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Abstract

The [European Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \('EaSI'\) 2014-2020](#)¹ is a financing instrument managed directly by the European Commission (EC) to promote high-quality and sustainable employment, adequate and decent social protection, social inclusion and poverty reduction and prevention, and fair working conditions. Following the proclamation of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)², which sets out guidelines for the support of fair and well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems, the EaSI programme is an essential tool in assisting the Commission to reinforce the EU's social dimension.

Making the European Pillar of Social Rights a reality for citizens is a joint responsibility. While most of the tools to deliver on the pillar are in the hands of Member States, as well as social partners and civil society, the European Union institutions – and the European Commission in particular – can help by setting the framework and giving the direction, using instruments such as EaSI. Among other initiatives, EaSI co-finances actions of public, private and civil society organisations enabling them to deliver new services, assess existing policies or develop new ones, and exchange good practices in the fields of employment, social protection, working conditions, geographical labour mobility, microfinance and social entrepreneurship.

To facilitate the dissemination of the achieved results, this report presents examples of 19 projects supported by the Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI). The aims of the presented projects ranged from supporting reforms of national social protection systems, enhancing administrative cooperation on posting of workers, raising awareness on how young people can benefit from the [Youth Guarantee](#)³ to boosting the social finance market and promoting intra-EU geographical mobility.

Another main part of the report presents the results of 11 EaSI-supported organisations active in the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction and access to finance. The presented organisations aimed to support the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as Commission initiatives carried out towards policy objectives of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#), [the Social Investment Package](#) and [the Political Guidelines of the Commission](#) at both national and local level. In addition, they contributed to the main EU governance processes such as the [Open Method of Coordination \(OMC\) on social protection and social inclusion](#) and the [European Semester](#).

The report also includes a description of the methodology that was applied to collect information on the presented actions and to analyse their results. The report also seeks to emphasise the European added value of the described actions and to single out potential good practices.

We believe that this report will be beneficial in two major ways. First, it will serve as guidance for public and private institutions and civil society organisations wishing to apply for EU funding. Second, it will provide policymakers with innovative ideas to design and implement new policy interventions to boost employment and ensure adequate social protection across the EU.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_en

³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>

Kurzfassung

Das [Programm für Beschäftigung und soziale Innovation \(EaSI\) 2014-2020](#)⁴ ist ein unmittelbar von der Europäischen Kommission verwaltetes Finanzierungsinstrument, mit dem die Kommission hochwertige und nachhaltige Beschäftigung, einen angemessenen und menschenwürdigen Sozialschutz, soziale Eingliederung, Armutsbekämpfung und -prävention und faire Arbeitsbedingungen fördert. Als Teil der [Europäischen Säule der sozialen Rechte](#)⁵, die unter anderem Leitlinien für die Förderung gerechter und gut funktionierender Arbeitsmärkte und Sozialsysteme enthält, dient das Programm EaSI der Kommission als wirksames Instrument, um die soziale Dimension der EU zu stärken.

Damit die Europäische Säule der sozialen Rechte für die Bürger Europas zur Realität wird, müssen alle Ebenen zusammenarbeiten. Zwar liegen die meisten politischen Instrumente, die für die Säule relevant sind, in den Händen der Mitgliedstaaten, der Sozialpartner und der Zivilgesellschaft, dennoch können die Organe der Europäischen Union, und insbesondere die Europäische Kommission, unter anderem mit Hilfe des Programms EaSI günstige Rahmenbedingungen schaffen und Ziele vorgeben. So stellt das Programm EaSI unter anderem eine Kofinanzierung für Maßnahmen staatlicher, privater und zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen bereit, mit denen diese in den Politikfeldern Beschäftigung, Sozialschutz, Arbeitsbedingungen, räumliche Mobilität von Arbeitnehmern, Mikrofinanzierung und soziales Unternehmertum neue Dienstleistungen erbringen, politische Strategien auswerten oder neue politische Ideen entwickeln sowie bewährte Verfahren austauschen können.

