

# THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

## Support to Education and Training: 2014-2018



**POLAND**

### SUMMARY

ESF Thematic Objective 10 funding is used to support education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning. Over 4 billion euro has been allocated to such operations in Poland, with 1 357 453 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 Poland.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

Early school leaving (ESL) rate (%)



► The rate of **early school leaving** has traditionally been low in Poland and has decreased slightly in recent years, from 5.7% in 2012 to 4.8% in 2018, well below the EU average of 10.6% in 2018.

► The **percentage of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)** in Poland fell by almost three percentage points between 2011 (11.5%) and 2018 (8.7%) and remains below the EU average.

► According to the 2015 OECD PISA results, Poland has a relatively low proportion of low-achieving students in **reading, mathematics and science**.

► The **tertiary educational attainment** rate continues to be above the EU average in Poland: in 2018 it was 45.7% compared with an EU average of 40.7%. The attainment rate among women is significantly higher than among men – in 2018 it was 55.5% and 36.3% respectively, a much higher gender gap than the EU28 average.

► The proportion of the Polish population aged 30-34 with **tertiary level education** is above the EU average, but Polish universities do not score well in world rankings and are characterised by low internationalisation.

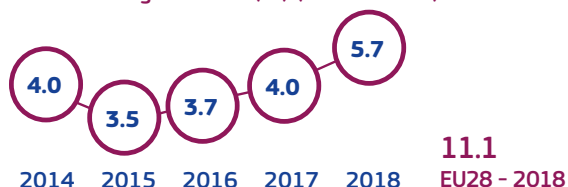
► There has been an increase in **VET participation** in recent years, but a considerable mismatch remains between the skills required by employers and those offered by university graduates.

► The **adult participation rate in lifelong learning** has been continuously far below the EU28 average in recent years. The rate in 2018 of 5.7% was far below the EU28 average of 11.1%.

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.

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## ESF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS IN POLAND

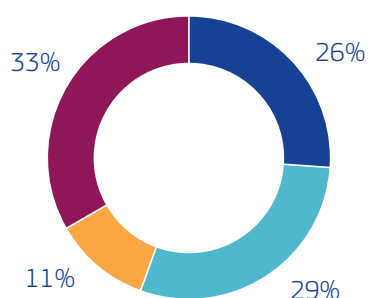
- ▶ There is **one** national OP (OP Knowledge Education Growth) and **16** regional OPs in Poland.
- ▶ The **national OP addresses all four investment priorities of T010**. In general, it finances projects aimed at the development of modern tools and curricula, training management staff in general education and teacher trainers, and developing an integrated qualifications system.
- ▶ The **16 regional OPs cover three out of four T010 priorities** (they don't cover IP 10.ii) between them. Overall, they focus on funding projects targeted directly at teachers and students and focuses on widening adult education and improving the relevance of VET.

31% of total ESF funding<sup>1</sup>...

**€4 739 296 786**

...is allocated to the following T010 investment priorities: **early school leaving (26%)**, **access to quality tertiary and equivalent education (29%)**, **enhancing access to lifelong learning (11%)**, and **improving the labour market relevance of education and training (33%)**.

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

66% of planned resources under T010 had been allocated in 2018, with 21% spent.

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

**1 357 453**

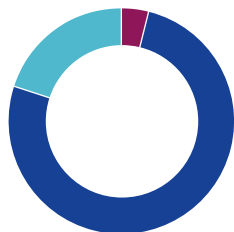
- ▶ **732 252** participations in operations to reduce and prevent early school leaving
- ▶ **103 233** participations in operations to improve the access to, and quality of, tertiary and equivalent education
- ▶ **208 682** participations in operations to enhance access to lifelong learning
- ▶ **313 286** 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.

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## PARTICIPANT PROFILES WHEN RECEIVING SUPPORT

Employment status



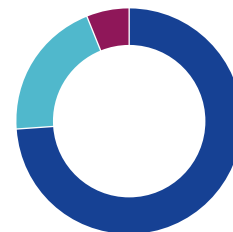
**4% (46 007)** Unemployed  
**76% (1 034 529)** Inactive<sup>2</sup>  
**20% (275 775)** Employed

