairs event also included the awarding of the EPR Prize, which was won a Belgian EPR member, GTB, for its 'We Go to Work' outreach services for people inactive due to a disability and / or health problem.

In partnership with a broad alliance of EU organisations for not-for-profit social service providers, a seminar was held on investment needs and opportunities for social services. The seminar was aimed at identifying investment needs to deliver accessible, affordable and high-quality social services in line with the ambitions set in the European Pillar of Social Rights.



As planned, the EPR engaged in joint work with Social Services Europe, and participated in board meetings and in general working group meetings. The EPR co-organised the Social Services Europe event 'Do Social Services Matter for EU?' at the European Parliament, which launched a report co-funded under the previous year's grant, 'Third-Country Social and Care Service Professionals: Unlocking the Job Creation potential of Social Services'. The event brought together EU policy makers, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

The EPR also contributed to a joint statement by the Alliance for Mental Health and Work called 'Mental health in the eye of the COVID-19 hurricane'. The statement focused on and highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, and included recommendations to prevent mental health issues. In addition, the EPR contributed to a joint statement on the review of the GBER Regulation, which specifically focuses on legislation in relation to state aid.

The organisation successfully delivered two webinars to update its members on EU policy initiatives and develop recommendations, based on EPR members' expertise, to enrich EU decision-making processes.

The EPR also produced an analytical report on digital skills for service providers. This offered a review of digital tools that could help to save resources, achieve a higher quality of services and support efficient management and organisational functioning.

In 2020, the EPR held an online annual conference, 'Embracing Digital Transformation: Inspiration and Innovation for Quality Services'. The conference alternated plenary sessions with four workshops in small groups, dedicated to more specific topics (Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality in Training and Employment, Crowdsourcing through Hackathons, Assistive Technology and Digital Skills). In these workshops, good practice examples were discussed, and stakeholders worked together on innovative skills for users and staff. Innovation in service provision, care and management was also addressed. The conference had 22 speakers, and was attended by 90 participants.

In addition, the EPR has worked with external researchers and members to gather information on regulations and quality requirements for the provision of a selection of social services. The researchers consulted service providers and regulators in eight selected countries and conducted desk research. As a result, a comparative report was produced that provided an overview of the challenges and developments in the field of vocational rehabilitation, as well as conclusions and recommendations. Its findings are useful for policy makers to understand what works well in ensuring quality services, and what needs to be prioritised.

The EPR also organised three study day events focusing on topics such as services for social inclusion and early intervention for children; homecare and community-based services; and technology for social inclusion. Initially, these events were planned to be held in person but due to COVID-19, the meetings took place online.

Many activities were also carried out by two EPR working groups – the Mental Health Taskforce and the Innovation Taskforce. The former developed and gathered innovative resources for service providers in relation to mental health and well-being, as well as on the return to employment. More specifically, these resources touched upon topics such as stress and anxiety, mindfulness, body intervention, training, community engagement and others. The Mental Health Taskforce also organised a public seminar with the aim of showcasing good practices in service delivery for people with mental health issues. The Innovation Taskforce discussed practices and



programmes that providers could use to support disadvantaged groups to develop digital skills and competences, and the impact that technological change has on end users.

As regards the Multi-Annual Financial Framework, the EPR organised two webinars to raise awareness of the most useful funding programmes in the disability sector. On 18 February 2020, EPR held a seminar dedicated to Erasmus Plus Key Action 1, to discuss mobility projects, and share objectives and the needs of EPR members. Another seminar took place on 23 November. This focused on the new ESF+ programme, and aimed to increase knowledge about the ESF+ programme and assist members on how to successfully apply for funding through relevant calls for proposals.

Lastly, as planned, the EPR organised three awareness-raising events. Initially these were planned to take place in Germany, Sweden and Spain, but were instead held online. Two events focused on the active inclusion of persons with disabilities. The third awareness-raising event discussed quality services for social inclusion, and was organised in partnership with Slovenian EPR members.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the most sound analytical outputs produced by EPR were: (1) the briefing paper 'COVID-19 and Mental Health: Delivering Mental Health Services Under the Pandemic'; (2) the study 'Quality Services for Social Inclusion: Mapping Quality Regulations, Requirements and Trends in Vocational Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities'; and (3) the report 'From Care to Employment: A Short Study on Programmes Supporting Return-To-Work'. All of these analytical outputs can be found and accessed at the EPR website.

**Dissemination strategy:** the EPR reached a wider audience by disseminating its reports and analytical outputs via the organisation's website, e-Bulletins, social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), and its partner's websites (e.g. Social Services Europe). Publications and information about the EPR's public events were disseminated to a broad audience of stakeholders via e-mail using Mailchimp.

Information about mutual learning activities, exchanges and the sharing of good practices (including awareness-raising activities such as the online campaign organised within the framework of the 2020 Work Plan) have been publicised on the EPR website and knowledge hub and shared via social media channels and targeted e-mail campaigns. Information about training sessions, conferences and high-level events were disseminated to EPR members and partners via the website, social media, e-Bulletins and Newsletters. EPR members have also contributed to outreach activities at national and local levels by actively disseminating information regarding the national awareness-raising events of which they were co-organisers.

**European added value:** without EU funding, the EPR would not have been able to facilitate mutual learning activities and raise awareness about upcoming events. EU support also helped to engage experts to deliver high-quality activities, reports and studies, and to provide input for more sound EU policies.

**Sustainability measures:** the EPR will map its policy recommendations gathered in 2020 to ensure that as much detail as possible is provided in policy work. Based on its policy work of 2020, the EPR is committed to continuing to contribute proactively to EU policy initiatives where opportunities are identified. The EPR is also engaged in monitoring the development, launch and implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, both with its members and with Social Services Europe.

In addition, the EPR will further monitor the negotiations of the EU funding programmes and keep its members informed and updated about any changes from the initial funding structures.

The EPR also plans to focus on the employment of persons with disabilities after the COVID-19 pandemic, sharing expertise with the European Commission and project partners.

Lastly, the EPR aims to continue monitoring and supporting European policy initiatives, including through the provision of insights from the ground within the European Semester process.

