

# THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND



## Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

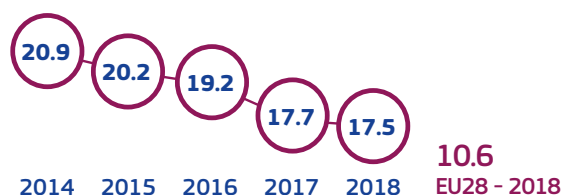
MALTA

### SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 47 million euro has been allocated to such operations in Malta, with 6 658 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Malta.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



▶ Malta has a very high rate of **early school leaving (ESL)**, almost double the EU28 average. While the rate has declined slowly in recent years, Malta remains far from achieving the EU and national target rate of 10%.

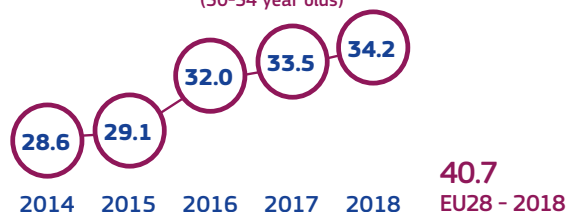
▶ OECD PISA results place Malta's achievements in **reading, mathematics and science** well below the OECD and EU averages.

▶ In 2017, Malta exceeded its national **tertiary educational attainment rate** target of 33% for the first time. The rate of 34.2% in 2018 (compared to the EU average of 40.7%) remains below the EU 2020 target of 40%. Women had a slightly higher attainment rate than men (37% compared to 31.7% in 2018).

▶ The **employment rate of recent graduates** (20-34 years old) with upper secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education was the second highest in the EU in 2018 at 94.8%.

▶ The rate of **adult participation in education and training** remains low in comparison with the EU.

Tertiary educational attainment rate (%)  
(30-34 year olds)



Participation rate in education and training by adults  
aged 25-64 (%) (last 4 weeks)



#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**ESF** European Social Fund

**TO10** Thematic Objective 10

**OP** Operational Programme

**IP** Investment Priority

\* Figures present the situation for ESF operations under Thematic Objective 10 and its four Investment Priorities (IPs) for the programming period 2014-2020 implemented up to the end of 2018, as reported on 1 October 2019. In many instances, operations are not yet complete at this stage, or have only recently started.

\* As one person could participate more than once in ESF operations over time, the number of participations is reported. These figures exclude Technical Assistance.

\* Where the breakdown of participants according to employment status, age, and level of education does not add up to 100%, it means that it was not possible to include characteristics of a number of participants in some OPs.

Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

## ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN MALTA

- ▶ Malta has **one** ESF Operational Programme (OP): '**Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the well-being of society**'.
- ▶ Priority Action 3 has a very **strong focus on education and training**, and includes seven strategic pillars:
  - ▶ governance of education organisations (sustainable funding, governance structure able to innovate, transparent administration);
  - ▶ quality of education (quality assurance of educational programs);
  - ▶ social dimension (equal access to education);
  - ▶ student focus (modernisation, tailored programs, mentoring);
  - ▶ international dimension (international mobility, improve English literacy, harmonising examination methods and qualification);
  - ▶ strategic innovation (training teachers on innovation); and
  - ▶ performance dashboards (data collection and reporting).

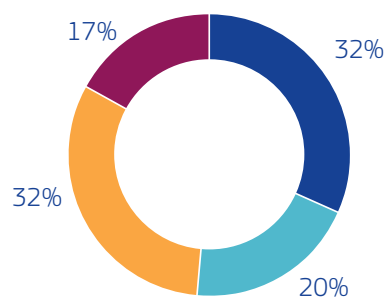
ESF funding was also allocated to **post-doctoral research and fellowship programs** to increase the quality of tertiary education and provide the human capital supply that can effectively contribute towards R&I investment

36% of total ESF funding<sup>1</sup>...

€ 47 424 810

...is allocated to the following T010 investment priorities: **early school leaving (32%)**, **access to quality tertiary and equivalent education (20%)**, **enhancing access to lifelong learning (32%)**, and **improving the labour market relevance of education and training (17%)**.<sup>2</sup>

Allocation of ESF T010 funds



- Reducing and preventing early school leaving - IP10.i
- Improving quality and access to tertiary education - IP10.ii
- Enhancing access to lifelong learning - IP10.iii
- Improving the labour market relevance of education and training - IP10.iv

## STATE OF PLAY

100% of planned resources under T010 had been allocated in 2018, with 40% spent.

Number of overall participations in T010 operations by the end of 2018:

6 658

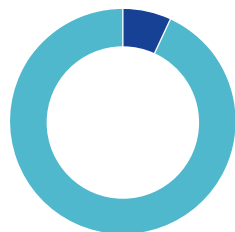
- ▶ **1 755** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ **829** participations in operations to improve the access to, and quality of, tertiary and equivalent education
- ▶ **4 074** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning
- ▶ **0** participations in operations to improve the labour market relevance of education and training

<sup>1</sup> This includes EU-only funding and co-financing from the Member State.

