European Commission
Structural Reform Support Service
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Introducing the Structural Reform Support Service

Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS)
The SRSS is a part of the European Commission whose role is to:

- support EU Member States in the preparation, design and implementation of growth-enhancing reforms;
- focus on providing tailor-made support on the ground; and
- steer and coordinate technical support provided by the Commission.

How it works
At the request of a Member State, the SRSS:

1. engages in a dialogue to discuss technical support needs;
2. agrees on a ‘cooperation and support plan’ with the Member State; and
3. provides financing for technical support and coordinates the necessary expertise.

The technical support is available to all Member States and covers the entire process of reform, from inception to completion.
Areas of support

Member States can request help from the SRSS to implement the following:

**Member States’ reforms at their own initiative**
- growth-enhancing reforms to achieve sustainable investment, growth and job creation

**Economic governance processes**
- European Semester (incl. economic adjustment programmes)
- Union law
- EU policy priorities
- better use of EU funds

**Special assignments**
- Cyprus settlement support \(^{(1)}\)
- coordinating service for public administration and governance \(^{(2)}\)

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\(^{(2)}\) Since June 2018
Organisation of the SRSS

Organisational structure

Director-General

Director

Budget, Finance & Evaluation
Governance & Public Administration
Revenue Administration & Public Financial Management
Growth & Business Environment
Labour Market, Education, Health & Social Services
Financial Sector & Access to Finance
Cyprus Settlement Support

Country focus ingrained across the service

Country focus and broad scope

- The SRSS has a country-specific focus, using expertise across its teams to develop tailor-made technical support programmes in response to the specific needs of individual Member States.

- The SRSS takes a flexible approach and covers a large number of policy areas, allowing it to respond to the wide variety of technical support requests from Member States.
Policy areas of SRSS support

The SRSS can engage in any policy area identified by a Member State as a reform priority.

This includes:

**Governance & Public Administration**
- Governance
- Central & local administration
- Digital public administration
- Governance & IT function
- eGovernment strategies
- Management of human resources
- Better regulation
- Anti-corruption & anti-fraud strategies
- Judicial reform

**Revenue Administration & Public Financial Management**
- Tax compliance
- Tackling aggressive tax planning & tax evasion
- Tax administration efficiency & capacity building
- Digitalisation & impact on tax administration
- Modelling, analysis & assessment
- Spending reviews
- Fiscal framework
- Budgeting
- Budget execution & cash management
- Public accounting & fiscal statistics
- External audits

**Growth & Business Environment**
- Foreign investment & trade policy
- SMEs & competition policy
- Research, innovation & digital economy
- Transport, logistics, tourism, agriculture & other economic sectors
- Licensing, inspections & better regulation
- Investment management & public-private partnerships
- Management of state-owned enterprises
- Management of natural resources
- Energy & climate

**Labour Market, Education, Health & Social Services**
- Labour market
- Welfare system
- Pension system
- Healthcare & long-term care system
- Education & vocational training

**Financial Sector & Access to Finance**
- Capital market development
- Financial literacy
- Financial sector supervision
- Insolvency
- Crisis management
- Insurance undertakings
- Anti-money laundering
How the SRSS operates

Reform process cycle

The SRSS engages with Member States through the various stages of the reform process, ensuring that support is available where it is needed most. This includes:

- identifying reform needs;
- helping with the implementation of reforms; and
- monitoring and evaluating outputs and outcomes.

Technical support providers

To deliver tailor-made technical support, the SRSS works with a wide range of experts to address Member States' specific needs.

Support is provided *inter alia* by:

- experts from Member States' administrations (through the TAIEX-SRSP peer-to-peer instrument (3));
- international organisations;
- private firms, including consultancy firms; and
- individual experts from the private sector.

Together with in-house Commission expertise delivered directly, these providers ensure that the appropriate assistance is delivered where it is needed.

(3) https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/tenders/taix_en
Types of technical support

The technical support provided by the SRSS can take the form of:

- studies and diagnostic analyses;
- study visits;
- seminars, conferences & workshops;
- expert & scoping missions; and
- training.

Technical support process (how it works)

1. Each year, the national authorities submit requests for technical support to the SRSS. The SRSS staff can help preparing these requests.
2. The SRSS analyses the requests on the basis of a number of assessment criteria.
3. The SRSS discusses its findings with the individual countries and determines what type of support is needed.
4. The SRSS comes to an agreement with each country on the basis of the priority areas for support, its objectives and scope, an indicative timeline and an estimated budget – this is included in a “Cooperation and Support Plan”.
5. The SRSS ensures the delivery of the support and monitors and evaluates the outcomes.
Objective of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP)

In May 2017, the Regulation (EU) 2017/825 (4) establishing the SRSP for the period 2017 to 2020 entered into force. The objective of the SRSP is to strengthen Member States’ capacity to prepare and implement growth-enhancing reforms, including through assistance for the efficient and effective use of Union funds.