**Horizontal objectives:** the EPR was founded on the principle of transnational mutual learning. All of its activities have a transnational dimension and involve organisations from across Europe. Through its activities, the organisation has addressed issues such as discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, and pushed for equality between men and women. It has done so via online campaigns on mental health, by engaging in consultation on the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, and through national awareness-raising events. In addition, the EPR has supported the fight against long-term unemployment and promoted high-quality, sustainable employment. With regard to the latter, the EPR was involved in awareness-raising events and workshops dedicated to inclusive job design and disability management, the quality of vocational rehabilitation, support for return-to-work policies, and mental well-being at work.

#### 4.11. Strengthening Action on Health and Social Equity in the EU – EuroHealthNet



*'In 2020, we focused specifically on the theme of sustainable and equitable health systems, as part of approaches to modernise social protection.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0038
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0031
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	Health care
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• National statistical offices;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed information and advocacy materials, including a policy brief, one factsheet, four policy guides, three joint statements, 12 news releases and two online magazines;</li> <li>• Participated in 302 events, meetings and conferences;</li> <li>• Provided evidence-based input to 24 policy consultations;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published a report, 'Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring health equity – the role of the European Semester', including seven country-specific fiches;</li> <li>Held a high-level virtual conference on 'Skills for Health: Up- and re-skilling for a sustainable recovery';</li> <li>Organised a plenary session on 'The Earth – A strategy for Survival' during the 16th World Congress on Public Health;</li> <li>Redeveloped the health-inequalities.eu portal, and launched the e-Guide for Financing Health Promoting Services;</li> <li>Implemented outreach activities in 13 countries;</li> <li>Established four new partnerships;</li> <li>Engaged in a proposal for a joint health programme, resulting in a new project on vaccine training and communication.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	EuroHealthNet
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 561,668.00
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.eurohealthnet.eu">www.eurohealthnet.eu</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** health, which is a state of physical, mental and social well-being, is a fundamental human right. Despite progress to date, large gaps remain within and between countries in life expectancy and the number of years spent in good health. Investments in public goods and services are lower than previously, and social protection systems are at risk of reduced standards. Demand for care is growing fast. Persistent health inequalities across Europe mean that new approaches are urgently needed.

Considerable evidence exists that investing in cross-sectoral policies results in numerous benefits for society and the economy. EuroHealthNet has therefore focused on the transformation of health systems to help modernise social protection and boost social innovation across sectors. Establishing the case and advocating for investment in health equity are key to enabling evidence-informed policy and action that benefit all people and lead to sustainable societies.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the organisation set several overarching priorities for the year 2020, which are as follows:

- Strengthening the design, implementation and dissemination of innovative policies and initiatives at EU and (sub)national level in the areas of social protection and inclusion, and in the reduction of poverty and inequality, in line with the EC's political guidelines, the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EPSR and the UN SDGs;
- Making lasting impacts by increasing capacities, competency, and knowledge among the partnership and stakeholders, as well as enabling the partnership to integrate cross-cutting issues into its daily work, while supporting the main EU-driven processes in the field of social protection and social inclusion;
- Contributing to better policy-making by improving the collective understanding of 'what works', and of innovative social investments trends, via effective communication and dissemination among politicians and policymakers, practitioners and researchers, at EU and (sub)national levels.
- Realise and expand a high-quality, effective and sustainable European partnership to promote health and social equity.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** EuroHealthNet successfully engaged in all relevant policy developments. These included the European Semester, the

development of an Action Plan for the EU Pillar of Social Rights, the emergence of the Recovery and Resilience Funds and the programmes of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF), including the ESF+. EuroHealthNet provided input on how these policy initiatives could be designed and applied to maximise their impact on health and well-being and to reduce health inequities across the EU. The organisation raised awareness among its members and broader stakeholders concerning new and / or relevant policies and tools and how they could be applied to address urgent, inter-related threats to health and social equity.

Another initiative undertaken by EuroHealthNet at the end of 2020 was a policy-practice dialogue to consult members and public health experts on how to make better use of Principle 16 of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its action plan, on access to health care. The meeting was organised to hear the views of a range of health stakeholders in the 'ecosystem', and increase ownership of this process and reflect real needs.

EuroHealthNet also provided input into 24 policy consultations organised by the European Commission and its advisory bodies. These included consultations on the EU Pact for Skills, tobacco taxes and the implementation of the Tobacco Products Directive, the European Commission's Green Paper on Ageing, the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the EU Occupational and Health Safety Framework, and the Organisation of Resilient Health and Social Care following the COVID-19 pandemic, to name a few.

Building on the EuroHealthNet ESIF Helpdesk function, the organisation offered knowledge and capacity-building guidance to its members, partners and relevant stakeholders as a core component of its work during 2020. EuroHealthNet achieved this in three main ways: through member briefings, through the launch of an interactive eGuide, 'Financing Health Promoting Services', and a series of capacity-building online workshops.

In addition, EuroHealthNet organised a series of members-only webinars that offered the opportunity to exchange and disseminate good practice examples in the area of health equity, to report on developments linked to the EU Green Deal, and to gather input for the public consultation on the EU Climate Pact.

At the end of 2020, EuroHealthNet organised a high-level conference on 'Skills for Health: Up- and Re-Skilling for a Sustainable Recovery' for members and other stakeholders from European, national and (sub)national levels. The speakers at the conference, along with its more than 200 participants, examined three aspects of skills for health: (1) changes to the world of work and new skills needed; (2) skills for good health and well-being; and (3) skills for tomorrow's health and care systems.

EuroHealthNet's communication network continued to improve exchanges of information between partnership members, and to help partners express their interests and concerns about communication efforts at international level. It also strengthened the flow of information between European institutions and national / regional agencies. In 2020, 10 issues of the newsletter 'Health Highlights' were sent out to the wider audience. The number of subscriptions grew from 6,600 in 2019 to 8,000 in 2020. Throughout 2020, EuroHealthNet promoted the active use and consultation of EuroHealthNet websites<sup>51</sup> via continuous updates and content management. In addition, EuroHealthNet spent most of 2020 re-developing the

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www.eurohealthnet.eu/>

[www.health-inequalities.eu](http://www.health-inequalities.eu) website, and continued to operate [www.healthyageing.eu](http://www.healthyageing.eu), which contains resources about active and healthy ageing.