Um die Verbreitung der erzielten Ergebnisse zu verbessern, stellt dieser Bericht beispielhaft 19 Projekte vor, die im Rahmen des Programms für Beschäftigung und soziale Innovation (EaSI) gefördert wurden. Die vorgestellten Projekte dienen unter anderem dazu, Reformen der Sozialsysteme in den Mitgliedstaaten zu unterstützen, die Kooperation von Behörden bei der Vermittlung von Arbeitnehmern zu verbessern, junge Menschen über die Vorteile und Möglichkeiten der [Jugendgarantie](#)⁶ zu informieren, den Finanzmarkt für Sozialunternehmen zu verbessern und die geografische Mobilität innerhalb der EU zu erleichtern.

In einem weiteren Hauptteil des Berichts werden die Ergebnisse von 11 EaSI-unterstützten Organisationen vorgestellt, die sich für die Förderung der sozialen Eingliederung, die Armutsbekämpfung und den Zugang zu Finanzmitteln einsetzen. Die Maßnahmen der vorgestellten Organisationen hatten das Ziel, die Umsetzung der Europäischen Säule der sozialen Rechte und anderer Initiative der Kommission, mit deren Hilfe diese die im Rahmen der [Strategie Europa 2020, des Sozialinvestitionspakets](#) und der [politischen Leitlinien der Kommission](#) definierten politischen Ziele fördert, auf nationaler und lokaler Ebene zu unterstützen. Außerdem tragen sie zu den wichtigsten Verfahren des Europäischen Regierens bei, das heißt zu der [offenen Koordinierungsmethode für Sozialschutz und soziale Eingliederung \(OKM\)](#) und zum [Europäischen Semester](#).

Ferner enthält der Bericht eine Beschreibung der Methoden, die angewendet wurden, um Daten über die vorgestellten Maßnahmen zu erfassen und deren Ergebnisse zu

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=de>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_de

⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=de>

analysieren. Unter anderem möchte der Bericht den europäischen Mehrwert der untersuchten Maßnahmen betonen und bewährten Verfahren vorstellen.

Wir hoffen, dass sich dieser Bericht als hilfreich erweist, indem er erstens öffentlichen und privaten Institutionen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen, die Fördermittel der EU beantragen möchten, als Leitfaden dient und zweitens politischen Entscheidungsträgern innovative Ideen zur Entwicklung und Umsetzung neuer politischer Maßnahmen vorstellt, mit denen Arbeitsplätze geschaffen und europaweit ein angemessener Sozialschutz gewährleistet werden können.

Résumé

[Le programme européen pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale \(« EaSI »\) 2014-2020⁷](#) est un instrument de financement géré directement par la Commission européenne visant à promouvoir des emplois durables et de haute qualité, une protection sociale décente et adaptée, l'inclusion sociale, la prévention et la réduction de la pauvreté, et des conditions de travail justes. Après [la proclamation du socle européen⁸](#) des droits sociaux qui fixe les lignes directrices pour soutenir des marchés du travail et systèmes de protection sociale équitables et performants, le programme EaSI représente un outil essentiel pour aider la Commission à renforcer la dimension sociale de l'UE.

Faire du socle européen pour les droits sociaux une réalité pour les citoyens est une responsabilité commune. La plupart des outils nécessaires à la mise en œuvre de ce socle sont dans les mains des États membres et dans celles des partenaires sociaux et de la société civile ; néanmoins, les institutions européennes, et notamment la Commission européenne, peuvent aider en fixant le cadre et en donnant des orientations, à l'aide d'instruments comme le programme EaSI. Entre autres initiatives, le programme EaSI cofinance les actions des organisations publiques, privées ou de la société civile pour leur permettre de proposer de nouveaux services, d'évaluer les politiques existantes ou d'en proposer de nouvelles et de procéder à des échanges de bonnes pratiques dans les domaines de l'emploi, de la protection sociale, des conditions de travail, de la mobilité professionnelle géographique, du microfinancement et de l'entrepreneuriat social.