Key facts

- The SRSP establishes a comprehensive programme for Commission engagement with Member States on technical support;
- Assistance is demand-driven, based on request from Member States;
- The budget of EUR 222.8 million is at the Commission’s disposal for the delivery of technical support to Member States; there are no co-financing requirements;
- For Member States with high support needs, unused structural funds (technical assistance) can be transferred for use under the technical support programme for that Member State (Article 11 of the SRSP Regulation);
- The SRSP is available to all Member States.

Amendment of the SRSP Regulation

On 6 December 2017, the Commission proposed amendments to the SRSP Regulation to increase the budget by EUR 80 million and to add support for euro-area membership to the goals of the programme. The amended Regulation entered into force on 13 November 2018.

A new programme after 2020

The Commission has proposed to expand the work of the SRSS after 2020 under a new Reform Support Programme, with a much larger overall budget of EUR 25 billion.

The proposed programme would have three instruments:

- **Reform Delivery Tool (EUR 22 billion)**
  Financial incentives for Member States to implement structural reforms to address key challenges identified each year under the European Semester of economic policy coordination cycle;

- **Technical support instrument (just under EUR 1 billion)**
  Continued help for Member States to design and implement structural reforms, including optimisation of the administrative capacity of the public administration; and

- **Convergence Facility (just over EUR 2 billion)**
  Financial and technical support for Member States that have taken demonstrable steps towards joining the euro area.

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SRSP budget

2016: EUR 3 million (Preparatory Action; pre-SRSP)
2017: EUR 22.5 million
2018: EUR 30.5 million
2019: EUR 79.3 million
2020: EUR 84.7 million

(5) Amounts excluding support expenditure.
SRSP timelines

01

July - October
The SRSS discusses the preparation of requests for SRSP funding with Member States

02

31 October
Member States submit requests for SRSP funding to the SRSS

03

November - January
The SRSS assesses Member States’ requests and proposes a selection of requests for funding
February - March
The Commission adopts a Financing Decision and concludes cooperation and support plans with Member States

From March onwards
Start of delivery of the support projects on the ground

At the closure of the projects
Evaluation of the technical support provided and the results on the ground
Governance & Public Administration
## Examples of topics and projects

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The wide range of topics covered allows the SRSS to work on the priorities identified by a Member State in the areas of governance and public administration.

The SRSS focuses on:

1. Providing advice and hands-on support at various stages of the reform process;
2. Reinforcing the technical capacity of public administrations; and
3. Creating a set up that allows for the development of evidence-based policy-making.
Helping Member States improve the efficiency of the State

Strong and effective governance is a pre-condition for the identification, selection and implementation of some policies. The SRSS can help with the development of such governance at both strategic and technical levels.

Examples of technical support provided

Inter-ministerial coordination structure
The SRSS helped to develop a structure for coordinating the agenda in all areas of government. Support covered the design of the structure, the staff training and the development of management and IT tools.

Codification and planning of laws
Better regulation is a particular focus for the Commission; the SRSS has provided technical support to structure and develop a code of laws to improve the legal framework.
Human resource (HR) policies

HR development tools are a key component for building a quality public administration and fostering economic growth.

Member States receive assistance in addressing these challenges: policy guidance and innovation, monitoring and assessment, and the exchange of good practices. They also benefit from funding under the European structural and investment funds (ESIFs).

The SRSS complements the above with hands-on technical support for the design, planning and implementation of HR reforms. It can provide support on all aspects of HR policy, with a strong emphasis on capacity building.

Examples of technical support provided

Selection of top managers
The SRSS has provided support to improve the selection of top managers, including the design of a process to target the skills required and help put in place the necessary leadership to implement reforms.

Internal mobility
The SRSS helped to develop an internal job market and foster mobility to improve the allocation of resources. The transparency of the process and the direct involvement of managers in mobility decisions are central to such reforms.

Performance assessment
The SRSS helped to design and implement performance management systems with a view to improving staff performance. A central element of its support was the development of a competency framework tailored to the public sector.

Strategic workforce planning
The SRSS provided assistance for the development of staffing plans and hiring plans in line with government priorities. Solutions combined the management of budgetary positions with the planned movement of personnel.

Change management
The SRSS supported the design of an internal communication strategy. Based on the reform programme, clear steps were identified to produce specific communication messages, help explain reforms and secure buy-in from those involved.
Efficiency of the organisation of the State and service delivery by the State

Helping Member States improve the efficiency of the public administration

A key focus of technical support is to improve the efficiency of the public administration.

The SRSS can help to improve the efficiency of Member States' administration inter alia through reengineering of their administrative processes.

Examples of technical support provided

Administrative simplification
The SRSS has helped Member States with the simplification of administrative processes and regulations, in particular through the development of existing one-stop shops.

Functional reviews
The SRSS has assisted Member States with assessments of their administrations, leading to reorganisation and the identification of reforms.

Management of EU funds
The SRSS has helped Member States to improve their absorption of ESIF financing.

Internal control systems
The SRSS has provided support for the design and development of a system of internal control.

