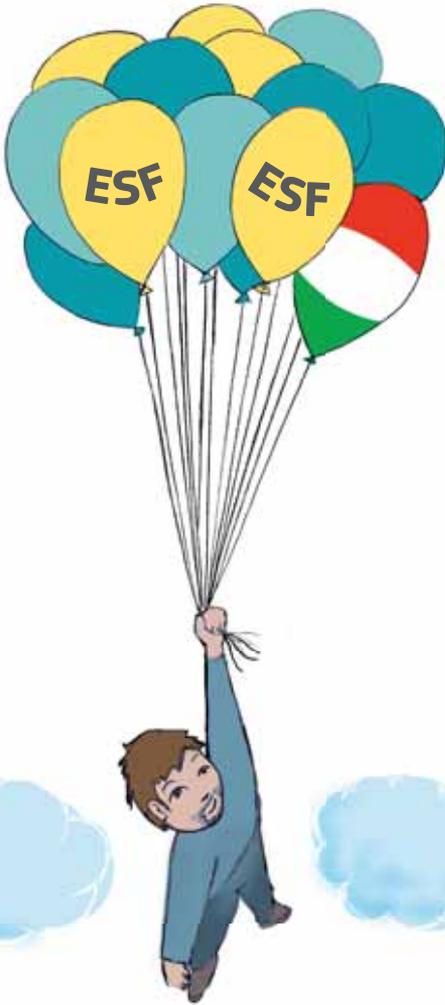




European
Commission



HUNGARY

AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

Hungary has set itself ambitious targets in its bid to build a strong, competitive, dynamic and sustainable economy. Over EUR 4 billion is being invested through ESF programmes to meet the specific challenges that the country is facing – particularly the low percentage of the population in jobs, high long-term unemployment, and persisting inequalities of opportunity between regions and between specific sections of the population.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE AND JOBS: THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUNGARY

A key challenge for Hungary is its very low employment rate which is one of the lowest in the EU at just over 60%. This is particularly an issue for the low-skilled, the Roma population, the elderly, the disabled, young people and women with small children. There are also marked regional differences in employment rates and opportunities. In response, Hungary is investing in its education and training system and improving access to lifelong learning in order to give people the skills they need to find a job or improve their career prospects. As part of this effort, Hungary has set itself the ambitious target of raising employment levels to 75% by 2020 while continuing to take significant steps to cut red tape and speed up the implementation of initiatives to reach this goal. Indeed, as part of the Hungarian Work Plan launched in 2011, Hungary plans to create close on a million new jobs by 2020.

A further opportunity for Hungary is to improve its education and vocational training systems. Many graduates find that their qualifications do not lead to the jobs they expected. By upgrading the education and

training choices on offer, and including more work-oriented elements, more young people will find

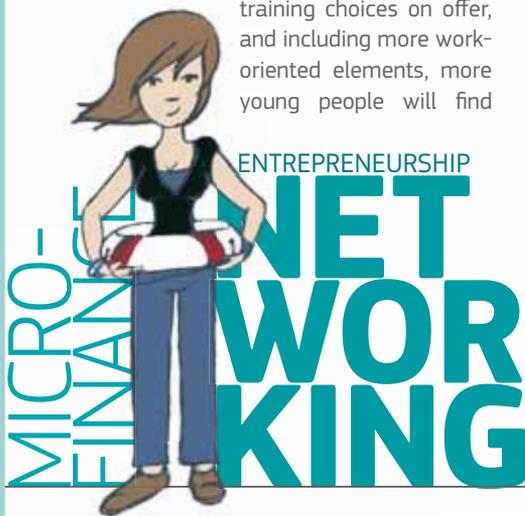
the jobs and careers they want. In addition, by making education more attractive and relevant, Hungary aims to boost the number of graduates in the workforce while reducing the share of early school leavers to 10% for 18-24-year-olds.