Afin de faciliter la diffusion des résultats obtenus, le présent rapport présente des exemples de 19 projets qui ont été financés par le programme pour l'emploi et l'innovation sociale (EaSI). Les projets présentés avaient des objectifs variés, comme le soutien aux réformes des systèmes nationaux de protection sociale, le renforcement de la coopération administrative relative au placement des travailleurs, le renforcement de la sensibilisation des jeunes aux avantages de la [Garantie pour la jeunesse⁹](#) ou encore la dynamisation du marché du financement social ou la promotion de la mobilité géographique intraeuropéenne.

Une autre grande partie du rapport présente les résultats de 11 organisations soutenues par EaSI et actives dans le domaine de la promotion de l'inclusion sociale, la réduction de la pauvreté et l'accès au financement. Les organisations présentées avaient pour objectifs de soutenir la mise en œuvre du pilier européen des droits sociaux, ainsi que les initiatives de la Commission visant à atteindre les objectifs politiques tant au niveau national que local de [la Stratégie Europe 2020, du train de mesures sur les investissements sociaux et des orientations politiques de la Commission](#). Elles ont par ailleurs contribué aux principaux procédés de gouvernance européens comme [la méthode ouverte de coordination pour la protection et l'inclusion sociales](#) ou [le semestre européen](#).

Le rapport comporte également une description de la méthodologie utilisée pour collecter les informations sur les actions présentées et pour analyser leurs résultats. Le rapport cherche en outre à mettre l'accent sur la valeur ajoutée européenne des actions décrites, et à faire ressortir d'éventuelles bonnes pratiques.

⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081&langId=fr>

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/jobs-growth-and-investment/european-pillar-social-rights/european-pillar-social-rights-20-principles_fr

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=fr>

Nous pensons que ce rapport présentera deux grands avantages. Tout d'abord, il pourra servir de guide aux institutions privées et publiques et aux organisations de la société civile qui souhaitent demander un financement européen. Ensuite, il proposera des idées innovantes aux responsables politiques pour la conception et la mise en œuvre de nouvelles interventions politiques visant à dynamiser l'emploi et à garantir une protection sociale adaptée dans toute l'UE.

1. Introduction

The [EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \(EaSI\)](#)¹⁰ is one of the four EU financing instruments in the area of employment and social affairs for the period 2014-2020, together with the [European Social Fund](#)¹¹ (ESF), the [Fund for European Aid for the most Deprived](#)¹² (FEAD) and the [European Globalisation Adjustment Fund](#)¹³ (EGF). EaSI provides support to promote high-quality and sustainable employment, adequate and decent social protection, social inclusion and poverty reduction and prevention and fair working conditions. It is an essential tool in assisting the European Commission to reinforce the EU's social dimension as affirmed by the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)¹⁴.

The pillar contains principles promoting well-functioning and fair labour markets as well as social protection systems, structured around three dimensions:

- ensuring equal opportunities and access to the labour market;
- fair working conditions, and;
- social protection and inclusion.

Alongside other financial instruments, EaSI plays a key supporting role in the implementation of the pillar and its follow-up initiatives. With the pillar directly feeding into the annual cycle of assessing economic and social challenges across the EU, the EaSI programme remains central to supporting the achievement of the political goals in the area of employment and social affairs in the EU.

EaSI is structured into the following three axes:

- **Progress – focusing on providing support to the policymaking and implementation process** through production of policy evidence, organisation of information sharing and mutual learning, funding social policy experimentation projects and providing capacity building to EU and national organisations;
- **EURES – aiming to improve geographical labour mobility** in the EU through making information on placements more transparent and accessible as well as funding the actual services for jobseekers and employers;
- **Microfinance and social entrepreneurship (MF/SE) axis – supporting access to finance for vulnerable people, micro- and social enterprises** by providing funding for financial intermediaries and capacity building of relevant actors.

In particular, EaSI aims to act as **a catalyst for innovative solutions through social policy experimentation** by assisting Member States in improving their policies in employment and social affairs that respond to their social needs and challenges. Furthermore, it **fosters transnational partnerships and networking between public, private and third-sector actors**. Finally, it supports involvement in designing and implementing new approaches to cope with pressing social and economic trends.

