THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND: SUPPORTING SOCIAL DIALOGUE AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS

Presentation of research findings to date

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THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2014-2020: SOME BASIC FACTS (1)

Concentration, simplification and result orientation

- Fewer thematic priorities
- Includes possibility of TO11: 'Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration'
- Simplifying implementation and better guidance on results measurement

THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2014-2020: SOME BASIC FACTS (2)

Greater emphasis on involvement of social partners/stakeholders

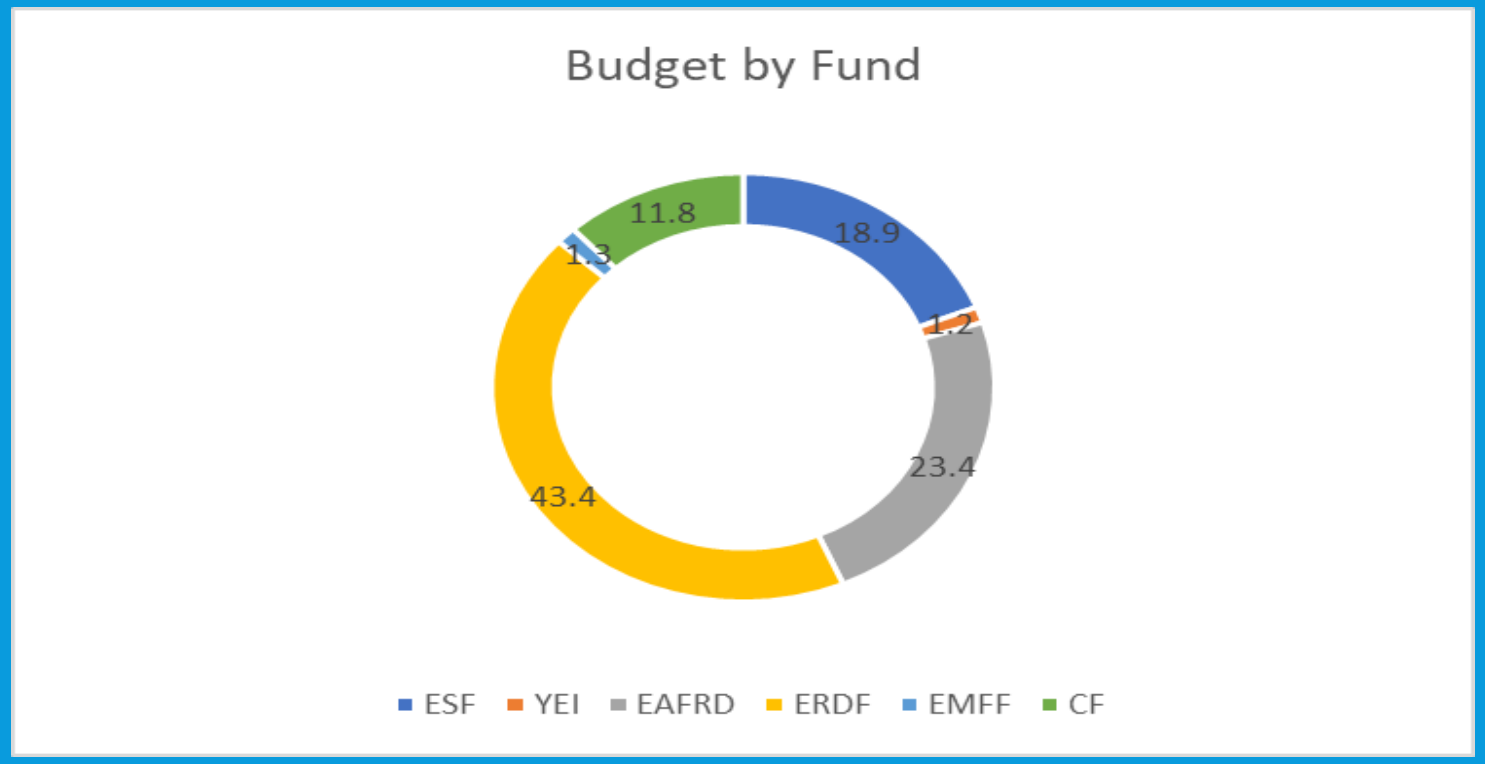
- European Code of Conduct on Partnership
- Preamble (para 17) of ESF Regulation emphasises importance of social partners in good governance of ESF
- Article 6 of Regulation calls on Member States to dedicate an appropriate amount of ESF resources to social partner capacity building 'according to needs'