Life events and customer journey mapping
The SRSS has helped with a revision of administrative processes based on the common, crucial moments or stages in the lives of citizens or the lifespan of a business.
Transparency and accountability and the European Union

The SRSS helps Member States to embed transparency and accountability in their administrative practices. It offers hands-on technical support for the design, planning and implementation of ethical, anti-corruption and anti-fraud strategies. It provides support at all stages of reform design and implementation.

Examples of technical support provided

Anti-corruption strategies
The SRSS helped one Member State with the implementation of a national action plan for anti-corruption. Strategies were developed in the areas most prone to corruption, covering numerous measures, including protection for whistle-blowers, frameworks for the declaration of assets and conflicts of interest, and forced mobility.

Ethics
The SRSS helped with the development of a network on ethics across the public administration. It also helped to review the disciplinary framework.

Procurement
The SRSS assisted with the revision of procurement processes and regulation, with a view to improving efficiency and limiting the risk of fraud. It also provided support regarding the use of IT systems to improve the transparency of the procurement process.

(6) For further details on this policy field, please contact the SRSS Advisor on anti-money-laundering and anti-corruption strategies.
Judicial systems

Supporting judicial reforms in Europe

Effective judicial systems play a crucial role in upholding the rule of law and the Union’s fundamental values. They are also an important structural element of an investment and business-friendly environment. The effectiveness of national judicial systems is a priority in the European Semester process.

The SRSS supports the hands-on building of national institutions’ capacity to implement reforms and exchange best practices with other Member States.

Examples of technical support provided

**Efficiency of the judicial system**
The SRSS helped review courts’ business processes in order to reduce delays. The focus was on identifying and analysing problem areas in terms of frequency and impact. This involved evaluating the insolvency framework, which is a known limiting factor for business development in many countries.

**Quality of the judicial system**
The SRSS provided support for the implementation and promotion of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms/mediation to limit the workload of judges and improve the quality of the justice system.

**Independence of the judicial system**
In one Member State, the SRSS led an analysis of the prosecutor’s office. The work was based on a structural model and a review to identify problem areas and propose solutions.
Helping Member States develop Digital Public Administration in a sustainable manner

The digitalisation of public administration is a way to ensure faster, cheaper and better government services. E-government improves efficiency, user-friendliness and accessibility. It also helps to promote ethical practices and reduces opportunities for corruption.

The implementation of solid e-governance is at the core of the development of e-government. Once decision-making and supervision bodies are in place, Member States can develop their strategies, architectures and frameworks and proceed to implement them in a sustainable manner. E-government has a strong inter-ministerial dimension, as it requires the overall simplification of administrative processes to meet citizens' needs.

Examples of technical support provided

**Design and implementation of e-governance**
The development of e-government requires strong coordination of all activities of the State. Solid governance for the development of IT is a must if a State wishes to develop sustainable e-government. The SRSS has helped Member States to structure and prepare e-governance and associated services.

**Development of IT strategies and action plans**
The development of e-government requires an understanding of numerous aspects relating to IT infrastructures and their implementation, and to key building blocks and governance. The SRSS has helped Member States to draw up e-government strategies, with the design of relevant action plans.

**Development of IT specifications**
The implementation of an IT system requires a good understanding of stakeholder needs. The SRSS has helped Member States to draft specifications for IT systems both at the level of technical detail and for assessing the potential shared use of tools among services with a view to reducing public spending.
Revenue Administration & Public Financial Management
Examples of topics covered

**Revenue administration**
- Enhancing tax compliance
- Tackling aggressive tax planning and tax evasion
- Improving tax administration efficiency and capacity building
- Digitalisation and impact on tax administration
- Modelling, analysis and assessments

**Public financial management**
- Spending review
- Fiscal framework (including fiscal decentralisation and independent fiscal institutions)
- Budgeting
- Budget execution and cash management
- Public accounting and fiscal statistics
- External audit

The wide range of topics covered allows the SRSS to work on the priorities identified by a Member State in the areas of revenue administration and public financial management.
Enhancing tax compliance

Strengthening revenue administration and enhancing voluntary tax compliance is a key component of resource mobilisation. The task of revenue administration is to collect all taxes due in a fair and efficient way with limited costs for taxpayers and the administration. Efficient revenue administration is also key in building effective and accountable government institutions.

The SRSS offers Member States’ hands-on technical support for the design, planning and implementation of reforms in the core functions of revenue administration.

Examples of technical support provided

Designing a compliance strategy
Developing compliance strategies that encourage and reward compliant taxpayers and identify and correct the behaviour of those who choose not to comply.

Strengthening the audit function
Providing audit training and helping with the development of sector-specific audit guidelines focusing on high risk sectors.

Improving taxpayer services
Supporting the implementation of taxpayer services for disadvantaged groups.

Enhancing the dispute resolution process
Reforming the dispute resolution process to reduce litigation and ensure fairness and legal certainty.
Improving tax administration efficiency and capacity building

Member States’ revenue administrations are under increasing pressure to provide “more for less” while maintaining an effective deterrent to non-compliance.

The SRSS can help tax administrations to build institutional capacity that enables a better outcome of reforms. Typical enablers for change are the institutional framework, appropriate organisational and managerial structures, and human-resource and IT policies.