The total budget for 2014-2020 is EUR 919 469 000 (in 2013 prices). On 18 July 2018, the so-called *Omnibus Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union* provided that the allocation of funding was indicative and not binding, thereby allowing EaSI to 'swiftly provide adequate resources to support changing political priorities. It also updated the indicative percentages applicable on average over the whole period of the programme to the axes, setting these at least 55 % for Progress, at least 18 % for EURES and at least 18 % for MF/SE.

¹⁰ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>

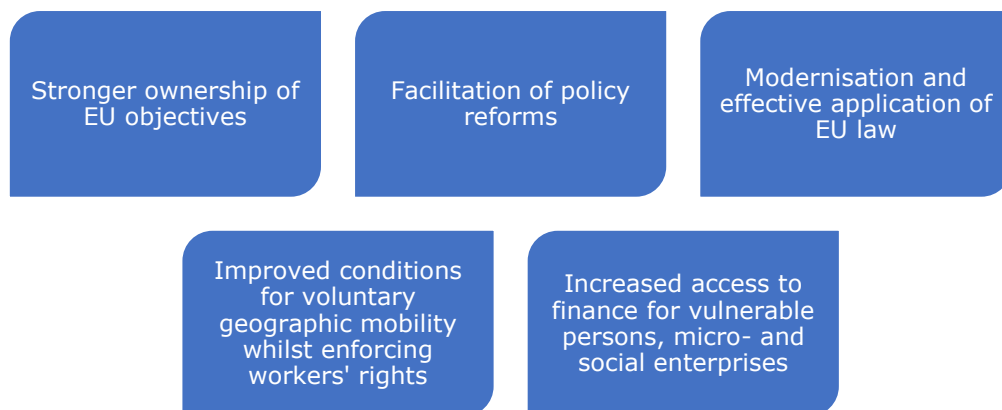
¹¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp>

¹² <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1089>

¹³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=326&langId=en>

¹⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1310&langId=en>

Figure 1: EaSI long-term outcomes



Source: European Commission.

The programme pays particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people, and to promoting equality between women and men. Combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation is another cross-cutting concern. Likewise, EaSI is promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating long-term unemployment and fighting poverty and social exclusion.

Since EaSI fosters social policy innovation a significant amount of funding is devoted to this, notably through calls for proposals for social experimentation projects.

Concretely, EaSI supports the maintenance and development of the necessary evidence base for EU employment and social policies and legislation by financing, for example, the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS), European Skills, Competences and Qualifications (ESCO) database, Accidents at work EU statistics (Eurostat), Database on Labour Market Policies (LMP), EUROMOD and the Social Situation Monitor. Other analytical outputs financed by EaSI are a result of cooperation with international organisations carrying out research in the relevant fields (e.g., Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and International Labour Organization) or developed by the networks of independent experts like the European Employment Policy Observatory and European Social Policy Network.

In addition, the programme contributes towards the operating costs of key EU-level civil society (CSO) network organisations (such as Caritas, Eurochild and Eurocarers) and co-finances projects of Member States' public, private and CSOs that have a transnational character or are of interest to the EU as a whole. These contribute to evidence-based policymaking, social innovation and advancement in employment, social protection and inclusion as well as working conditions, while promoting an integrated EU market for labour mobility, microfinance and social entrepreneurship.

This is the **thirteenth** report on projects and organisations funded by EaSI. Previous reports on projects and organisations can be downloaded from the European Commission's website¹⁵.

¹⁵ Please see: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=monitoring+good+practices&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>

This report focuses on the results of **19 EaSI-funded projects** in the areas of social protection, working conditions, employment, development of social finance market and EURES – geographical labour mobility. It also presents results of **11 EaSI-supported organisations** – major EU-level civil society organisations promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and access to finance for vulnerable groups and social entrepreneurs.

The report consists mainly of fiches that describe in concise and uniform format the results and the European added value of a successful project or organisation as well as potential good practices among the implemented actions. In addition, the project / organisation fiches were developed with the aim of making them easily accessible as stand-alone documents and useful to all informed stakeholders (decision-makers, social partners, NGOs, academia, media and civil society at large).