EuroHealthNet's online presence was enhanced and complemented by social media pages on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, where EuroHealthNet engages with a wider audience of stakeholders, members and non-members. To complement its daily social media engagement, the organisation published two editions of the EuroHealthNet Online Magazine, which offered an in-depth look at the most interesting projects and practices in the field of health equity, public health and health promotion in Europe.

In 2020, the General Council Meeting – an important annual event that brings together all of EuroHealthNet's members – was held in June. It was the first time the General Council Meeting had been held virtually, due to the travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting provided EuroHealthNet's membership with the opportunity to discuss its vital role in contributing to a healthier and more equitable EU, and to discuss ways to support EU plans to make health promotion and disease prevention more of a priority. A new executive board was also elected during the General Council Meeting, which reflected widening experiences, backgrounds and knowledge as well as expanding geographical and gender diversities in accordance with the ethos and aims of EuroHealthNet.

EuroHealthNet members, with support from the Brussels office, continued to further develop the thematic working group (TWIG) on best practice portals, established in 2019. TWIG has successfully (1) prepared a workshop for the World Congress on Public Health; (2) co-organised a series of focus groups with Maastricht University and EuroHealthNet member BZgA, which explored criteria for evaluating the transferability of best practices using a conceptual process PIET-T; and (3) engaged in liaison activities with the European Commission, specifically the JRC and DG SANTE, to explore and increase interlinkages between national and EU best practice portals. Lastly, the working group began a comparative analysis of participating national portals to publish the final results in a scientific journal.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** EuroHealthNet produced policy guides and other documentation throughout the year, to mobilise members and partners to support the implementation of EU policy processes at national, regional and local levels. Topics included the EU's data and AI strategies, the Farm to Fork strategy, and the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. In addition, to further raise awareness around changes in the European Semester, EuroHealthNet produced a rapid brief about the ties between European Semester and the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

**New partnerships created:** EuroHealthNet successfully established four new partnerships. The four organisations joining EuroHealthNet were: (1) the National Institute of Health for Italy; (2) the National Federation of Nursing Professionals for Italy (FNOPI); (3) the Luxembourg Institute of Socioeconomic Research (LISER); and (4) Association Pianoterra, based in Naples, which supports vulnerable families.

**Dissemination strategy:** all of the reports produced by EuroHealthNet have been disseminated to members, partners, decision-makers and policymakers at EU and (sub)national levels, as well as wider stakeholders. Most documents were sent electronically to the relevant target audiences. The EuroHealthNet CiviCRM database is updated regularly, and currently contains around 19,500 contacts. Reports are also published on the EuroHealthNet website. They are also added, as appropriate, to other websites managed by EuroHealthNet, such as [healthyageing.eu](http://healthyageing.eu) and [health-inequalities.eu](http://health-inequalities.eu). A total of 263 articles and updates were included on the EuroHealthNet website (including the EuroHealthNet Online Magazine) during 2020.

Where appropriate, printed copies of reports were distributed at EuroHealthNet events and were available from the reception of the EuroHealthNet office. EuroHealthNet adapted to changed conditions by making all of its materials more digital-friendly, such as issuing an online-only annual report and adding more links into briefing documents and other informational materials.

Calls and Opportunities Alerts were sent to members, and remained available in a members-only section of the website. Information about EuroHealthNet reports and activities was published in a widely distributed newsletter (Health Highlights). This newsletter includes news from members and partners, from the European institutions and other EU bodies, as well as international news. In 2020, EuroHealthNet staff spoke and moderated at 63 events.

The EuroHealthNet Online Magazine complemented the regular social media updates by providing in-depth biannual insights on developments in the field of health equity and health promotion in Europe. EuroHealthNet also experienced an overall increase in engagement through its social media channels.

**European added value:** EuroHealthNet's steps forward towards tackling social and health inequalities in 2020 would not have happened without support from the EaSI Programme, which provided the organisation with invaluable support to strengthen its policies, practices, evidence-based activities and overall governance.

**Sustainability measures:** EuroHealthNet looks forward to continuing its activities in 2021 and beyond by expanding current conceptions of what it means to implement the Action Plan of the European Pillar on Social Rights; taking forward the EU Child Guarantee in the Member States; building a 'European Health Union' and helping to shape the 'Future of Europe'. EuroHealthNet will continue to build leadership and capacities among its partnerships, to encourage prevention and promotion as well as community-based and integrated health care models. EuroHealthNet will explore and support the reforms needed to strengthen health and social systems, engaging specifically with the EU Skills and Digital Agenda and efforts to end child poverty. The organisation will also work to encourage and enable policymakers and practitioners at EU and (sub)national levels to take up other effective tools and methods to encourage collaboration and overcome siloed thinking. EuroHealthNet will also continue to identify and promote the best ways to catalyse change; to improve health and well-being, and reduce inequities across the EU; to contribute to the process of transitioning towards more resilient, fairer and more sustainable societies and to Economies of Wellbeing of the future.

**Horizontal objectives:** EuroHealthNet work has directly contributed to the promotion of adequate and decent social protection for all. It has done so by engaging in various activities spanning from communication, monitoring and capacity-building actions to the development of recommendations for improvements at regional, national, European and international levels in relation to health equity and the social determinants of health.



#### 4.12. (Re)connect – EU4you



*'EASPD will continue to use its internal and external expertise to build knowledge on delivering quality services for persons with disabilities.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0039
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0021
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment;</li> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Employment services;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Media;</li> <li>• Service providers for persons with disabilities;</li> <li>• General public.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered a study on 'How to improve working conditions for social service providers'; a report on 'Community-based living for persons with psychological disabilities and addictions'; a report on 'Access to health services for persons with disabilities, and a report on 'Disability Support Services in Non-EU Countries: Needs and Trends';</li> <li>• EASPD produced a study on 'Alternatives to Public Procurement';</li> <li>• Held two online EASPD annual conferences;</li> <li>• Developed a toolkit 'Need EU Money? Engage Now to Benefit Later';</li> <li>• Organised two webinars on EU funding mechanisms;</li> <li>• Provided inputs on EU funds and financing instruments;</li> <li>• Organised its first-ever 'Social Services Week', attended by over 500 participants;</li> <li>• Launched the social media campaign #WeAreEssentialServices with other EU organisations representing social service providers.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	Member countries
Coordinator	EASPD – European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
Partners	Members of EASPD
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 781,803.66
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.easpd.eu">www.easpd.eu</a>