Examples of technical support provided

Tax Administration Diagnostic Assessment Tool (TADAT)
TADAT assessments provide an objective snapshot diagnosis of the health of key components of a country’s tax administration system.

Strategic and operational planning
Support for the design and implementation of an overall revenue administration strategy aimed at mobilising revenues and meeting the government’s targets.

Change management and awareness strategy
Support for the development of internal and external communication strategies and building capacity for organisational change.

Business process analysis and improvement
Support for analysing and streamlining the processes and procedures in the revenue administration to increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

Performance management
Support for the implementation of performance management systems including the design of key performance indicators (KPIs).

IT strategies and implementation
Support for IT strategy development, IT needs analysis and the definition of technical and functional requirements, planning of innovative analytics, business intelligence and data management.
Adequate tax policies

Tax policy is the choice by a government as to what taxes to levy, at what rates, on whom and how to collect them. Good tax policies meet revenue objectives while ensuring that the tax system supports inclusive and equitable growth, enhances legal certainty and minimises administrative burden.

The SRSS can provide support for the design and drafting of tax legislation, tax modelling, revenue analysis and forecasts.

Examples of technical support provided

Tax legislation
Support for the design and drafting of a tax procedure code, VAT legislation, income tax code, penal provisions, etc.

Tax modelling
Support for micro-simulations to optimise the structure of taxes, and design, simulate and analyse (ex-ante and ex-post) the benefits and costs of tax policies. Advising on alternatives and scenarios by using administrative data (tax returns) and anticipating citizens’ behaviours.

Tax gap analysis
Support for the collection of data and statistics and the development of methodologies for revenue analysis and forecasts.

Transfer pricing and fight against aggressive international tax planning
Support for the setting-up of mechanisms to avoid erosion of the tax base through cross-border profit shifting.

Preventing and tackling VAT fraud
Support to tackle VAT Missing Trader Intra Community fraud through the exchange of good practices and analysis of software requirements for early-detection systems.
Strengthening public financial management

Public expenditure can support growth-enhancing policies and the development of strong economies. Improving the quality and composition of public expenditure helps achieve or maintain responsible fiscal policies and contribute to a more growth-friendly budget composition. Improving the quality of public finances has particular relevance for the euro area.

The SRSS can provide technical support for spending reviews and performance budgeting or the strengthening of fiscal frameworks (including fiscal decentralisation and independent fiscal institutions), in the context of the EU economic governance framework.

Moreover, good forecasting, sound management, true and fair reporting and independent external scrutiny are essential for the economy and for efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditure. They help to build trust of the citizen in the government.

The SRSS can provide technical support to improve budget execution and cash management processes, plan the transition to accrual accounting or build capacity for supreme audit institutions.

Examples of technical support provided

**Spending reviews**
Support for the design and implementation of a spending reviews process consistent with EU common principles and fully coordinated with budget preparation.

**Performance budgeting and key performance indicators (KPIs)**
Providing support for capacity building on the methodology of defining and managing KPIs, in accordance with good practices.

**Fiscal decentralisation**
Support for the analysis, design and reform of regional and/or local government’s financial frameworks and ensuring adequate resources and efficient spending across different levels of government.

**Independent fiscal institutions**
Helping fiscal councils become fully operational in terms of human resources management, communication, access to data and methodologies.

**Budget execution and cash management**
Providing support for the management of the treasury single account, improving cash forecasts and their articulation with budget execution.

**Accrual accounting**
Helping to develop gap assessments and roadmaps for the transition to accrual accounting and to design new accounting policies; providing further support during the implementation of accrual accounting policies in accordance with international standards and good practices.

**External audit**
Providing supreme audit institutions with support to enhance their human resources management, focus their communication and publication strategy and update their audit methodologies.
Growth & Business Environment
The wide range of topics covered allows the SRSS to work on the priorities identified by a Member State in the areas of growth and business environment.
**Sectoral reforms**

The recovery of Europe’s economies presents a window of opportunity to make key sectors more competitive. Sustainable growth relies on reforms to strengthen productivity and innovation.

**Examples of technical support provided**

- Benchmarking and modelling the business environment and competitiveness.
- Strategic planning in key sectors such as innovation, tourism, trade and transport.

**Markets for goods and services**

Numerous obstacles hamper the efficient functioning of goods and services markets. This undermines the development of a level playing field for consumers and business and prevents SMEs from scaling up. Weak regulatory frameworks and regulatory bodies lead to an uneven application of rules, unequal access to networks, and services that fall short of agreed standards.

**Examples of technical support provided**

- Strengthening regulatory bodies’ abilities to use tools for economic regulation.
- Helping entrepreneurs and professionals to innovate and expand.
- Removing barriers to competition in key economic sectors.
- Promoting points of single contact.
- Developing the collaborative economy and social entrepreneurship.

**Business licences and inspections**

Fragmented regulations, time-consuming procedures and poorly designed inspections make “doing business” costly and uncertain. Such red tape discourages business and investors.

