Questions and answers on Poland's recovery and resilience plan

Brussels, 1 June 2022

**How did the Commission assess Poland’s recovery and resilience plan?**

The Commission is assessing the recovery and resilience plans based on eleven criteria set out in the Regulation itself. The 11 criteria require an assessment of whether:

- the measures have a lasting impact;
- the measures address the challenges identified in the country specific recommendations or a significant subset of them;
- the milestones and targets which allow for monitoring the progress with the reforms and investments are clear and realistic;
- the plans meet the 37% climate expenditure target and the 20% digital expenditure target;
- the plans respect the do no significant harm principle;
- the plans provide an adequate control and audit mechanism and set out the plausibility of the costing information.

The Commission has summarised its assessment in the proposal for the Council Implementing Decision. The accompanying staff working document provides detailed documentation on the assessment.

**Does Poland's recovery and resilience plan effectively support the green transition?**

The Polish plan’s contribution to the green transition amounts to almost 42.7% of the plan, with an allocation of €15.1 billion. This exceeds the minimum of 37% required by the RRF Regulation.

The implementation of Poland's plan is expected to contribute significantly to the decarbonisation of the Polish economy by increasing the share of renewable energy in Poland’s energy mix and increasing the energy efficiency of the economy. This includes more than €3.7 billion in funding for offshore wind energy plants and terminal infrastructure, as well as key changes to the regulatory framework which will facilitate the construction of offshore and onshore wind energy plants. Moreover, the plan dedicates €3.5 billion to the energy-efficient renovation of buildings, combined with replacing coal-fired heaters, and provides €800 million to support the development of green hydrogen technologies.

The plan also includes investments worth over €7.5 billion in green and smart mobility. The plan aims to double the number of zero- and low-emission vehicles by 2026 up to 20 000, and to finance the purchase of more than 1,700 zero/low-emission buses serving 4 500 lines across Poland. The plan also includes the removal of 305 blackspots to improve road safety.

**Does Poland’s recovery and resilience plan effectively contribute to the digital transition?**

The Polish plan’s contribution to the digital transition amounts to more than 21.3% of the plan, with an allocation of €7.5 billion. This exceeds the minimum of 20% required by the RRF Regulation.

The measures in the plan to support Poland’s digital transition include reforms and investments of €420 million in support of the digital transformation of public administration and its offer of e-services to businesses and citizens. This includes the digitisation of invoicing and administrative procedures related to construction and spatial planning.

Support for ensuring access to high-speed internet and 5G network deployment in Poland, with investments of €2.6 billion, is expected to boost the digital efficiency of the economy and reduce the digital divide in society.

Reforms to digitalise education and investments of €1.4 billion in digital infrastructure and equipment for general and vocational schools, as well as in digital skills of teachers, are expected to accelerate the development of digital and information skills in Polish society.
Transformative reforms and investments of €443 million are foreseen to strengthen the State’s cybersecurity capacity. These measures also aim to secure data processing infrastructure to prevent cyber-crimes and increase the level of trust to adopt digital technologies.

In addition, the Polish plan has a strong focus on accelerating the digital transformation of the healthcare system by investing €1 billion to consolidate fragmented national health registries and ensure the interoperability and security of digital health platforms to the benefit of patients.

**Does the recovery and resilience plan represent a balanced response to the economic and social situation of Poland?**

The Commission considers that the Polish plan represents a comprehensive and adequately balanced response to Poland’s economic and social situation, thereby contributing appropriately to all six pillars of the RRF.

Social and territorial cohesion is supported by several measures, including those aiming to improve the availability and quality of childcare. Some 47,500 new places in nurseries and children’s clubs are to be created, while a new set of quality standards is to be established. Measures strengthening long-term care, vocational training and adult learning would also contribute to this objective.

The plan supports the resilience, accessibility, and effectiveness of the Polish healthcare system with measures such as the restructuring of hospitals and investment support for medical universities to encourage students to choose this study path and improve learning conditions. More than 200 projects will be financed to renovate or modernise medical education facilities, student libraries and dormitories.

The Polish plan includes measures in support of smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth including in the area of research and innovation. It will support companies developing circular economy innovations, competence centres and infrastructure for unmanned vehicles, research laboratories, including for the agri-food sector, as well as a programme for the creative industries. In total, Poland plans to invest close to €1.5 billion to support innovation under its RRP.