**Socioeconomic context:** the EASPD is a non-profit organisation working in the disability sector. The organisation promotes the views of over 17,000 social services and their umbrella associations. The activities of the organisation are driven by the idea that support services play a key role in enabling people to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis, beyond disability. The overarching objectives of EASPD are to support the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to provide high-quality and user-centric services running in an accountable, efficient and effective way, as well as to promote fair conditions and lifelong learning opportunities for staff employed in these services.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** the action (Re)connect: EU4you supports the implementation of EASPD's strategy 2018-2021, 'Commit! Delivering the support services of Tomorrow'. It aims to improve connection and understanding between the EU level and the grassroots level through various activities foreseen in the 2020 Work Programme. The EASPD has set the following main objectives:

- To build capacity and engagement among EASPD members on EU policies: the European Semester (ES), the EU Investment Plan, and the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR);
- To raise awareness on the economic added value of social and disability services;
- To continue research on human resources, focusing on aspects critical to unlocking the sector's job creation potential;
- To strengthen the capacity of social services to innovate and reform through knowledge sharing, peer learning and access to EU funding and financial instruments;
- To remove barriers, and increase digital competences and access to assistive technologies to maximise the potential of ICT in high-quality services;
- To help unlock the employment of persons with disabilities through stronger cooperation with mainstream stakeholders, as well as campaigning and the exchange of promising practices;
- To put user involvement into practice by implementing the European Disability Strategy (EDS) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) through the Taskforce on Support Services of Tomorrow and the development of co-production know-how;
- To accelerate inclusive service provision in education, employment, ICT / AT, migration, social housing sector, health and long-term care through co-operation with EU / international networks, network building with mainstream partners and peer learning, as building blocks of the Economy of Well-being;
- To build a systematic approach towards inclusive communities through cooperation between academia, practitioners and civil society via the European Research Platform on Inclusive Community Planning and Service Development (EURECO), the ENTELIS Network, and IASSID;
- To improve communication via the EASPD website, social media and targeted dissemination channels;
- To provide more tailored information to members about EU funding opportunities and processes, as well as tools for project management;
- To provide a space to exchange information and share good practices on high-quality support services via the EASPD e-learning hub (D-LoT - Disability Leaders of Tomorrow).
- To involve member organisations in EASPD's agenda to voice their concerns, unlock know-how and generate engagement.
- To gain new members and enter into new partnerships to strengthen the network and better represent the sector's diversity.

- To reinforce the capacity of the secretariat to better react to new policy developments.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the EASPD developed one report on the European Semester, focusing on long-term care and early childhood interventions, as well as a briefing on the Country-Specific Recommendations 2020. In September, the organisation also organised a policy webinar on grassroots challenges in relation to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, three years after its adoption. In addition, the EASPD organised online 'policy café' events allowing members to discuss the implementation of the EPSR.

With regard to the Multiannual Financial Framework, the EASPD developed a toolkit entitled 'Need EU Money? Engage Now to Benefit Later'; organised two webinars on EU funding mechanisms; suggested amendments to REACT EU; provided a briefing paper on the Recovery and Resilience Facility following the AGS 2020; carried out an analysis of Council Conclusions on the EU Recovery Plan; and published a briefing on examples of ESIF projects 2014-2020, and a press release on the Next MFF and Recovery Plan.

The EASPD also provided inputs on EU funds and financing instruments. In relation to this, the organisation developed (1) a toolkit on accessing EU funds and related activities; (2) an overview of COVID-19 funding needs in social services; (3) a proposal for a coordinated action on social services; and (4) a helpdesk on access to EU funds. In addition, the EASPD organised a social summit, 'Social Services and COVID-19: what role for the EU?'

The EASPD also organised a webinar on challenges in disability service provision in rural areas during the COVID-19 pandemic, and developed a briefing paper on the European Commission Report on the Impact of Demographic Change.

In 2020, the EASPD organised its first-ever 'Social Services Week' including seven events, which was attended by over 500 participants. The week-long programme focused on issues such as the planning of social services at local level, inclusive education, and personal and household services. The event echoed concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted and reaffirmed the need to strengthen the disability service system by building on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In addition, the EASPD organised an online Balkan Provider Forum to support disability service organisations in the region. In July 2020, the annual Bulgarian Provider Forum took place and focused on inclusive employment for persons with disabilities.

The EASPD also focused on inclusive education by organising an online seminar to discuss the importance of co-production in inclusive education. The event brought together over 120 participants including EU policymakers, representatives of persons with disabilities, their families and support service providers, to discuss how the EU can promote the realisation of inclusive education for learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the EASPD Member Forum on Education produced an 'EASPD Barometer of Inclusive Education in Selected European Countries 2020', gathering together information on the state of play of inclusive education in 12 countries (Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Belgium, Finland, France, Albania, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Iceland and Portugal).

During 2020, the EASPD was keen to strengthen cooperation with actors engaged in the development of assistive technologies. Thus, it participated in numerous meetings, conferences and discussions with organisations active in the field of ICT/AT.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two foreseen EASPD annual conferences were held online. The first annual conference, 'The Road to Employment for Persons with Disabilities', brought together 450 participants to share the latest promising practices in the sector. The second, 'The Art of Inclusion – Disability and Diversity in Arts and Culture', was attended by more than 660 participants, bringing together advocates, experts, policy makers and practitioners in the field of inclusion, differing abilities, arts and culture. The conference discussed synergies and cooperation between the arts and cultural sector and disability service providers and artists with disabilities, and how they form innovative and inclusive opportunities that are open to all at local, national and European level. .

In June, in cooperation with other EU organisations representing social service providers, the EASPD launched a social media campaign using the hashtags #WeAreEssentialServices #SocialServicesAreEssentialServices. The campaign aimed to keep social services issues and access high on the EU agenda by raising awareness of the major challenges affecting social services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the EASPD produced a study on 'Alternatives to Public Procurement'. This also includes eight country factsheets on social care and support services sector for persons with disabilities, focusing on neighbouring countries as well as a survey of members on capacity-building needs for social impact finance. In addition, the EASPD released reports entitled 'Green Deal: what opportunities for support services?' and 'How to implement the EU Green Deal in the social sector: report on strategy development'.