**Examples of technical support provided**

- Streamlining licences and permits for starting, running and closing a business.
- Reducing the administrative burden on business by simplifying information requirements.
- Ensuring that inspections focus on key risks.
Investment management

Investments in areas such as infrastructure and innovation can boost productivity and underpin future economic growth. Member States seek to make better use of available public resources, leverage them with private funds and ensure value for money for investments.

Governance of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)

Weakly managed SOEs undermine public finances, the functioning of markets and the provision of services. Better corporate governance of SOEs is important for increasing their efficiency and accountability, allowing the State to act as an informed and active owner.

Management of natural resources

Poor implementation of environmental and land-use laws leads to environmental, economic and social costs and an uneven playing field for business.

Examples of technical support provided

Enhancing capacity to manage the whole life cycle of an investment project, from ex-ante design to ex-post evaluation.

Strengthening capacity to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate public-private partnerships.

Examples of technical support provided

Strengthening entities responsible for supervising and managing SOEs.

Setting up reporting, monitoring and evaluation frameworks for SOEs.

Building capacity for efficient and effective decision making of SOE management boards.

Examples of technical support provided

Improving water management by establishing sound information and monitoring systems for the assessment and evaluation of service providers.

Improving waste management by stimulating innovation in recycling and limiting the use of landfilling.

Protecting environmental resources by building capacity for preventing oil pollution.

Improving land management by modernising cadastral services.
Energy markets

Despite the progress made in recent years, many energy markets are still underperforming. In particular, market design does not encourage sufficient investment, market concentration and weak competition still prevail, and the European energy landscape is still too fragmented.

Governance

Member States are seeking ways to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy, inter alia, by promoting renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. This is challenging in view of the continuous technological innovation and fast-changing cost structures present in the sectors. Capital-intensive, ageing and diverse infrastructure makes it difficult to learn from other countries.

Examples of technical support provided

Adapting market and grid codes.

Designing regulatory policies and programmes to increase competition in wholesale and retail markets and ensure security of supply.

Developing roadmaps for the regional integration of electricity market segments.

Providing tailor-made training and training strategies for energy regulators.

Examples of technical support provided

Supporting Energy-Union governance by helping with the preparation and implementation of the National Energy and Climate Plans.

Developing strategies and action plans for coal regions in transition, including the institutional arrangements.

Coordinating stakeholders on Energy Union matters.
Low-carbon economy

Member States are seeking ways to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy, inter alia, by promoting renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. This is challenging in view of the continuous technological innovation and fast-changing cost structures present in the sectors. Capital-intensive, ageing and diverse infrastructure makes it difficult to learn from other countries.

Examples of technical support provided

- Identifying barriers to investment in renewables, energy efficiency and other clean energy technologies.
- Designing suitable support and incentive schemes.
- Developing awareness-raising strategies, materials and tools and promoting cooperation among stakeholders.
- Evaluating climate-change mitigation measures.
- Developing land-use change and forestry inventories.
Labour Market, Education, Health & Social Services
Examples of topics covered

**Health systems**
- Improving universal access to quality health care services
- Improving the sustainability of long-term care systems
- Modernising the governance and public administration of health systems
- Fostering the sustainable financing and reimbursement of health services
- Ensuring adequate human resources

**Education and training**
- Modernisation of administrative structures
- Continuing professional development of teachers
- Improving funding mechanisms in education
- Improving teaching methods, curricula and assessment
- Addressing inclusion and early school leaving
- Modernising vocational education systems
- Developing IT systems and data-based monitoring tools
- Improving collaboration within higher education sector and with research and the private sector

**Social welfare and innovation**
- Conducting social welfare reviews and improving targeting and adequacy of social benefits
- Introducing minimum income schemes
- Monitoring and evaluation of social services
- Supporting the development/improvement of social care
- Developing social outcomes contracting
- Implementing social housing reform

**Pensions**
- Improving the administration of pension systems
- Disability: assessment and policy design
- Review of pension policies

**Labour market**
- Strengthening the administration of labour market institutions
- Reforming public employment services (PES)
- Fighting undeclared work
- Enhancing employability programmes
- Supporting the social economy
- Supporting labour migration policy and the integration of refugees and migrants

The wide range of topics covered allows the SRSS to work on the priorities identified by a Member State in the areas of the labour market, education, health and social services.
Health systems

Health system reforms in the EU

Ageing populations, rising expectations for high quality services and technological progress challenge the sustainability of health systems in a context of budget constraints. These factors suggest that structural adjustments and/or reforms are necessary to enhance public health policies and the efficiency and sustainability of health systems, while guaranteeing equitable access to quality services.

Member States are engaging in reforms to address these challenges and to enshrine them in their national health programmes, policies and strategies. The SRSS offers support to build national institutions' capacity to implement reforms and exchange good practices with other Member States, thus complementing other available support.

Examples of technical support provided

Improving universal access to quality health care services
Modernising primary health care (setting up policy dialogues and communication strategies, providing business start-up services for primary health care centres, integrating public health policies in primary care).

Strengthening outpatient care (benchmarking of outpatient specialist services, hands-on facility support to improve the delivery of ambulatory surgeries).