The purpose of this report is to improve learning among the national authorities, civil society organisations and private actors working in the field of employment and social affairs, and to support future policy developments. First, it may serve as guidance for public, private and civil society actors wishing to apply for EU funding in the future. Second, it will provide policymakers with ideas and suggestions that can inform the design and implementation of new policy interventions.

Along with this introduction, the report has three other parts. Chapter 2 features a description of the methodology that was applied to collect information on the actions and to analyse their results. Chapter 3 presents activities of projects funded by EaSI and implemented between 2018 and 2021 through **action grants** which finance actions with an intention to help achieve objectives of the European Union policy. In Chapter 4, the reader will find an overview of the results achieved between 2019 and 2020 by EaSI-supported major EU-level organisations through **operating grants**. Operating grants finance work programme of a body that pursues interests as those of the European Union or its specific policy. The report concludes with a short afterword explaining the next steps in monitoring EaSI-supported projects and organisations as well as the overall programme.

The reader should note that the date of finalisation serves as the basis for the selection of the projects described in the report. This report lists EaSI-funded action and operating grants completed between **1 May 2020 – 28 February 2021**.

1.1. Key facts about the presented projects

This report presents **19 finished projects** funded by the EaSI programme in the areas of social protection, working conditions, employment and development of a social finance market¹⁶.

¹⁶ Please note that the projects within different policy areas as well as projects within the same policy area that are funded through different calls should not be directly compared with each other. They are different in scope, aims, activities, budget and duration. Each project should rather be seen as a distinct action.

In the policy area of [working conditions](#)¹⁷, the report presents six EaSI-funded projects that aimed to enhance administrative cooperation and access to information on the posting of workers and prevent and tackle undeclared work (see Table 1).

One of the main areas of EU labour law is **working conditions setting minimum requirements at European level**. This includes provisions on working time, part-time, and fixed-term work, temporary workers, and the posting of workers. All these are key to ensuring high quality and sustainable employment and decent and adequate social protection throughout the EU.

Table 1. Calls for proposals in the policy area of working conditions (EaSI-PROGRESS)

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2018/011 VP/2017/003	Posting of workers: enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information	5
VP/2018/012	Activities in the field of undeclared work	1

In the policy area of **employment**, the report analyses five projects (see Table 2). Two of the projects were specifically focused on fast-track integration into the labour market for third country nationals, another three – on awareness-raising activities and support for the deployment of skills assessments on “Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults”.

Table 2. Calls for proposals in the policy area of employment (EaSI-PROGRESS)

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2016/015	Fast-track integration into the labour market for third country nationals targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members	2
VP/2017/011	Awareness-raising activities on “Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults”	2
VP/2018/008	Support for the deployment of skills assessments in the implementation of ‘Upskilling Pathways’	1

In the policy area of **geographical labour mobility (EaSI-EURES**¹⁸), the report analyses two projects. All the projects fall under the same call for proposal to provide support to national classification inventories and innovative national online services for mobile workers.

¹⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en>

¹⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/homepage>

Table 3. Calls for proposals in the policy area of geographical labour mobility (EaSI-EURES)



EURES is a European job mobility network providing information, guidance and recruitment/placement services to employers, jobseekers and any citizen wishing to take advantage of freedom of movement for workers within the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA).

It covers three thematic sections:

- transparency of job vacancies, job applications and any related information for applicants and employers;
- development of services on recruitment and placing of workers in employment;
- cross-border partnerships.

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2019/010	EaSI --EURES: support to national classification inventories and innovative national online services for mobile workers	2

In the policy area of the **social finance market**, the report presents six projects (see Table 4). The EU grants aimed at lowering the transaction costs borne by financial intermediaries undertaking long-term risk capital investments in ticket sizes of less than EUR 500 000 to social enterprises in the EaSI participating countries.