In addition, the EASPD produced (1) a report entitled 'Community-based living for persons with psychological disabilities and addictions'; (2) a report on 'Access to health services for persons with disabilities'; and (3) a report on 'Disability Support Services in Non-EU Countries: Needs and Trends', which provided an overview of the current support service sector in Albania, Armenia, Moldova, North Macedonia and Turkey. The last of these reports also proposed a number of key recommendations at national and EU levels to promote the delivery of human rights-based support and care services for persons with disabilities and contribute to the full implementation of the UNCRPD in these countries.

Furthermore, the EASPD delivered a study on 'How to improve working conditions for social service providers. The scope of this study included an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the support services sector, including its impact on the workforce, on the organisations providing services, as well as on the services themselves.

**Dissemination strategy:** the EASPD ensures that its members, partners and stakeholders are informed about new policies and legal frameworks developed at European level. EASPD communication strategy consists of disseminating information via a dedicated website<sup>52</sup>, an e-learning hub<sup>53</sup> and newsletters, as well as producing video materials, press releases and communicating via social media channels.

During the year 2020, the EASPD website received 178,923 page views and had 65,041 website users. The EASPD's e-learning hub works as a platform for training

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.easpd.eu/>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.dlot.eu/>

and knowledge sharing through Massive Open Online Courses and via online forums in which discussions are initiated on a regular basis. As regards newsletters, in 2020 the EASPD successfully issued 23 newsletters in English, French, Spanish, Bulgarian and German, which were sent out to 2,200 stakeholders including EASPD members, SMEs, media representatives, civil servants, research and education centres, and universities.

In 2020, the EASPD produced 22 'Video Flashes' to improve communication with social service providers. These were created to report the latest developments on EU policies and to inform about planned and ongoing projects and initiatives in the thematic field of disability. In addition, the EASPD published 29 press releases and posted updates on its Facebook and Twitter accounts, YouTube channel and LinkedIn page.

**Sustainability measures:** the EASPD will continue to use its internal and external expertise to build knowledge on delivering quality services for persons with disabilities. The EASPD also plans to further develop its research and innovation capacities. Moreover, the organisation anticipates further focusing on staff training and recruitment strategies for a high-quality care workforce. As a priority, the EASPD will promote the development of a coherent European quality assurance system for services using technological solutions, as well as the development of policies that incentivise statutory and non-statutory bodies to facilitate the deployment of technology-based solutions to support citizens and clients. The organisation is also keen to continue its involvement in the Early Childhood Education and Care EC Working Group, and its work on investment in children in the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework. The EASPD will also further showcase models of support in employment for persons with disabilities through its cooperation with the EASPD Standing Committee on employment, as well as its cooperation with the Observatory on Social Economy Enterprises and the Inclusive Labour Market Alliance.

With regard to monitoring activities, the EASPD will continue to monitor the development of the Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Just Transition Fund programmes. In addition, the organisation will strengthen its work on the European Semester and the European Pillar of Social Rights as key tools through which national debates can be addressed.

An important activity for the EASPD will be to support the effective implementation of the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030, ensuring that support services are enablers of change allowing persons with support needs to participate in society and in the labour market.

**Horizontal objectives:** the EASPD addressed the issue of youth employment by promoting high-quality, sustainable employment as part of its work on inclusive labour markets, social enterprises and the development of the social care workforce. The organisation's activities are also oriented towards fighting poverty and social exclusion, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, as well as combatting discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups. As part of its work to advocate for equality between women and men, the EASPD is committed to promoting work-life balance and gender-responsive services. Lastly, as a wide EU network, the EASPD's work has a transnational dimension that allows for the exchange of experiences and know-how between countries.

#### 4.13. CECOP - EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation



*'This action allows us to support the involvement of members in the dissemination and implementation of the EPSR, and to strengthen CECOP's capacity by possibly enlarging its membership.'*

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0040
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0060
Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Legal and regulatory framework for the social economy
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>Non-governmental organisations.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A European conference on cooperatives' contribution to quality employment for people in non-standard employment;</li> <li>A workshop on major EU social policies and their impact on cooperatives and social enterprises in Poland;</li> <li>Research on cooperatives' contribution to the transition from the informal to the formal economy and employment;</li> <li>A publication on the impact of the Social Business Initiative on legal frameworks regulating social enterprises;</li> <li>Creation of a database (toolkit) measuring cooperatives' contribution to the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups;</li> <li>A mutual learning session on cooperative initiatives supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship in France;</li> <li>Follow-up to the 2019 mutual learning session on cooperatives' response to non-standard workers' needs;</li> <li>An e-bulletin on major EU social policies and initiatives that could have an impact on cooperatives and other social economy enterprises.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	Member countries
Coordinator	CECOP – European Confederation of Industrial and Service Cooperatives
Partners	CECOP members
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 145,214.60
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="https://cecop.coop/">https://cecop.coop/</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** CECOP is the European confederation of industrial and service cooperatives. Members of the organisation are national federations of cooperatives and organisations that promote cooperatives. The organisation represents 25 members in 16 European countries. CECOP aims to create a supportive

environment for cooperatives so that they can operate to their full strength and fulfil their mission of providing sustainable jobs and high-quality services to communities.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** with the financial support received from the Commission, the action set eight main objectives:

- To collect information about non-standard forms of employment across the EU, and analyse how cooperatives can contribute to ensuring quality employment and access to social protection, in order to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) – mainly principles such as secure and adaptable employment and the right to social protection;
- To provide the European Commission (EC) with an evidence base on the impact of different employment policies across the EU on non-standard workers and their access to social protection, so as to contribute to better EU policy-making in that field;
- To support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the initiative undertaken towards the policy objective of the Social Business Initiative (SBI), particularly one of its key actions: improving the legal environment for social enterprises;
- To strengthen the capacity of CECOP's national members with regard to data collection and the measurement of social impact, in order to support the monitoring of the major EU initiatives in the field of social inclusion and poverty reduction in the EU (EU 2020 Strategy, 2030 Agenda);
- To support the involvement of CECOP's Polish member organisation (and indirectly, other Polish social economy stakeholders) in the dissemination and implementation of the EPSR in cooperation with national, regional and local levels;
- To involve CECOP's member organisations in the implementation of the European Semester to achieve the EU2020 objectives (mainly employment and poverty targets);
- To disseminate the main EU social policies and initiatives and ensure CECOP's members and other interested stakeholders can be better informed and make better use of the various EU funds;
- To strengthen CECOP's capacity by possibly enlarging its membership to Germany.