Modernising hospital care (fostering the functional integration of hospitals, master planning, reorganising non-clinical services, defining key performance indicators, clinical guidelines and audits).

Improving the sustainability of long-term care systems
Reviewing the legislative framework for long-term care, establishing and implementing tools for assessing long-term care needs, running and evaluating pilots for the delivery of integrated long-term care services, providing training for interdisciplinary long-term care teams.

Modernising health system governance and efficient public administration
Establishing business processes in social health insurance (claims management, hospital financing systems and coding quality, IT infrastructure, business continuity), building capacity in the Ministry of Health to manage large-scale infrastructure projects, setting up a National e-Health Centre, helping with the implementation of EU legislation (data protection, cross-border healthcare), implementing tools for assessing health system performance, including patient-reported experience and outcome measures, setting up a system for patient safety, institution-building and the operationalisation of centralised public procurement.

Ensuring adequate human resources
Establishing capacity planning, promoting family medicine curricula in post-graduate programmes, defining skills and responsibilities in reformed hospitals and community services in long-term care; increasing competences and amending curricula for primary care professionals.
Education and training

Supporting education and vocational training in Europe

EU policy is designed to support Member States in their efforts to address common challenges, such as unemployment, skills gaps, rising inequality and limited competitiveness. Education and training are crucial for both economic and social progress in that they provide EU citizens with the necessary skills to succeed in the labour market, address technological development and avoid social exclusion.

The SRSS provides Member States with policy advice and targeted expertise to design and implement reforms that will enhance the effectiveness and inclusiveness of their education systems, thereby facilitating the entry of young people into the labour market, addressing social inequality and boosting productivity, growth and innovation.

Examples of technical support provided

Modernisation of administrative structures
Supporting the decentralisation reform of the education system; increasing school autonomy; functional reviews of educational entities and improving their operational arrangements; assistance with the formulation of indicators/objectives for strategic planning.

Continuing professional development for teachers
Supporting the policy implementation of continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers: evaluating current practices and making recommendations for further improvement.

Improving funding mechanisms in education
Supporting Member States’ efforts to improve perspectives for performance-based funding systems for public universities; assessing the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a student loan scheme in higher education.

Improving teaching methods, curricula and assessment
Supporting efforts to take stock of and reflect on current educational practices, in particular use of digital technologies, and recommending and supporting improvements of curricula, teaching methods and assessments.

Addressing inclusion and early school leaving
Supporting national efforts to ensure that education systems provide adequate support also for disadvantaged populations such as migrants, refugees and the disabled.

Modernisation of Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems
Support for the implementation of the National Strategic Frameworks for upgrading VET; helping national administrations to strengthen the link between VET and the labour market, make VET more attractive and improve enrolment rates; supporting the implementation of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework.

Development of IT systems and data-based monitoring tools
Improving the efficiency and quality of education and training systems through the provision of expertise and the exchange of good practices between Member States; drafting business requirement documentation for the development of a school management system to improve day-to-day operation of school entities; helping to monitor the risk of early school leaving.

Improving collaboration in higher education and with research and the private sector
Helping to establish national collaboration and cooperation among universities; ensuring that academic research and innovation lead to private sector innovation.
Social welfare reforms in the European Union

To foster sustainable economic growth and social cohesion in the EU, welfare systems need to adapt to fast-changing social circumstances. Well-functioning welfare systems can enhance social fairness, adequacy of social protection, efficiency in social expenditure and the sustainability of social budgets.

The SRSS helps Member States reform their welfare systems by offering concrete technical support for the design, planning and implementation of social welfare reforms. The multi-stage approach allows the SRSS to support Member States in all phases of the reform process, from improving coordination and the streamlining of social benefits, to supporting specific capacity building action to improve the delivery of social services.

Examples of technical support provided

Conducting social welfare reviews and improving the targeting and adequacy of social benefits
Analysis of all cash and in-kind social benefits, identifying target populations, eligibility criteria and delivery channels; assessment of the fiscal and redistributive impact of tax expenditures; development of evidence-based policy proposals to reduce the fragmentation of benefits and improve their redistributive impact; helping to build the capacity of national and local authorities to implement policy recommendations more effectively.

Introducing minimum income schemes
Establishing key parameters and criteria for a minimum income scheme; supporting its roll-out and organising targeted outreach campaigns; setting up a management information system to make applications, eligibility checks and benefits payments more efficient; developing strategies for linking social assistance with employment services; building capacity in the national administration.

Supporting the development/improvement of social care
Developing comprehensive strategies for the provision of social services that respond better to needs; capacity building of administrations providing social services; support for reforming long-term care and developing needs assessments.

Monitoring and evaluation of social services
Carrying out an assessment of the efficiency of social services provided at the national and local level; supporting the efforts of national authorities to define and implement appropriate processes and methodologies to improve the quality of social services; preparing the methodology to monitor social services and to conduct evaluations; capacity building activities for national and local officials.

Developing social outcomes contracting
Developing of a national strategy and action plan, design of pilot projects to implement innovative, outcome-based forms of procuring social services; creating strategic and operational tools for delivering social impact and innovation in addressing key social inclusion challenges.

