

# THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND



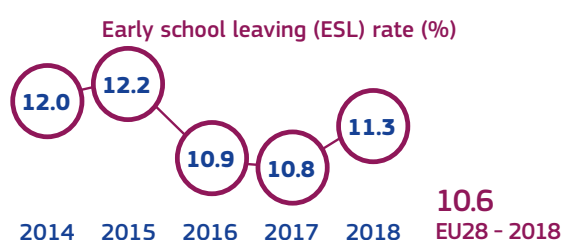
## Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018

### ESTONIA

### SUMMARY

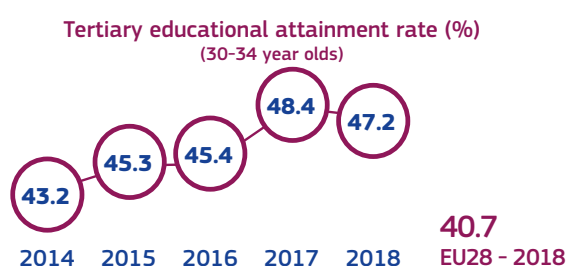
ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 239 million euro has been allocated to such operations in Estonia, with 42 675 participations having taken place by the end of 2018. This factsheet summarises the main actions, outputs, results and lessons learned so far in the use of this funding in Estonia.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES



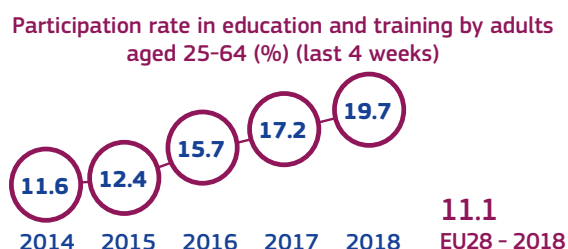
► The **early school leaving (ESL) rate** in Estonia is above the EU28 average and has not fallen significantly in recent years. The gender gap remains significant (the rate for men in 2018 was 16% and 6.4% for women) despite a recent improvement.

► Due to demographic trends, the number of pupils in rural schools has decreased significantly, and the use of space in rural schools is, on average, less efficient as in urban schools.



► Although OECD PISA results in 2015 show that the **proportion of low-performing students in Estonia is relatively low**, Estonia may struggle to reach its 2020 target to reduce the percentage of young people who do not acquire upper secondary education to 9.5%.

► The **tertiary educational attainment rate** of 47.2% in 2018 is above the EU28 average and exceeds the EU 2020 target of 40%. Women have a significantly higher attainment rate than men (57.5% compared to 37.7% in 2018).



► The **participation rate of the adult population in education and training** is above the EU28 average and is on an upward trend. The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 provides a framework for the provision of lifelong learning in the country, and set a national target rate of 20% by 2020.

► The level of **expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP** in Estonia has decreased since 2009 but it is still among the highest in the EU and higher than the EU average (5.8% compared to 4.6% in 2017). Expenditure on pre-primary and primary education and higher education are significantly higher than the EU average.

#### 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 ESTONIA

- ▶ There is **1** multifund operational programme for Estonia which includes ESF.
- ▶ The OP has the following priorities relevant to Thematic Objective 10 (TO10):
  - ▶ **reducing school and education drop-out rates** and supporting career choices through high-quality educational support services;
  - ▶ **improving the teaching competence among teaching staff, school principals and youth workers** in order to implement a teaching approach that supports personal and social development and enhances the learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurial ability of each learner at all levels and in all forms of education;
  - ▶ introducing **modern and innovative** study materials;
  - ▶ study programmes in vocational and higher education institutions are **more in line with labour market needs** and support entrepreneurial ability;
  - ▶ increasing the share of adults with professional and occupational qualifications, improving key competences for lifelong learning, and improving employability.

35% of total ESF funding<sup>1</sup>...

€239 754 442

...is allocated to the following TO10 investment priorities: **early school leaving (51%), access to quality tertiary and equivalent education (5%), enhancing access to lifelong learning (44%).**

Allocation of ESF TO10 funds



## STATE OF PLAY

79% of planned resources under TO10 had been allocated in 2018, with 33% spent.

Number of overall participations in TO10 operations by the end of 2018:

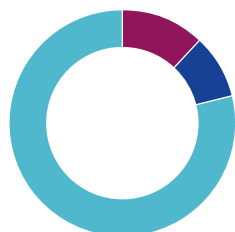
42 675

- ▶ **7 735** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ **0** participations in operations to improve the access to, and quality of, tertiary and equivalent education
- ▶ **34 940** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning

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

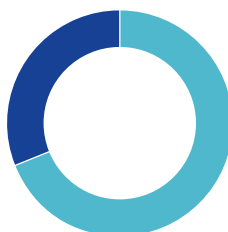
## PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



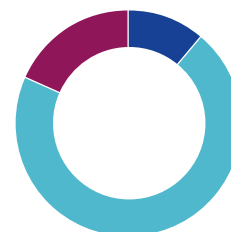
**12% (5 317)** Unemployed  
**9% (3 866)** Inactive<sup>2</sup>  
**78% (33 096)** Employed