<sup>2</sup> The total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



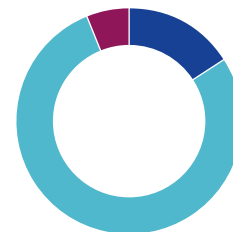
0% (29) Unemployed  
7% (465) Inactive<sup>3</sup>  
93% (6,164) Employed

Sex

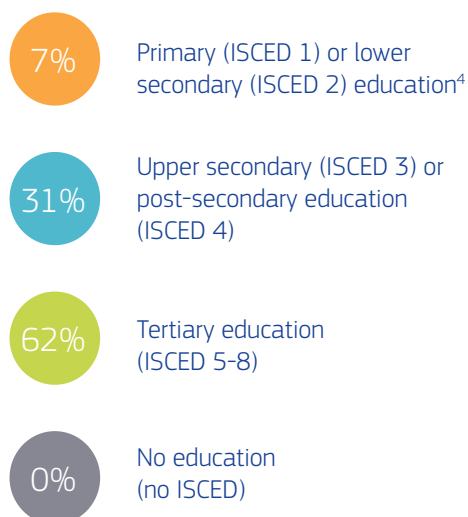
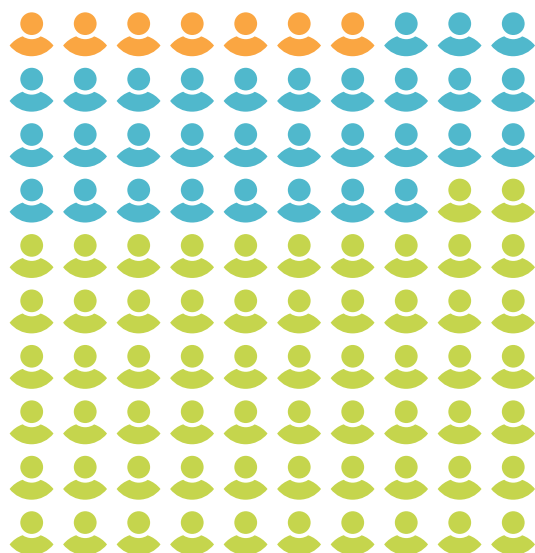


55% Women  
45% Men

Age



16% (1,072) <25 years  
78% (5,207) 25-54 years  
6% (379) >54 years



484  
Migrants

50  
Other disadvantaged

53  
Participants with disabilities

28  
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Malta include<sup>5</sup>:

- ▶ **775** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
  - ▶ **24** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
  - ▶ **157** participants went into education or training
  - ▶ **511** participants gained a qualification upon leaving
  - ▶ **12,898** participants moved into employment upon leaving
- ▶ ESF activities to tackle early school leaving in Malta focused mainly on building the capacity of education professionals, particularly their digital skills. The activities reached 1,755 participants. At the end of 2018, the percentage of participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in upskilling and retraining programmes under this IP was 97%, exceeding the target of 87%.
- ▶ The Investing in Skills scheme continued to promote access to training and in 2018 supported 2,870 participants with a total investment of €582,000 for a total of 183 SMEs and 34 large unique enterprises. An awareness campaign has been launched to further increase the uptake of the scheme.

<sup>3</sup> The inactive population can include pre-school children, school children, students, pensioners and housewives or -men, for example, provided that they are not working and not available or looking for work.

<sup>4</sup> ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

<sup>5</sup> Participants' data are collected when starting an operation. Data on results are collected at the end of an operation or even later. Because of this time lag the two sets of data (participations and results) should not be directly compared.

## LESSONS LEARNED SO FAR

### ► Coherence

ESF operations are coherent with other EU funded activities in Malta e.g. for example the ERDF and national funding to improve physical infrastructure in VET colleges. Equally, ESF operations build on the achievements of preceding programmes, and are designed to avoid duplication of existing efforts: for example, ESF funding to tackle ESL focuses on teachers rather than pupils, to ensure complementarity with an existing large-scale ESL reduction programme.

### ► VET sector reform

Malta has used ESF funding to create new Masters degrees in vocational education and training, with accompanying grants for students. The programmes are developed in conjunction with, and in response to demand from, the private sector.

### ► Procedural issues

Due the small size of the island and the limited number of organisations with the capacity to participate in ESF operations, the ESF Managing Authority has had to be proactive in providing training and guidance to participating organisations in Malta.

### ► IT education and family learning

ESF funding has been used to provide over 11 000 students with a tablet and trained over 1 500 teachers to make effective teaching use of these devices. Students bring the tablet home, thereby involving their parents and grandparents in digital education.

### ► Time lag to measure impacts

There is a tension between the 'demand for results' in EU-funded programmes and the time needed for education programmes to show outcomes. It will take years for cohorts of students to pass through newly developed VET courses and begin having an impact on the Maltese labour market and the economy.

### ► Impact on research capacity

Malta has dedicated some of its funding from ESF TO10 to postdoctoral scholars (e.g. the REACH HIGH programme) with the aim of boosting the country's research capacity and future potential.

## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### ► REACH HIGH Scholars Programme – Postdoctoral Grants

ESF funding is used to provide postdoctoral grants to researchers in Malta. The country is expected to derive economic benefits through the effects of human resource development, R&I and knowledge diffusion on technological innovation.

### ► Investing in Skills

Investing in Skills promotes access to training of workers in the Maltese labour market, with a view to increasing productivity and enhancing adaptability. It seeks to increase and/or improve the knowledge and skills of employees through funds granted by this scheme.

### ► ENDEAVOUR Scholarships Scheme

The ESF has invested in improving the accessibility and quality of tertiary education to make it more aligned to labour market needs. By the beginning of 2019, 775 students had signed scholarship grants to the value of EUR 7.4 million.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

European Commission, Study supporting the evaluation of ESF support to education and training (Thematic Objective 10)

The ESF in Malta: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=391>

Website of the ESF in Malta: <https://meusac.gov.mt/funding-opportunity/european-social-fund/>