Implementing social housing reform
Developing and implementing an action plan to foster a substantial management change from traditional 'housing systems' to innovative social housing solutions; designing measures to raise awareness and ownership of stakeholders; developing the professional skills of the sector’s employees through training needs assessments and the development of a training plan.
Pensions

Pension reform trends in the European Union

The purpose of pension policy is to provide people with an income in their old age that allows them a decent standard of living and protects them from poverty and social exclusion.

However, ageing populations and changing labour markets pose a challenge for the financially sustainable provision of adequate public pensions – all the more so given the importance of pension expenditure as a proportion of public budgets.

Against this background, Member States have adopted many reforms in recent years and continue to discuss the best ways of adjusting pension systems and late-career labour markets to demographic and technological change. These reform efforts can usefully be aided and complemented by technical support. The SRSS facilitates support on all aspects and at all stages of the reform process.

Examples of technical support provided

Administration of pension systems
Holistic assistance for institutional reform or mergers of pension funds, including: organisational development; human resources and customer services; business processes, IT systems and database management; finance, contribution collection and benefit administration, and assets and accounting.

Modernisation of disability assessment and policies
Help with the reform of disability assessment methodologies and administrative processes. Reviewing benefits and services to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegrate people with disabilities.

Review of pension policy
Provision of international experience on pension policy design, e.g. the setting up of funded pension schemes, implementation of EU legislation, review of special pension schemes; technical support to help build capacity for pension modelling.
Labour market policies and the European Union

Ageing populations, greater automation and increased segmentation are all contributing to a structural transformation of European labour markets. In many Member States, slow economic growth and the legacy of the economic crisis add to the challenge.

At EU level, Member-State efforts to address these challenges are supported in various ways, including through legislative initiatives, policy guidance and coordination, monitoring and assessment, mutual learning and, not least, various funding instruments.

The SRSS complements these tools by offering Member States concrete technical support with the design, planning and implementation of labour market reforms. Support can be provided on the revision of key employment policies and building of the administrative capacity in the labour administration.

Examples of topics covered

**Strengthening labour administration**
Review of the institutional framework, roles, responsibilities and duties in the labour administration; assessment of training needs and development of training curricula.

**Reforming public employment services**
Support for the reform of business processes, communication strategies, customer segmentation and HR management.

**Fighting undeclared work**
Capacity building for the labour inspectorate, improving the interoperability of IT systems and databases, comprehensive strategies and policies to fight undeclared work and facilitating social dialogue.

**Enhancing employability programmes**
Hands-on support for the design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a menu of active labour market policies, including public work schemes, apprenticeships, traineeships, job placement schemes and reskilling; complementary action to strengthen capacity for service delivery, such as development of a staff training plan and a new management information system.

**Supporting the social economy**
Support for the development of a legal framework and business support structures for social enterprises; strengthening social enterprises’ access to finance and to markets.

**Supporting labour migration policy and integration of refugees and migrants**
Support for the design and implementation of labour migration policy and integration measures; reviewing migration data collection practices and facilitating bilateral/regional cooperation on labour migration; developing and implementing integration activities in order to foster social and labour market integration; strengthening national and local administrative capacities to implement integration programmes; creating monitoring and evaluation systems.
Strengthening the capacity of the labour administration

- Organisational structure
- Job profiles & training needs
- IT systems & data management
- Customer services
- Evaluation & monitoring
- Legislative framework
- Policy development
Financial Sector & Access to Finance
Examples of topics covered

**Capital market development**
- Equity and bond issuances
- Venture capital
- Development banks
- Sustainable finance

**Financial literacy**
- National strategies
- Capital market literacy

**Insolvency**
- Legal & institutional issues

**Anti-money laundering**
- Supervision
- National strategies

**Financial sector supervision**
- Legal and institutional issues
- Supervision issues
- Non-performing loans
- Consumer protection

**Crisis management**
- Resolution
- Bank insolvency
- Deposit guarantee schemes

**Insurance undertakings**
- Legal and institutional issues
- Supervision
- Regulation

The wide range of topics covered allows the SRSS to engage in discussions on any priority within the financial sector on which a Member State approaches the SRSS.
The Commission’s Capital Markets Union (CMU) initiative was established to mobilise capital in the EU. Europe’s capital markets are still relatively underdeveloped and fragmented, and are at different stages of development and use across the Union.

There is no single measure that will deliver CMU. Instead, there is a range of steps whose impact will be cumulatively significant. The Commission will take forward measures to remove the barriers that stand between investors’ money and investment opportunities and to overcome the obstacles that prevent businesses from reaching investors.

While the Commission can address some barriers, there are also purely national barriers that hinder the efficient allocation of capital. The CMU Action Plan states that “the Commission will, through the Structural Reform Support Service, develop a strategy for providing technical assistance to Member States where needed to reinforce specific capacities of national capital markets.”

In collaboration with Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union and other Directorate-Generals as appropriate, the SRSS will provide technical support to Member States within the framework of CMU.

