



CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS TO THE 10 COMMISSION PRIORITIES MIGRATION





HOW ARE THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS (ESI FUNDS) CONTRIBUTING TO THIS COMMISSION PRIORITY 2014-2020?

The plight of thousands of migrants putting their lives at risk is shocking. The European Commission's agenda on migration sets out a European response combining internal and external policies, making best use of EU agencies and tools and involving Member States and institutions, international organisations, civil society, local authorities and partners outside the EU.

A strong common asylum policy and a new European policy on legal migration are among President Juncker's top political priorities.

HOW CAN THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS HELP?

In its Communication on a 'European Agenda for Migration', the Commission set out four key focus areas: *A strong Common Asylum System; A new European policy on legal migration; Fighting irregular migration and human trafficking more robustly; and Securing Europe's external borders.*

In this Communication, Cohesion Policy is highlighted as an important funding source **to support effective integration policies** covering education, employment, housing and non-discrimination policies. While competence lies primarily with the Member States, the European Union can also support Member States, local authorities and civil society organisations to deal with these pressing issues.

Coordination mechanisms between the funding sources, such as the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Internal Security Fund (ISF) and the ESI Funds should be established both at the European and national level in order to reinforce synergies.



ESI FUND ACTIONS: 2014-2020

The European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) can help support the **long-term integration of migrants**. Financial support for emergency measures, such as reception centres, mobile hospitals, tents, and containers primarily fall under the scope of AMIF programmes. In order to ensure an adequate and comprehensive response to the challenges Member States may face with the migrant crisis, the coordinated use of various European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) is vital.

In its Communication relating to the current crisis, adopted in September 2015, the Commission ‘calls on Member States to examine the use of their current Structural Funds programmes in terms of supporting migration-related measures, with a view to proposing changes to the Commission’.

- The **ESF** can support a wide range of activities to **help integrate asylum seekers into the labour market**. For example, it can provide funding for training, language courses, counselling, coaching and vocational training. With a few exceptions in some Member States, the ESF can only support asylum seekers who already have access to the labour market. Member States are required to grant such access at the latest nine months after the asylum seekers have applied for international protection. However some Member States grant earlier or even immediate access to the labour market once the asylum seekers apply for international protection. If this is the case, they will immediately benefit from ESF support. Besides providing individual support to asylum seekers, refugees and their families, the ESF may also support anti-discrimination initiatives and reinforce the administrative capacity of public administrations, including child protection systems, and NGOs that are dealing with the influx.
- The ERDF will aim to integrate migrants and asylum seekers **through investments in social, health, education, housing and childcare infrastructure, deprived urban areas and business start-ups**. The ERDF



may also support, **in exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis, emergency measures** that complement support coming from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) as well as other funding sources, such as FRONTEX, Internal Security Fund (ISF), United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), and International Organisation of Migration (IOM). Taking into account the specific protection needs of unaccompanied children and families with children, support could include building or extending reception centres and shelters or reinforcing capacity at reception services, infrastructural development in hotspots, mobile hospitals as well as sanitation and water supply.

- The **European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) can offer support to municipalities to develop rural areas receiving migrants**, in order to provide them with basic infrastructure or services related to education (kindergartens, schools, busses, etc.), healthcare, social housing, essential services and utilities such as water, waste, electricity, gas and Internet. The EAFRD could also provide **support for the development and implementation of local development strategies** which would cover all aspects of ensuring a successful integration of migrants into the rural economy, developing businesses, specific employment schemes, targeted education, vocational and language training, as well as renovation of housing, meeting points and community activities and other activities that fall under the scope of the Rural Development priority of 'promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas'. These strategies could be developed by the autonomous Local Action Groups under LEADER or indeed directly by public authorities together with local actors.
- **To promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in fisheries** and aquaculture areas, **the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)** can also provide similar support for the development and implementation of strategies developed by Fisheries Local Action Groups. It can also provide start-up support for young fishermen or new aquaculture farmers entering the profession, as well as support for professional training.



PROJECT EXAMPLES

- A **local support centre for the integration of immigrants** helped 1 215 immigrants in Portugal by providing social and legal assistance, as well as contacts and information to gain access to employment. The ESF contributed EUR 383 736 to the project between 2012 and 2014.
<http://europa.eu/!vc98Kt>
- The **ESF-funded Lotsendienst (Pilot service) for migrants** advised some 1 400 migrants who were interested in setting up their own businesses. 735 of these did just that through individual coaching. The start-ups were also supported by business start-up pilot schemes during their first year of operation.
<http://europa.eu/!Gu44Yt>
- The **National Operational Programme 'Sicurezza'** has to-date financed 99 projects that established centres for legal migrants in the four regions covered by the programme: Sicily, Campania, Calabria and Puglia. The ERDF allocation for the programme is EUR 79 million. The investment helped build temporary accommodation for immigrants as well as language labs, recreational and sport spaces. Healthcare services and psychological support were also provided by working together with local health centres.
<http://www.sicurezzasud.it>



- Sweden is using EAFRD funds for a number of projects that are relevant to the integration of migrants. It supports **multicultural business development**, providing good conditions for immigrants to become active in the 'green industry'. A rural innovation project has quickly created a successful model for transferring the knowledge and know-how from 'new Swedish citizens' with agrarian background to Swedish food production, which in turn will help create new jobs and new products for the market. The 'Province Food project' creates a model for social business by taking advantage of foreign-born women's cooking skills. This pilot study has resulted in a catering company and a coffee shop business with several employees. The Swedish rural network also has a working group dealing with integration and it is currently looking into activities aiming at integrating immigrants as well as housing opportunities for immigrants in rural areas.

<http://bit.ly/1lW4xs>

More factsheets on how ESI Funds contribute to Commission priorities are available at http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/funds_en.htm

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