> To encourage adequate participation of the social partners in actions supported by the ESF, the managing authorities of an operational programme in a region defined in Article 90(2)(a) or (b) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 or in a Member State eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund shall ensure that, according to the needs, an appropriate amount of ESF resources is allocated to capacity building activities, in the form of training, networking measures, and strengthening of the social dialogue, and to activities jointly undertaken by the social partners'.

- Among common output indicators is the number of projects fully or partly implemented by social partners

THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2014-2020: SOME BASIC FACTS (3)

- Total ESIF funds 2014-2020: € 638,161,790,114
- Total ESF 2014-2020: € 120,461,019,673



ESF EXPENDITURE 2014-2020: SOME BASIC FACTS

Country	Total ESF (excluding YEI)	ESF as share of ESIF (%)	TO11 as share of ESF (%)	Share of total ESF expenditure decided (%)	Share of total ESF spent (%)
BE	2,195,768,221	36.3	not foreseen	63.9	1
CZ	4,202,555,619	13	3.9	34.2	5.3
DK	399,225,121	17.7	not foreseen	34.1	5
EE	690,561,190	11.5	5.1	71	5.9
EL	4,528,243,327	18.1	8	31.2	13
ES	9,721,065,462	18.2	not foreseen	17.1	0.6
IE	948,582,284	15.5	not foreseen	99.8	0
LT	1,288,825,262	12.9	13.7	26.8	10.6
LV	717,111,529	10.4	3	63.2	4
PL	15,217,080,311	14.5	1.3	18.5	3.8
SK	2,461,341,865	12.3	13.1	27.6	6

STUDY METHODOLOGY

- Desk research (February/March 2017 and ongoing)
- Survey of national members of BusinessEurope, ETUC, CEEP and UEAPME
- Survey of social partner members of Monitoring Committees
- Interviews
- Progress report
- Two regional workshops
- Final report
- Closing conference

RESULTS OF SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS TO DATE: NUMBER OF RESPONSES

- As of September 2017: 53 responses to survey of national members
- 33 responses to survey of social partner members of Monitoring Committees
- 15 interviews have been carried out (BG, LV, HR, LT, PL, AT, DE, EE)

IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLE: REALISED IN PRACTICE?

- Largely considered to be implemented in the make up of Monitoring Committees of the ESF: 32% of respondents considered it to be fully implemented and 57% considered in implemented to some extent
- Some evidence of slightly different assessments between employer and trade union organisations
- 33% of respondents considered the partnership principle to be implemented fully in practice; 56% stated it is implemented to some extent. 10% (6 respondents) argued it was not implemented at all.

EXPERIENCE OF MONITORING COMMITTEES: PARTICIPATION AND INFLUENCE

- 55% of social partners always participated, while 32% only participate sometimes (13% never)
- 43% argued they always actively contribute (43% sometimes and 14% never)
- 37% of respondents consider their views are never taken into account in MCs (46% sometimes, 17% always)

CONCERNS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLE

- Not all relevant partners are involved
- Social partners are not given greater importance than NGOs
- Partnership is more 'window dressing' than reality
- Size of MCs means that social partners with their limited votes cannot exert much influence
- MCs run by arm's length organisations mean that decisions are taken elsewhere
- Decision making process in MCs not always transparent
- Many important decisions already taken prior to the meeting of the MC

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

- Involvement of social partners already at the planning stage
- Social partners to be given specific role (veto rights?)
- Ensure MCs are fully participatory and documents are shared well in advance to ensure meaningful participation
- Training for MC members to fully understand all documentation etc (especially for new members)
- Significant improvements are reported by some countries as a result of Code of Conduct, particularly where this is translated into national law
- Responsibility on ministry to ensure social partners are involved in MCs of all OPs and in all regions

ESF SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL PARTNER CAPACITY BUILDING: ARE POSSIBILITIES FULLY EXPLOITED?