Sex

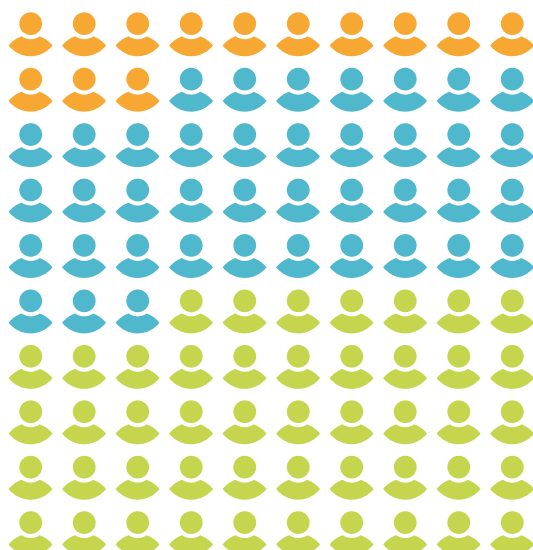


**69%** Women  
**31%** Men

Age



**11% (4 684)** <25 years  
**70% (30 052)** 25-54 years  
**18% (7 543)** >54 years



13%

Primary (ISCED 1) or lower  
secondary (ISCED 2) education<sup>3</sup>

40%

Upper secondary (ISCED 3) or  
post-secondary education  
(ISCED 4)

46%

Tertiary education  
(ISCED 5-8)

0%

No education  
(no ISCED)

**12 251**  
Migrants

**4 014**  
Other disadvantaged

**2 567**  
Participants with  
disabilities

**7**  
Homeless

Key achievements to date of ESF T010 activities in Estonia include<sup>4</sup>:

- ▶ **34 401** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
  - ▶ **21** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
  - ▶ **5 913** participants went into education or training
  - ▶ **26 636** participants gained a qualification
  - ▶ **1 831** participants moved into employment upon leaving
- ▶ In three of the four programme-specific result indicators for ESF operations to reduce the rate of early school leaving, more than 90% of the target had been reached by 2018.
- ▶ In ESF operations to enhance access to lifelong learning, the share of participants in adult education who obtain a qualification or competence certificate upon completion is 94%, greatly exceeding the 2023 target of 80%.
- ▶ Six months after leaving an ESF operation, 3 747 participants were in employment (including self employment) or in an otherwise improved labour market situation.

<sup>2</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>3</sup> ISCED is the UN reference classification for organising education programmes and related qualifications by education levels and fields.

<sup>4</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

### ► Reducing early school leaving

This is still a challenge for the country, and ESF operations have had a modest effect overall, despite some programme-specific indicators having been met. A more interdisciplinary approach and greater intersectoral cooperation may be required in order to achieve success.

### ► Targets for ESF operations

Approximately one third of the ESF budget for T010 operations had been spent by 2018, but many programme-specific indicators were showing results close to the overall target levels. This raises the question whether more challenging and ambitious targets could have been set.

### ► Success in lifelong learning

The expansion of lifelong learning opportunities has been particularly successful in Estonia. The variety of services offered - for example in-service training for adults, more opportunities for work-based learning and training for unemployed people - has helped to increase the adult participation rate in education and training, which is well on the way to reaching the national target of 20% by 2020.

### ► Coherence with national and other EU programmes

ESF operations are consistent with the priorities outlined in the 'Estonia 2020' National Reform Programme. Investments in education infrastructure using ERDF funding, for example, in special education needs schools, align with ESF operations to increase the pedagogical ability of teachers.

### ► Labour market needs

Although the target numbers of apprentices have progressed as expected, the low interest among employers and young people in work-based learning is a challenge to expand work-based learning opportunities funded by the ESF.

## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### ► Labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting (OSKA)

OSKA is a forecasting tool to anticipate labour market and skills needs developed with the support of the ESF. OSKA conclusions and recommendations are based on expert panels that include representatives of trade associations and employers, educational institutions and the public sector. Economic sectors are analysed in-depth once every five or six years, with monitoring in the following years. A general report on changes in labour requirements, labour market developments and trends over the next 10 years is prepared annually.

### ► Promoting Adult Education and Improving Learning Opportunities

The ESF co-funds around 910 courses at vocational education and training institutions that are made available to adults free of charge. The courses are targeting primarily low skilled people who have so far not participated in lifelong learning or have only basic and secondary education. The courses last between 20 and 160 hours and are structured in a way that accommodates working adults who want to update their skills.

### ► Career guidance

ESF funds are used to set up educational support services at county level to provide both educational and career guidance services in an integrated manner. In particular, funding is used to provide specialist support services for pupils in schools in smaller municipalities where the limited number of pupils does not enable full-time specialists to be hired.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

National evaluation: <https://www.struktuurifondid.ee/eng/about/evaluation>

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

The ESF in Estonia: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=377&langId=en>

Website of the ESF in Estonia: <https://www.struktuurifondid.ee/et>