The SRSS’s approach to the development of capital markets

1. Comprehensive analysis of national impediments to capital market development
2. Where necessary, support to put in place capital markets infrastructure
3. Specialised support to widen and deepen capital markets
Areas of support

The SRSS’s engagement with Member States is based on a comprehensive analysis of the current state of capital market development and identification of national impediments to further development. As a starting point, the SRSS, together with specific providers and experts, offers Member States technical support to conduct such an analysis. If such an analysis is already available, the SRSS will engage directly on the issues that have been identified. The SRSS’s country-specific approach will ensure that technical support for capital market development targets the relevant national issues, thus ensuring the maximum impact of the support.

CMU and capital market development touch upon a wide variety of policy areas, all of which affect the attractiveness of investment opportunities. The SRSS will engage with Member States on any policy area that it considers to be a priority for that Member State, with work focused on seven main areas.

1. Market infrastructure
2. Increasing supply of non-bank finance for companies (private debt and equity)
3. Increasing demand for non-bank finance; information provision, signposting and guidance
4. Maximising the impact of support from promotional banks and national authorities
5. Helping market-ready firms to prepare for an initial public offering
6. Strengthening supervisory capacity
7. Insolvency reform
Financial Sector Supervision and Crisis Management

Working with Member States to ensure high quality financial sector supervision

The strengthening of the Europe’s financial architecture has been initiated in recent years and the rapid evolution of financial innovation requires Member States to continuously upgrade their efforts to safeguard and strengthen financial stability. Such reform efforts to improve financial stability at national level are ongoing and can be usefully complemented by technical support from the SRSS.

Crisis management

Alongside efforts to improve financial sector supervision, Member States are undertaking efforts to better prepare for any crisis situation. The SRSS supports these preparations by providing technical support on both the legal frameworks and effective testing.

Examples of topics covered

Supervisory capacity
Developing more advanced and risk-sensitive supervisory tools, guidelines and models adapted to national specificities that can improve supervisory effectiveness.

Crisis simulation exercises
Conducting simulations of crises, including bank resolutions, to test the operational preparedness, highlight gaps in the framework and ensure that decision-makers are familiar with their roles and the types of decision they may face.

Bank insolvency legal framework
Modernising the insolvency framework for banks to ensure appropriate tools and options for swift and efficient insolvency procedures.

Anti-money-laundering supervision and strategies
The SRSS helped with the development of the national risk assessment on money laundering. Its support included developing a platform for the exchange of information in the banking sector to help identify potential fraud.
Helping Member States to improve the efficiency of their insolvency frameworks

Well-organised insolvency frameworks are essential for the efficient allocation of capital in an economy, facilitating investment and growth. The "Five Presidents' report" on "Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union" of June 2015 listed insolvency law as one of the main bottlenecks preventing the integration of capital markets in the euro area and beyond.

Insolvency rules cover a wide range of measures from pre-insolvency, early intervention, reorganisation and liquidation. A well-functioning insolvency framework is essential for a good business environment as it supports trade and investment and helps economies to manage non-performing loans effectively.

At EU level, the initiative on the insolvency framework is a key deliverable under the CMU Action Plan and the Single Market Strategy mirrored in the Commission’s proposal for a Directive on Insolvency, Restructuring and Second Chance.

The SRSS supports national authorities in their efforts to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the insolvency legal framework and implementation mechanisms.

Examples of topics covered

Insolvency legal framework
Helping to modernise insolvency law and the associated legal framework to provide speedy and effective outcomes for both debtors and creditors.

Impediment review
Identifying impediments and making recommendations for their removal in the operation of the insolvency framework.

Pre-insolvency legal framework
Supporting the development and introduction of mechanisms such as pre-insolvency procedures, early warning systems and out-of-court mechanisms.

Capacity building for insolvency practitioners
Helping with the development of training methodologies and follow-up training for insolvency and restructuring practitioners.
Non-performing loans (NPLs)

Supporting Member States' efforts to address NPLs

NPLs present risks to financial stability and restrict economic growth. They limit bank’s profitability and, if not properly addressed, give rise to solvency risks, thereby posing risks to financial stability. Furthermore, they restrict banks’ ability to engage in new lending and prevent over-indebted borrowers from engaging in productive economic activity, thereby holding back economic growth.

Member States’ reform efforts to address NPLs can be usefully aided and complemented by technical support. The SRSS complements these activities by offering Member States hands-on technical support.

Examples of topics covered

**Improving supervisory capacity**
Helping the supervisor to increase both supervisory knowledge and practice by developing supervisory tools aimed at NPL reduction.

**Courts**
Working with judicial authorities on reforms to improve efficiency.

**Insolvency**
Modernising the insolvency system and the wider legal framework to provide speedy and effective outcomes for both debtors and creditors.

**Wider legal framework**
Assistance to promote efficient out-of-court resolution.

**Information**
Development of national credit registries.

**Tax**
Supporting initiatives to consider the tax implications of NPLs, including the implications of policy on provisioning.

**Asset Management Companies (AMC)**
Assistance for the establishment of AMCs.
Contact details

Further details

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