Table 4. Calls for proposals in the policy area of social finance market (EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship)

Reference number	Title	Number reported projects
VP/2017/013	Transaction cost support for social enterprises finance	6

1.2. Key facts about the presented organisations

The report also presents the work of **11 EaSI-funded EU-level civil society network organisations** working on social inclusion, poverty reduction and promotion of access to finance for vulnerable persons and social entrepreneurs¹⁹.

¹⁹ Funded as a result of the call for proposals for operating grants open to EU-level NGO networks that signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission (VP/2018/016).

Table 5. List of presented EaSI-supported organisations

Title of an organisation	Vision and goal
The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA)	Tackling homelessness and its effects
EUCLID Network	Supporting social entrepreneurs and impact-driven leaders
Caritas Europa	Fighting poverty and social exclusion
COFACE	Promoting the well-being, health and security of families and their members
Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)	Ensuring social justice and human rights for undocumented migrants
EUROCARERS	Acting as a vocal voice for informal carers
European Microfinance Network (EMN)	Advocating for stronger provision of microfinance and fighting social and financial exclusion
EUROCITIES	Network of major European cities reinforcing the role of local and municipal governments
Fundacja Microfinance Centre	Empowering individuals and sustaining communities through innovative social finance and microfinance
European Social Network (ESN)	Advancing the exchange of knowledge in public social services in partnership with health, education, housing, employment and social inclusion
European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA)	Enabling investors for impact to maximise social impact through increased recourses, collaboration

1.3. How to read this report

This report consists mainly of fiches prepared as stand-alone documents. Therefore, please, go to the fiches of interest and relevance to your work or personal interest. To learn more on how these fiches were developed refer to Chapter 2 – Methodology.

2. Methodology

The key components of this report are fiches presenting the results of projects and actions delivered by organisations funded by the EaSI programme. These project and organisation fiches are structured according to policy areas, as well as themes of respective calls for proposals. The report presents projects completed between 2020 and 2021 through action grants (Chapter 3), and the results delivered in 2019 and 2021 by the EU-level civil society network organisations supported by EaSI through operating grants (Chapter 4).

In addition to an overview of activities carried out by the grant beneficiaries, the report aims to identify and describe **potential good practices**. To single out such practices, we followed a broad definition of the term “practice” encompassing both policy development and implementation. In our view, a “good practice” is a process or methodology that has been proven to work well and produce good results and is therefore recommended for others as a model or useful example. What constitutes a “good practice” can thus include initiatives as diverse as legislation (at the national, sub-national and local levels), regulation, policies, strategies, institutional frameworks, planning and coordination procedures, various interventions (programmes, projects, campaigns, subsidies, financing mechanisms, tariff structures and similar), among many others. When analysing EaSI-funded projects and organisations, the report team aimed to include all information instrumental to distinguishing the most successful activities, so that only effective calls are continued in the future.

To ensure that the collected information is as comprehensive as possible, we relied on **three data collection strategies**:

1. The main sources of information were the final technical implementation reports completed by grant beneficiaries.
2. The report team also used all available additional information about the presented projects and organisations provided to them by the European Commission. Such information included various reports and briefings, agendas of organised events, participant lists, financial information, a detailed description of deliverables and external/internal evaluations.
3. Finally, data collection was carried out in openly accessible sources, such as project / organisation websites.

The report team then analysed the content of the collected material according to a pre-developed toolkit to produce fiches for each project and organisation. The **toolkit** included a project / organisation fiche template (covering pre-established criteria for analysis), a list of criteria for classifying analysed projects and organisations, and a reference grid for indicating potential good practices.

The resulting **30 fiches** consist of two parts. The first part (a table) presents the general administrative data on a given project or organisation as well as policy areas and sub-areas as per the pre-established classification. In the second part, we outline the actions’ aims and results, effectiveness, transferability / up-scalability, sustainability, innovativeness, impact and EU added value. These criteria were also used to assess which of the project and organisation activities could be regarded as potential good practices. As the reports on EaSI-funded projects and organisations will be inter alia used by the project and organisations’ auditors, the aspect of effectiveness (i.e., the extent to which projects and organisations achieved their results) was given particular attention.