“Targeting 75 % of the population in work”

Hungary is also targeting help at disadvantaged groups and promoting secure, skilled jobs as a way of avoiding the risk of poverty. Early pre-school education and better teaching will help disadvantaged children, in particular Roma children, to develop their talents for the future and provide a path into further vocational education. Likewise, job and training opportunities are needed for deprived families to avoid subsequent generations falling into the trap of long-term unemployment. By 2020, Hungary aims to reduce poverty levels by 20% and employment is a key instrument in achieving this.

ESF spending in Hungary

Hungary is receiving EUR 3.6 billion of ESF funds which with national co-funding brings total ESF spending in Hungary to nearly EUR 4.3 billion. Most of this is being spent on the ‘Social Renewal’ agenda to support growth and employment, while the State Reform programme is focused on improving administrative services.



HUNGARY'S ESF PRIORITIES

More people in work

A key priority for Hungary's ESF programme is to increase the number of people in work. ESF funding is improving access to training and jobs for everyone, with particular attention to disadvantaged groups such as the Roma, low-skilled workers, the disabled, older workers and young people. An example of this support is a journalistic and film-making training project in Pécs for young Roma, which highlighted Roma role models and encouraged better integration and combating stereotypes. Unemployment among women with young children is high, so projects are encouraging women back into the workplace through the better provision of day care, vocational training opportunities and more flexible working arrangements. An example is the 'One-step-forward' project to train people, including parents, with low-qualifications and care obligations – over 1 300 passed their exams and many went on into work, with over 300 working from home.

Strong regional differences in employment opportunities and a reluctance to move to look for a job are major barriers to a higher employment rate. The ESF is supporting greater access to training throughout the country to help people find jobs and encourage greater mobility. As the economy moves away from traditional sectors such as agriculture, it is important to help workers adapt to new types of work, such as through a project in the rural Győr district that offered catch-up education courses to Roma which

“Reducing regional and social disparities in employment”

led to jobs as machine operators and assistant nurses. Many ESF projects are supporting Hungary's National Social Inclusion Strategy which aims – among others – to involve 100 000 disadvantaged Roma in employment and training activities.

Building skills for a stronger economy

ESF funding is modernising the education and training system to provide the skills that workers and companies need, such as a Budapest-based chocolate manufacturer that received lean-manufacturing training for its personnel, boosting competitiveness and safeguarding 300 jobs for the future. ESF actions are also supporting education institutions with training for teachers on new competence-based teaching methods. And higher education is being adapted to support the knowledge economy and the capacity for research and development – a key component of economic competitiveness. An example is the career-tracking system installed by Budapest University of Technology and Economics that follows the careers of its graduates to ensure its teaching and curricula are offering better job prospects.

THE ESF IN HUNGARY: SOME EXAMPLES

Reversing the 'brain drain'

In Hungary, young science graduates often leave the country to look for work in Western Europe where salaries are higher and employment opportunities better. One aim of the ESF programme is to keep talented graduates in the country. The 'Simmelweis Bridge Project' created an innovative working group – composed of young scientists from both Hungary and abroad, as well as industry representatives – to carry out vital long-term cardiovascular research. The group provides an opportunity to do crucial research for heart patients, and a chance for both Hungarian and international young scientists to live and work in Hungary.

Bridging the education gap

The ESF-funded project 'Tanoda' ('The Learners') targets the problem of social exclusion. By helping disadvantaged children, particularly Roma children, get a proper education the project is putting an end to the vicious cycle of poverty that these children are born into. 'Tanoda' is bridging the large gap that persists between children elsewhere in Hungary and these youngsters who, it is estimated, are 50 times less likely to complete secondary education. The children are mentored by the project and provided with individual development plans suited to their specific individual needs. Schools are also offered equipment and materials where necessary. In this way, the 'Tanoda' project is providing valuable, continuous and systematic support for those in need.



Do you want to...?

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- ...understand better how the ESF works?
- ...see video clips on projects from across the EU?

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