Sex

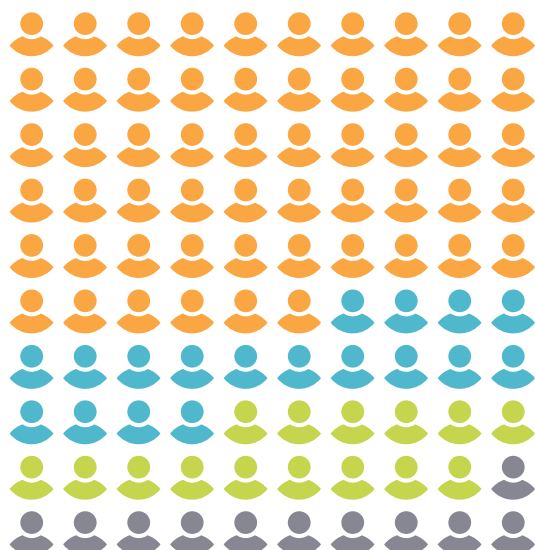


**55%** Women  
**45%** Men

Age



**74% (1 001 265)** <25 years  
**20% (276 114)** 25-54 years  
**6% (78 932v)** >54 years



56%

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

18%

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

15%

Tertiary education  
(ISCED 5-8)

11%

No education  
(no ISCED)

**14 978**  
Migrants

**410 194**  
Other disadvantaged

**48 983**  
Participants with  
disabilities

**2 071**  
Homeless

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

- ▶ **173 412** successful results have been achieved to date following participation in an activity funded by ESF T010, of which:
  - ▶ **6 066** inactive participants went on to engage in job searching
  - ▶ **10 746** participants went into education or training
  - ▶ **151 703** participants gained a qualification
  - ▶ **4 897** participants moved into employment upon leaving
- ▶ Internships and work-placements appear to be some of the most effective operations funded under T010 in Poland, enabling participants, particularly in rural areas, to gain market-relevant skills.
- ▶ In the regional OP for Pomerania (Pomorskie), T010 operations have helped to develop a coordinated VET offer that is relevant to the labour market in the region and is supporting the development of vocational centres of excellence.

<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

### ► Effective operations relating to internships and work placements

Internships and work placement operations appear to be some of the most effective operations funded by the ESF in Poland, enabling participants to gain market-relevant skills. Participants from rural areas report a particularly high level of satisfaction with this type of support.

### ► Good alignment of national and regional OPs

The national OP and the regional OPs are largely complementary with each other, with the national OP focusing on support for systemic and procedural change and the regional OPs focusing on more direct support.

### ► Implementation challenges

The implementation of TO10 operations in Poland has been negatively impacted by reform to the education system, which has resulted in delays in the implementation of projects and frequently the need to redirect financing away from lower-secondary schools which have been phased out.

### ► Relevance to target groups

The OPs in Poland are overall relevant to the needs of the main target groups, which are principally young people, those with low levels of qualifications, those with special educational needs and inactive people.

### ► Strategic approach

In the Pomerania (Pomorskie) region, close cooperation and lengthy discussions with potential beneficiaries prior to the allocation of funds were seen to be highly effective as they allowed the MA to coordinate interventions at the regional level and ensure that the operations funded are based on real needs.

### ► Sustainability of systemic change projects

Experience from the Pomerania region shows that operations implemented by local governments, rather than schools themselves, allow for making systemic improvements which are part of a wider, long-term educational strategy. A good example of such an operation is the establishment of a coordinated VET school system, which will remain irrespective of further EU funding.

## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### ► Motivational initiatives for students of Pomeranian VET schools

This operation has promoted access to various forms of vocational training and support to VET students and teachers. This training and support take the form of internships, apprenticeships, study visits to employers and classes at universities. For teachers, practical vocational training is offered in relation to specific key sectors.

### ► Development and provision of multimedia resources supporting career guidance

Under the national OP in Poland, an IT tool has been developed to provide information and exchanges between employers and individuals in relation to employment. Information can be posted in relation to 230 professions. This tool is implemented through the website for educational and vocational counselling of the Education Development Centre (*Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji*).

### ► The gifted of Pomerania (*Zdolni z pomorza*)

The "Gifted of Pomerania" project is part of a strategic intervention comprising a group of 26 projects. The project aims to provide systemic support to particularly gifted students from the Pomeranian region who have above-average educational achievement levels in the fields of mathematics, physics, computer science, biology, chemistry and social science. It is targeted at primary school learners and is implemented through two universities, which provide support to the beneficiaries.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mid-term evaluation of the OP Knowledge, Education and Development 2014-2020: [https://www.power.gov.pl/media/78644/Mid-term\\_RK\\_11\\_09.pdf](https://www.power.gov.pl/media/78644/Mid-term_RK_11_09.pdf)

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

The ESF in Poland: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=393>

Website of the ESF in Poland: <http://www.funduszeuropejskie.gov.pl/>