Box 1 provides a complete list of criteria applied to analyse projects.

Box 1. List of criteria for analysing projects

- **Socioeconomic context.** This part describes why the action was implemented and the policy-related motives behind it. It also describes how the analysed project fits into the local / national / EU policy, social and economic context.
- **Aims of the project/organisation.** This summarises what the action aimed to achieve.
- **Results, impacts, lessons learned.** This part discusses the results, medium-to-long-term impacts of the action (both current and expected) and lessons learned.
- **Identification of potential good practices.** This identifies processes / methodologies employed in a project that could be suggested as good practice examples to others.
- **Transferability element(s) of the project/activities (if any).** This discusses the potential for the action or its individual parts to be applied in other contexts / at other levels.
- **Innovativeness of the project/activities (if any).** Activities considered novel, in terms of standing out comparing similar actions and settings, elaborating the innovativeness.
- **Policy evidence generated by the project (if any).** An overview of studies, reports, databases or other evidence produced to inform policy developments in a respective field.
- **Transnational dimension (if any).** This section focuses on activities implemented in more than one country, at the EU or international level. In the fiches on transnational networks or projects (by design transnational), this section was often not singled out and instead the transnational element was emphasised as a horizontal theme in the fiche.
- **New partnerships created (if any).** This heading elaborates on actions that led to organisations finding new partners because of their involvement in a given project / network.
- **Dissemination strategy (if any)** on how the project communicated the results to their members, stakeholders and general public, including intermediary and final target groups.
- **European added value.** In this section, the report comments on whether the action:
 - could have been implemented or reached similar results without EU funding (where exactly did EU funding mostly contribute to?);
 - contributed to implementing EU legislation or ensuring it is correctly applied;
 - led to economies of scale, more efficient use of money and better services;
 - promoted best practice examples learned from the previous EU / national actions;
 - promoted benchmarking for decision-making (e.g., through peer reviews, mutual learning, producing evidence for policymakers, etc.);
 - due to its transnational character, allowed cross-border risks to be reduced and their consequences mitigated;
 - contributed to the free movement of persons;
 - contributed to networking (especially of organisations from different countries).
- **Sustainability measures.** This part explains measures taken to ensure that results and impacts are sustainable. Is there any evidence that activities would continue without EU support?
- **Horizontal objectives.** In all its axes and activities, the EaSI Programme should contribute to promoting gender equality (including through gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting), paying particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people and ensuring non-discrimination on all grounds, promoting fair working conditions and sustainable work and combating long-term unemployment, ensuring adequate and decent social protection, and fighting social exclusion and poverty²⁰. This section focuses on how these horizontal objectives of the EaSI Programme were considered in the technical implementation and the content of project activities. How did a project team pay attention to vulnerable groups? Is there any evidence on the use of non-discrimination and gender equality measures (including gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting)? Do the projects in any way promote high-quality and sustainable work, adequate and decent social protection and tackle long-term unemployment, social exclusion and poverty?

The reader should note that even though projects and organisations presented in this report were funded under the same programme and many of them had similar aims,

²⁰ Regulation EU No 1296/2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

each implemented a unique set of actions. Therefore, in overviewing them the research team focused on the most relevant information for each, instead of including a uniform list of criteria in every fiche. This is to say that project / organisation fiches feature different combinations of headings, and more emphasis is given to some of the criteria over others, with respect to the nature of the actions.



3. EaSI-funded projects

3.1. Working conditions

3.1.a. Posting of workers: enhancing administrative cooperation and access to information

This section presents five projects that aimed to further improve transnational administrative cooperation between national competent bodies and social partners involved in the monitoring and correct application of the Posting of Workers Directive and its Enforcement Directive. The projects under this call also worked on increasing the mutual trust among stakeholders, including promoting common actions between social partners at different levels, exchanges of relevant officials and training. The actions also enhanced the evidence basis, both of qualitative and quantitative nature, and evaluation of original information and data concerning various dimensions of posting of workers.