**Results and impacts:** the organisation successfully organised two public events: (1) a European conference on cooperatives' contribution to employment for people in non-standard employment, and (2) a workshop on major EU social policies and their impact on cooperatives and social enterprises, co-organised with Polish member and addressing the implementation of the EPSR by the Polish government and its impact on cooperatives and the social economy.

CECOP also carried out three analytical activities: (1) a study on cooperatives' contribution to the transition from the informal to the formal economy and employment; (2) a publication on the analysis of the impact of the Social Business Initiative on legal frameworks regulating social enterprises, including cooperatives across EU, providing guidance to members and other stakeholders from countries without legal frameworks for social enterprises; and (3) a database measuring cooperatives' contribution to the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Furthermore, CECOP helped to build competencies and better promote the organisation's objectives. A mutual learning session was held in France, focusing on cooperative initiatives to support youth employment and entrepreneurship. Follow-up to the 2019 mutual learning session on cooperatives' response to non-standard workers' needs also took place in Denmark and Belgium.



CECOP also created an e-bulletin on major EU social policies and initiatives that could have an impact on cooperatives and other social enterprises.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial study visit to Germany to discuss possible new membership was postponed. Instead, CECOP focused on preliminary desk research in preparation for an onsite visit which was foreseen for 2021.

**Lessons learned:** CECOP has concluded that cooperatives are still not given enough attention in EU employment policies, particularly as a possible solution to non-standard work. In addition, CECOP stressed the importance of promoting worker-owned cooperatives as a solution to issues relating to platform work, as they aim to protect platform workers and provide them with decent working conditions.

These activities also highlighted the fact that the cooperative business model is still poorly understood by young entrepreneurs and professionals; thus, it is crucial to raise awareness and further promote cooperatives among various EU networks and policy/decision-makers.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** CECOP published a publication, 'Social enterprises Laws in Europe after 2011 Social Business Initiative', which was uploaded to the organisation's website and shared via social media channels. Other policy evidence consisted of a toolkit measuring the social impact of industrial and service cooperatives, and a report on the outcomes of the mutual learning sessions on youth employment and entrepreneurship.

**Dissemination strategy:** the conference 'All for One' was promoted to national and EU policymakers, EU networks, CECOP members, partners, academia and social partners, and was information about it was disseminated via the organisation's website, an e-mail campaign and a month-long social media campaign (Twitter and Facebook). CECOP's publication on the Social Business Initiative was promoted to national and EU policymakers, CECOP members and EU networks. CECOP also created its e-bulletin, which is a newsletter dedicated to members and other actors involved in the social economy. The newsletter was disseminated via an e-mail campaign.

**European added value:** the funding received from the European Commission allowed CECOP to deepen its knowledge and to benefit from external expertise on specific topics. With the support from the EU, particular attention was given to social inclusion and quality employment. The funding received also made it possible to better position CECOP's advocacy activities within very specific themes of the EU agenda such as platform work.

CECOP has successfully provided the European Commission with inputs on policy design relating to employment and social inclusion policies and recommendations on the legal framework for social enterprises. In addition, the EaSI partnership allowed great synergies and collaboration with other networks active in the fields of employment and social protection and inclusion.

**Sustainability measures:** CECOP will continue to better engage with the European Commission and EU-wide networks active in the area of social economy, and to promote EU employment and social inclusion-related policies relevant to cooperatives and the social economy. One of the main activities foreseen is to raise awareness and increase knowledge about CECOP and cooperatives in countries where CECOP is not yet present.



**Horizontal objectives:** activities implemented through the action also addressed the issue of youth employment. More precisely, they focused on how cooperatives can contribute to supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship by sharing knowledge, tools and good practice examples among members of the organisation and the wider audience. Also, CECOP paid particular attention to the fight against social exclusion and poverty by addressing issues of non-standard and informal work, which directly affect household income.

In addition, the organisation produced a database for members to look for tools used by different cooperatives to measure their social impact on inclusion, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups.

#### 4.14. EAPN 2020 Work Programme



### EUROPEAN ANTI POVERTY NETWORK

Call identification number	VP/2019/013/0043
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0055
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social protection;</li> <li>• Social inclusion.</li> </ul>
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing exclusion and homelessness;</li> <li>• Child and youth poverty;</li> <li>• Social exclusion.</li> </ul>
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, regional and local authorities;</li> <li>• Social partners;</li> <li>• Non-governmental organisations;</li> <li>• Higher education institutions and research institutes;</li> <li>• Media.</li> </ul>
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produced 31 Poverty Watch reports;</li> <li>• Sent five official advocacy letters;</li> <li>• Organised events with the participation of representatives of the European Commission, the German European Council Presidency and the European Parliament;</li> <li>• Participated in a meeting with the Commissioner for Trade, Valdis Dombrovskis;</li> <li>• Contributed and provided input to EC public consultations;</li> <li>• Organised the EAPN's Annual Policy Conference 2020 'How to ensure the poor don't pay for COVID-19 – from short-term response to an effective rights-based integrated anti-poverty strategy';</li> <li>• Produced numerous reports, studies and position papers.</li> </ul>
Implementation country(-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-

Coordinator	European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN)
Partners	-
EU contribution	(initial) EUR 999,173.29
Project duration	1 January 2020 – 31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	<a href="http://www.eapn.eu">www.eapn.eu</a>

**Socioeconomic context:** the mission of the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) is to promote and enhance the effectiveness of actions to eradicate poverty and to prevent social exclusion; to raise awareness around poverty and social exclusion; to empower people living in poverty and social exclusion; and to lobby for and with people and groups facing poverty and social exclusion. The EAPN includes the objectives of gender equality and non-discrimination in all of its areas of work.

