

## 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ESF Managing Authorities of the Danube Region | summary

1 December 2020 | Online

### Introduction

Priority Coordinators of the EU Strategy of the Danube Region of the Priority Areas 9 “People and Skills”, Roland Hanak, and Priority Area 10 “Institutional capacity and Cooperation”, Claudia Singer, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

### Update from the European Commission

Jader Canè from DG EMPL reported on the on-going trilogue related to the ESF+ Regulation. Currently, the Council and the European Parliament negotiating funding priorities as follows:

European Council		European Parliament	
Social Inclusion	25%	Social Inclusion	27%
Youth employment	10%	Youth Employment	15%
Most Deprived	2%	Child Poverty	5%
		Most Deprived	3%
Co-financing rate (most deprived)	up to 85%	Co-financing rate (most deprived)	at least 85%

Table 1: Proposals for budget allocations for the ESF+ 2021-2027 from European Council & European Parliament (incl. Proposal for co-financing rate for activities addressing the most deprived – formerly funded under FEAD)

At the present stage, it is most likely that the Council and the European Parliament will agree on **15%** of the budget dedicated to **youth employment**, **5%** for **child poverty**, and **25%** for **social inclusion**.

Additionally, the Council and the European Parliament discussing co-financing rates for activities that have been funded through the FEAD. The European Parliament proposes co-financing rates of at least 85%, whereas the Council opts for co-financing rates up to 85%.

Results are expected within the next weeks.

### State of Play of Programming



The participating Managing Authorities shared their current state of programming in the ESF+ Operational Programmes. In the course of the discussion, the represented Managing Authorities elaborated on planned or possible specific objectives to be addressed in the ESF+ 2021-2027, the planned programme set-up and next steps in the programming procedure.

(Possible) Funding Priorities	Countries					
Equality between men & women/women rights	AT	BaWü				
Active ageing	AT	SK	SI			
Social inclusion/most deprived	AT	BaWü	HR	HU	SK	SI
Education & Training/NEETs	AT	HU	SI			
Life-long learning	AT					
Labour market inclusion	AT	BaWü	HR	HU	SK	SI
Social innovation	AT	SK				

Table 2: Possible funding priorities for the represented ESF+ Operational Programmes 2021-2027 (as of December 2020)

State of Programming		
<b>Austria</b>	<b>Baden-Württemberg</b>	<b>Croatia</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>January/February 2021: First formal draft of the OP is expected to be sent to the EC</li> <li>June 2021: OP is expected to be finalised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programming still under way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2020: Working Group on PO4 is expected to have its first meeting</li> <li>March 2021: First draft of the OP is expected to be submitted to the EC</li> </ul>
<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>December 2020: Informal draft of the OP will be submitted to the EC; at present, there are on-going negotiations at expert-level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, SK undergoes a consultation process with different stakeholder groups and is at the stage of finalizing the text for the OP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First draft has been sent to the EC</li> </ul>

Table 3: State of Programming in the represented Managing Authorities (as of 1 December 2020)

	2020		2021						
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
AT			1 <sup>st</sup> draft OP to EC					Finalised OP	
BaWü	On-going negotiations								
HR		1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of PO4 WG			1 <sup>st</sup> draft OP to EC				
HU	Expert-level negotiations	Informal draft OP to EC							
SK	Stakeholder consultations/ finalizing text for draft OP								
SI	1 <sup>st</sup> draft sent to EC								

Table 4: Timeline of state of programming in the represented Managing Authorities

Country	Types of Operational Programme
AT	1 national ESF+ Operational Programme "Employment" and 1 ESF+ Operational Programme Fead
BaWü	1 regional ESF+ Operational Programme   1 federal EF+ Operational Programme)
HR	1 national ESF+ Operational Programme   1 Multi-Fund-Programme   1 regional Multi-Fund Operational Programme (with possible ESF+ component)
HU	Multiple thematic Multi-Fund-Programmes
SK	1 Multi-Fund-Programme (but still on-going discussions about separating ESF+ funding
SI	1 Multi-Fund Programme

Table 5: Summary of planned ESF+ OP set-ups for the programme period 2021-2027

### Topics for transnational cooperation in the Danube Region in the ESF+ 2021-2027

The participants discussed the shortlist of possible topics for transnational cooperation in the Danube Region as proposed at the 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region in March 2020. The participants discussed and qualified the short list according to the current state of programming. In addition to the 7 short-listed topics, the participants discussed possibilities of transnational cooperation related to vocational training. In the course of the discussion, the participants agreed to keep the current short-list in order to have a certain level of flexibility in the programming procedure, as topics and funding priorities are not finalized at this stage.



Generally, the participants agreed that the approach of social inclusion and social innovation has a great potential to be implemented in various thematic areas.

ESF+ Transnational Cooperation 2021-2027						
	AT	BaWü	HR	HU	SK	SI
Equality between men & women in the labour market						
Digitisation						
Social Innovation						
Social Entrepreneurship						
Inclusion of Roma/ vulnerable groups						
Ageing population						
Life-long Learning						
Vocational Training						
Legend		Likely to be selected for TC		Potential to be selected for TC		Covered by different OP

Table 6: Overview of short-listed topics for transnational cooperation in the ESF+ 2021-2027

### Application for Competence Centres for Social Innovation

L&R Social Research as Lead Partner together with arbeit plus was endorsed by the Austrian ESF Managing Authority for the application. Together with the following partners to project proposal was submitted by November 2020:

#### Co-Applicants:

- IFKA, Hungary (endorsed by the Ministry of Finance as the Hungarian ESF Managing Authority)
- ESF Managing Authority Slovakia, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic
- Sofia Development Association, Bulgaria (endorsed by Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Operational Programme Human Resources Development)

#### Associated Partners:

- ESF Managing Authority, Baden-Württemberg; Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration
- ESF Managing Authority Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy of the Republic of Croatia
- ESF Managing Authority Slovenia, Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy
- European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE)

Institutions from 7 countries constitute the consortium, which stems from existing initiatives, such as the ESF Managing Authorities' Network of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. It is made up of a mix of diverse countries in terms of economic development and institutions (public, national and regional, NGOs, private) and thereby ensures a multi-perspective approach towards social innovation.

The project aims to promote the development of social innovation on both policy and practical levels by mapping and supporting existing initiatives as well as establishing new approaches. According to the Call, the proposed consortium shall support relevant ESF+ stakeholders (innovative projects and public authorities) by offering information and know-how through the providing of advice, guidance and training, and via the organising of networking and mutual learning formats at national and European levels, thus making use of transnational synergies. Thematically, the project focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on employment and labour market policies and their translation into socially-innovative models locally.

The decision of the Commission is expected till April 2020.

### Draft Text Module for Transnational Cooperation

The participants discussed the draft text module on transnational cooperation as from March 2020. There are no modifications of the text module requested at this stage. The text module matches the required format for the Operational Programmes and offers a good introduction that can be followed-up with a specification of activities. Hungary appreciated the development of the draft text module and its concise formulation, but needs to discuss the text with their programming authorities before further endorsement.

### Outlook

The next meeting should take place in spring 2021 and offers the opportunity to exchange on good practice examples that can be picked up for transnational cooperation in the ESF+. At this point of time the programming phase should be at a much more advanced stage, which gives the opportunity to discuss the thematic cooperation in more detail but also possible tools for cooperation.

### Annexes

- Agenda of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities
- Documentation of the discussion on the State of Play of programming for the ESF+ and discussion on the milestones for transnational cooperation (topics for transnational cooperation, text modules)