The implementation of the plan is expected to contribute to improving the business environment and investment climate in Poland. The plan includes a series of reforms that aim to reduce the administrative and regulatory burden on businesses, to improve public finance management, as well as to enhance the role of public consultations and impact assessments in the law-making process. Reforms strengthening certain aspects of the independence of the judiciary are also expected to contribute to a more investment-friendly climate.

Finally, a significant part of the plan is dedicated to policies for the next generation. In particular, the plan aims to invest in digitalising education and providing pupils and teachers with modernised ICT equipment. The plan also supports the matching of skills and qualifications with labour market requirements in the modern economy.

**Do the reforms presented by Poland effectively address a significant part of the country-specific recommendations issued to it in the context of the European Semester?**

Poland’s plan includes an extensive set of mutually reinforcing reforms and investments. These contribute to effectively addressing a significant subset of the economic and social challenges outlined in the country-specific recommendations addressed to Poland by the Council in the European Semester in 2019 and in 2020.

The implementation of the plan is expected to contribute to addressing the structural challenges identified in the country-specific recommendations, with investments and reforms in the fields of digitalisation, the green transition, sustainability of transport, labour market participation, adequacy of pension benefits, education and training, health and long-term care, and the investment climate, including with regard to strengthening important aspects of the independence of the Polish judicial system.

Reforms and investments are expected to increase energy efficiency of buildings, accelerate the deployment of renewables, and increase the sustainability and safety of the transport sector. All those measures are expected to significantly contribute to a progressive decarbonisation of the Polish economy.

Through substantial investments and ambitious reforms, the plan is expected to improve the accessibility, effectiveness, and resilience of the healthcare system.

Measures to increase the quality and availability of childcare, as well as a reform and dedicated investments to improve long-term care policies, address the country-specific recommendations in the area of labour market participation.
In the field of adequate and sustainable pensions, the plan includes the creation of tax incentives to prolong careers and increase the effective retirement age. The plan also provides for a reform to increase social protection under various work contracts.

Investments in broadband infrastructure and IT equipment for schools aim at fostering the digital transition and enhancing digital skills. To strengthen the country's vocational education and training system, the plan supports the creation of sectoral skills centres, in close cooperation with employers, social partners and other stakeholders.

**How does the plan address issues related to the independence of the Polish judiciary?**

The Commission considers that Poland’s plan contributes to effectively address the recommendation to Poland by the Council to improve the investment climate, by strengthening certain aspects of the independence of the judiciary.

Poland commits to a comprehensive reform of the disciplinary regime applicable to Polish judges. Before the first payment request, and in order to enable the disbursement of any RRF funds, Poland must demonstrate that the following commitments are fulfilled:

- All disciplinary cases against judges will be adjudicated by a court different from the current Disciplinary Chamber, that complies with EU law requirements in line with the case law of the Court of Justice and is thus independent, impartial and established by law;
- Judges cannot be subject to disciplinary liability for submitting a request for a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice, for the content of their judicial decisions, or for verifying whether another court is independent, impartial, and established by law;
- Procedural rights of parties in disciplinary proceedings are strengthened;
- All judges affected by the past Disciplinary Chamber rulings will have the right to have these rulings reviewed without delay by a court that complies with EU law requirements and is thus independent, impartial and established by law.

The above commitments are without prejudice to any ongoing or future infringement proceedings and to Poland’s obligation to comply with Union law in general, including the rulings of the Court of Justice.

**What measures must Poland take before any RRF funds can be disbursed?**

Before the disbursement of any RRF funds, Poland must adopt a reform of the disciplinary regime for judges in line with the milestones set out in the plan. This reform must also establish swift review proceedings for judges affected by the past rulings of the Disciplinary Chamber.

Poland must also fulfil a milestone on the implementation of Arachne. This is an IT tool that supports Member States in their anti-fraud activities by enabling them to collect data on final recipients of funds, contractors, subcontractors, and beneficial owners. This data can then be made available upon request.

**For More Information**

- Press release – NextGenerationEU: European Commission endorses Poland’s €35.4 billion recovery and resilience plan
- Factsheet on Poland’s recovery and resilience plan
- Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Poland
- Annex to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Poland
- Staff-working document accompanying the proposal for a Council Implementing Decision
- Recovery and Resilience Facility
- Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard
- Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation
- Recovery and Resilience Facility: Questions and Answers
- EU as a borrower website

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