**Aims of the project/organisation:** in 2020, EAPN set six main objectives:

- To implement the findings of its strategic review at the European and national level;
- To ensure political prioritisation of the fight against poverty and social exclusion and the recognition of the importance of the participation of people experiencing poverty, and of organisations which represent them;
- To carry out joint advocacy at national and European level to ensure the adoption of a social and sustainable post-2020 strategy;
- To facilitate strong engagement in the European Semester 2020 and to follow up on the implementation of the EPSR to ensure progress on poverty, social rights and meaningful participation in civil society;
- To diversify EAPN funding by 20%;
- To implement the recommendations of the EAPN COMM'ON Group through the network.

**Results, impacts and lessons learned:** the EAPN successfully strengthened shared ownership of the organisation's improved strategic objectives, essential to the implementation of EAPN's strategic priorities and underpinning activities.

In 2020, EAPN produced 31 Poverty Watch reports. Poverty Watch Reports are designed as a tool to serve the national networks in their own languages; to monitor key trends in poverty and social exclusion; to inform about the main policy measures; to highlight the realities for those facing poverty; and to elaborate recommendations to policymakers.

The organisation also developed and disseminated key publications in the context of the European Semester, the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the Green Deal and the Just Transition. The EAPN engaged with European institutions through (1) five advocacy letters; (2) organising events with the participation of representatives from the European Commission, the German European Council Presidency and the European parliament; (3) meeting with the Commissioner for Trade, Valdis Dombrovskis, and participating in EU events; and (4) contributing to EC consultations.

Worth mentioning is the EAPN's Annual Policy Conference 2020, 'How to ensure the poor don't pay for COVID-19 – from short-term response to an effective rights-based integrated anti-poverty strategy'. This conference focused on ensuring that short-term responses feed into an effective long-term rights-based EU strategy to fight poverty. During the conference, the findings were also presented of the study 'The impact of the crisis on people experiencing poverty and the efficacy of the measures being taken'.

The EAPN was also involved in alliances (Social Platform, Right to Energy Coalition and Investing in Children Alliance) advocating for a Post-2020 Strategy. The organisation participated in a joint advocacy campaign for a Framework Directive on Minimum Income. The EAPN also joined two workshops, 'Towards a fair energy transition: enabling vulnerable consumers to take part in energy communities' and 'Who pays and who benefits in the energy transition?'. The organisation also engaged in the EDF webinar 'Poverty and social exclusion of persons with disabilities'.

With regard to the European Semester, the EAPN organised the webinar 'How can we strengthen and make more effective EAPN's engagement in the European Semester?'. This webinar took place on 19 November, and was open to national networks and European organisations.

To implement the recommendations of the COMM'ON group, the EAPN strengthened ownership of the COMM'ON Guidelines. It also organised two training sessions on 'Plain Language' and 'Frames and Narratives' with the National Adult Literacy Agency and the Frameworks Institute.

**Policy evidence generated by the project:** the most significant analytical outputs produced by EAPN were: (1) the Poverty Watch reports 2020; (2) the EU Synthesis Report; (3) the EAPN's 'Expert study on a binding EU Framework on adequate national minimum income scheme'; (4) the EAPN survey and report on the COVID-19 pandemic; (5) the EAPN 'Reflection Paper with Key Messages on European Green Deal and Just Transition'; (6) the EAPN assessment of the 2020 Country-Specific Recommendations, with a country annex; (7) the EAPN Assessment Report on the Country Reports with Proposals for Alternative CSRs; (8) the report 'Nobody Left Behind – preventing and reducing poverty through education, training and lifelong learning'. The EAPN also produced a toolkit for NGOs engaging in the European Semester 2020. All of these analytical outputs and more can be found at the EAPN's website<sup>54</sup>.

**Dissemination strategy:** an average of 709 subscribers received the 'EAPN Flash' newsletters, which included internal documents. Within EAPN's contact lists, the organisation created five target groups to be sent tailored emails (newsletters, specific outputs and events, press, members and PeP stakeholders) The total number of people who subscribed to receive information relating to the organisation's activities reached 2,648 by the end of 2020. EAPN also made use of Facebook (8,212 followers), Twitter (4,445 followers), LinkedIn (2,038 followers) and Instagram (338 followers).

To reach wider audiences and raise awareness of EAPN's work, the organisation used official letters, reports, video material and capacity-building events. In addition, EAPN publications were also advertised on the websites of members and partners.

**Sustainability measures:** the EAPN will continue to engage actively with the leadership of the EU in 2021 to achieve concrete results in the fight against poverty and for social rights and better participation, including with the intergroups on Poverty and the Green Deal.

The EAPN will also continue to provide a regular, structured grassroots analysis of current key policy developments impacting poverty and inequality, based on and involving people experiencing poverty and their organisations, highlighting priorities, good practices and life stories, and producing key messages and recommendations to inform national and EU-level policymaking. The EAPN will continue to carry out joint

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<sup>54</sup> [www.eapn.eu](http://www.eapn.eu)

advocacy at national and EU levels to ensure that Europe adopts a social and sustainable Green Deal that ends poverty and implements social rights.

**Horizontal objectives:** for EAPN, the fight against poverty and social exclusion is embedded in all of the organisation's activities. In addition, EAPN promotes equality between women and men through its internal gender mainstreaming policy, building a network-wide understanding and ownership of the value of gender equality. The EAPN also pursues the objective of non-discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in all areas of its work. For example, EAPN has released a statement on 'racial justice' and 'EAPN's key messages on the European Commission Action Plan Against Racism'. A race and diversity Group has also been created to take into account the principles of non-discrimination in the organisation's future planning.

## Afterword

This report provides a review of projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) that were completed in the period **1 March 2021 - 14 December 2021**. A total of 36 project and organisation fiches, which can be read as stand-alone documents, were produced by the research team and are presented in the report.

Analysing and disseminating information about the results of supported projects and organisations forms part of EaSI performance monitoring for 2014-2020. The programme's monitoring approach foresees biannual reports presenting projects and organisations supported by EaSI and its predecessor programme PROGRESS. This is the 14th such report. It follows the **first 13, issued between 2014 and 2020**.