- Lack of coherent and comprehensive information about resources available for social partner capacity building; indications are possibilities are not fully used

Country	Total TO11 for social partner capacity building	Total ESF for social partner capacity building
BE	n/a	18000000 in OP Wallonie for SP and NGOs
CZ	not known	3,700,000
DK	n/a	not foreseen
EE	not known	
EL	not known	17,000,000
ES	n/a	not foreseen
IE	n/a	
LT	not known	3,800,000
LV	not known	not known
PL	not known	5,000,000 in OP for Education development alone
SK	not known	no specific amount earmarked according to COM questionnaire

AWARENESS OF AVAILABILITY OF ESIF FUNDING

- 75% of respondents aware of Article 6 requirement to allocate ESF funding to capacity building (trade unions tended to be more aware)
- 28% stated there was a specific amount allocated to implement Article 6 requirements while 26% argued a horizontal approach is taken – significant degree of uncertainty and limited hard numbers
- 60% aware of TO11; 43% of respondents argued the OP had a specific allocation for SP capacity building under this TO (23% no, 28% don't know)

REASONS FOR LACK OF SOCIAL PARTNER CAPACITY BUILDING FUNDING

- Lack of Social Partner involvement in planning phase
- Lack of emphasis on this priority by EC and national ministries
- Capacity building funding seen to be mainly required for public institutions
- Not considered necessary where social partners are already strongly established
- Lack of awareness of possibilities for such funding
- 58% of respondents thought that funding should have been allocated (this includes some countries where funding is available but potentially considered insufficient)

MAIN PRIORITIES FOR SOCIAL PARTNER CAPACITY BUILDING

- Survey findings on priorities considered 'very important or somewhat important'
  - Greater influence on decision making on European issues
  - Additional staffing related to European issues
  - Training on European issues

- Survey findings on priorities considered 'very important'
  - Greater influence on decision making on ESF
  - Greater resources linked to EU social dialogue agenda
  - Greater resources for developing social dialogue at national level

MAIN BARRIERS TO ACCESSING AND USING FUNDING

- Barriers to accessing funding:
  - Lack of suitable budget lines/priorities/programmes
  - Complex application processes
- Barriers to implementing projects:
  - Heavy administrative and monitoring requirements
  - Lack of dedicated staffing

Currently limited examples of projects – any further examples?

- *Other barriers?*
- *How could these be overcome?*

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

- Some improvements have been made as a result of Code of Conduct and emphasis of involvement of social partners in Regulation
- **However, work still remains to be done**
- Possibilities for funding for social partner capacity building not fully exploited
- Implementation lags behind and decisions still being taken
- **Need for better monitoring of information on use of social partner capacity building opportunities**
- **Limited examples of social partner projects**
- **Need for better opportunities to exchange information/experiences**
- **Clarify needs for improvements**

QUESTIONS

Implementation of partnership principle

- *Why in some cases only implemented to some extent or not at all; what could be improved?*
- *What has been the precise impact of the Code of Conduct?*
- *Barriers to full implementation?*
- *Suggestions for improvement?*

Participation and impact in Monitoring Committees

- *Why is participation/contribution patchy – is this related to perceived impact?*
- *What can be improved to ensure views are taken into account?*

QUESTIONS

Awareness of funding opportunities

- *More information on funds available?*
- *Progress in planning?*
- *Reasons for limited knowledge on funds available?*
- *Which method of implementation is more effective?*
- *Reasons for lack of social partner capacity building funding?*

Priorities for social partner capacity building

- *Other priorities?*
- *Precise support needed from*
  - *EU social partners*
  - *Commission*
  - *National level?*