It is expected that this report will be beneficial to public authorities in the Member States, civil society organisations and private actors in at least two ways. First, it will serve as guidance for public, private and civil society actors wishing to apply for EU funding in the future. Second, it will provide policymakers with ideas that can inform the design and implementation of new policy interventions in the policy areas covered.

In addition to these key aims, the results are expected to contribute to further EaSI monitoring and evaluation activities. The project and organisation fiches which have been developed also fed into the EaSI Performance Monitoring Report for 2019-2020. Lastly, the report team believes that the results will be useful for the evaluators of the programme.

## Annex I – List of projects and organisations in this report

No. in the report	Title of the project/organisation	Funding source	EU contribution in EUR (initial)	Website
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	Posting of workers – boosting transnational cooperation	EaSI-PROGRESS	421,890.28	<a href="http://www.efzg.unizg.hr/share">http://www.efzg.unizg.hr/share</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	ISA – Information Sharing Agreements. Building EU agreements for the posting of workers in the construction sector	EaSI-PROGRESS	425,090.00	<a href="http://www.isaproject.eu/">http://www.isaproject.eu/</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	SYNERGY – spreading the best practices in the implementation of EU law on posted workers	EaSI-PROGRESS	264,240.10	<a href="https://synergy-posted-workers.eu/en/main">https://synergy-posted-workers.eu/en/main</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	Tackling Undeclared Work in the Nordic Countries 2.0	EaSI-PROGRESS	674,640.00	<a href="http://www.av.se">www.av.se</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>	EaSI-PROGRESS	1,891,441.05	<a href="http://www.fabproject.eu">www.fabproject.eu</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	RIAC – Regional Integration Accelerators	EaSI-PROGRESS	2,027,203.14	<a href="http://www.offenbach.de">www.offenbach.de</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	FORWORK – Fostering Opportunities of Refugee WORKers	EaSI-PROGRESS	2,339,568.1	<a href="http://www.anpal.gov.it">www.anpal.gov.it</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	ALMIT – Acceleration of labour market integration of immigrants through mapping of skills and training	EaSI-PROGRESS	979,177.50	<a href="http://www.almit-project.eu">www.almit-project.eu</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>	EaSI-PROGRESS	1,368,322.80	<a href="https://www.comune.milano.it/">https://www.comune.milano.it/</a>

e not found				
Error! Reference source not found	EQW&L-Equality for Work and Life	EaSI-PROGRESS	862,014.73	<a href="http://www.anpal.gov.it">www.anpal.gov.it</a>
Error! Reference source not found	R.A.F.F.A.E.L.: Redesigning Activities in a Family Friendly wAy in VitErbo's workpLaces	EaSI-PROGRESS	1,300,000.00	<a href="http://www.provincia.viterbo.gov.it">www.provincia.viterbo.gov.it</a>
3.2.8.	Blueprints for basic skills development in Slovakia	EaSI-PROGRESS	308,080.00	<a href="http://www.zakladnezrucnosti.sk">www.zakladnezrucnosti.sk</a>
Error! Reference source not found	ESCO classification in the new Icelandic IT system	EaSI-EURES	282,042.69	-
3.3.2.	ESCO-mapping	EaSI-EURES	100,000.00	-
3.3.3.	EURES: ESCO under Regulation (EU) 2016/568, Article 19	EaSI-EURES	100,000.00	-
3.3.4.	A Data-Driven bridge towards ESCO using AI algorithms (AI4ESCO)	EaSI-EURES	64,613.39	-
3.3.5.	Mapping the ESCO: Croatia	EaSI-EURES	80,000.00	-
3.3.6.	Your first EURES job Germany	EaSI-EURES	4,430,692.00	-
3.3.7.	TMS Your first EURES job – YfEj 6.0	EaSI-EURES	4,643,199.84	<a href="http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu/">http://www.yourfirsteuresjob.eu/</a>
3.3.8.	Targeted Mobility Scheme - Your first EURES job	EaSI-EURES	5,034,122.06	-
3.4.1.	BIF – Belgian Investment Fund for Social Enterprises	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	579,982.80	<a href="http://www.credal.be">www.credal.be</a>
3.4.2.	Seeding social enterprises in Portugal	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	558,096.00	<a href="http://www.mustardseedmaze.vc">www.mustardseedmaze.vc</a>
4.1.	ERGO	EaSI-PROGRESS	415,612.00	<a href="https://ergonetnetwork.org">https://ergonetnetwork.org</a>
Error! Reference source not found	Eurochild	EaSI-PROGRESS	889,996.61	<a href="http://www.eurochild.org">www.eurochild.org</a>
Error! Reference source not found	RREUSE	EaSI-PROGRESS	273,025.00	<a href="http://www.rreuse.org">www.rreuse.org</a>
4.4.	SOLIDAR	EaSI-PROGRESS	383,950.00	<a href="http://www.solidar.org">www.solidar.org</a>
4.5.	European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE)	EaSI-PROGRESS	151,777.33	<a href="http://www.ensie.org">www.ensie.org</a>



4.6	Eurodiaconia	EaSI-PROGRESS	589,749.01	<a href="https://www.eurodiaconia.org/">https://www.eurodiaconia.org/</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	Euclid Network	EaSI-PROGRESS	256,025.00	<a href="http://www.euclidnetwork.eu">www.euclidnetwork.eu</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	FEANTSA	EaSI-PROGRESS	999,327.12	<a href="http://www.feantsa.org">www.feantsa.org</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	FEBA	EaSI-PROGRESS	250,172.01	<a href="http://www.eurofoodbank.org">www.eurofoodbank.org</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	EPR	EaSI-PROGRESS	157,862.30	<a href="http://www.epr.eu">www.epr.eu</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	EuroHealthNet	EaSI-PROGRESS	561,668.00	<a href="http://www.eurohealthnet.eu">www.eurohealthnet.eu</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	EASPD	EaSI-PROGRESS	781,803.66	<a href="http://www.easpd.eu">www.easpd.eu</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	CECOP	EaSI-PROGRESS	181,519.20	<a href="https://cecop.coop/">https://cecop.coop/</a>
<b>Error! Reference source not found .</b>	EAPN	EaSI-PROGRESS	999,173.29	<a href="http://www.eapn.eu">www.eapn.eu</a>

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