3.1.1. Action ‘Promoting fair treatment of posted workers via increasing transnational cooperation’



‘The Project aimed at defining obstacles in the access to information on the rights of posted workers and developing solutions to eliminate defined barriers. It made participants aware of the role of trade union organisations in the posting process.’

Call identification number	VP/2017/003
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0350
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Mobility
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and representatives of trade unions from metal and mining sector; • Posted workers aged 50+; • Social partners; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one inaugural meeting • one international seminar • seven national events (training sessions)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • six national workshops • consultations with trade unions • final publication on posted workers covering all the partner countries • production of written materials to raise awareness and provide information on the rights and obligations of posted workers
Implementation country (-ies)	Republic of North Macedonia
Participating countries	North Macedonia, Poland, Serbia, Montenegro, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria.
Coordinator	Workers' Union of Energy of Mining and Industry of the Republic of North Macedonia
Partners	Trade Unions of participating countries
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 122 166.87
Project duration	15 January 2018-14 January 2020
Project/organisation website	https://promotingfairtreatment.eu

Socioeconomic context: The action “Promoting fair treatment of posted workers via increasing transnational cooperation” was initiated as a result of number of unfair treatment and abuses of posted workers from the metal and mining sector. The project is fuelled by the market and policy gaps identified in the participating countries. Given the fact that posted workers comprise a significant share of workers in the metal and mining sector, there is a clear need to protect posted workers’ rights and improve the application of the rules of the Directive 96/71/EC regarding the terms and conditions of employment.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project aimed to raise workers’ awareness about their rights and obligations regarding the terms and conditions of employment. It specifically focused on topics related to older employees’ active participation in the posting and enhanced the mechanisms of delivery of proper information. In addition, the project team explored effective ways to avoid social dumping, fraud and circumvention of rules by strengthening trade unions’ influence in the national transposition of EU directives.

Other specific objectives of the project were to:

- promote the use of single market information system effectively to increase the delivery of information and access to consultations;
- explore difficulties in implementing EU directives and enforcement directives at national level and finding new ways to eradicate shortcomings considering country-specific conditions of posted workers;
- promote the creation of an international network among trade unions from EU Member States and candidate countries to effectively monitor the provision of the Posting of Workers Directive and its enforcement directive;
- conduct country comparative analysis and elaborate joint initiatives and recommendations.

Project results, measured impacts and achievements: the objectives of the project were met mainly through the organisation of large-scale events, consultations and dissemination of information in various formats.

The project team organised one inaugural meeting attended by 14 participants from each partner country; one international seminar attended by 15 participants and 7 national events (national trainings) attended by 141 participants and 6 national workshops attended by 117.

A dedicated website was developed and translated into each partner language. In addition, mini-manuals useful for posted workers representing various sectors in English and in the languages of all the partners were produced. The awareness-raising objective was also met through the production and delivery of leaflets; promotional materials such as banners and posters and a video production.

To summarise the project and its activities, a final publication was created. It included an analysis of the dilemmas, shortcomings and weaknesses related to posted workers and a reflection of the current situation of posted workers representing the metal and mining sector.

Lessons learned: In the context of the proposal regarding the Posting of Workers Directive, project partners indicated a strong need for a coordinated intervention and a real EU cooperation. Throughout consultations, trade unions stressed the importance of the autonomy of the social partners in terms of paying for the work of posted workers. The social partners indicated the lack of respect in terms of their autonomy to negotiate wages. Nonetheless, the plurality of national industrial relations systems is raising further questions about the equal and fair treatment of posted workers.

The events highlighted the importance of working conditions of posted workers which need to be further improved. Furthermore, the inequalities of posted workers compared to local employees that is mostly related to remuneration during the posting period was raised. It was also indicated that there is a clear need to boost and strengthen cooperation between representatives of the state, trade unions and employers in the receiving as well as the sending country.

Transnational dimension: the scope of the project was transnational towards a common identification, learning, sharing of experiences by seven countries. The project aimed at uniting trade unions from EU Member States and candidate countries in collaborating regulating the posting of workers.

European added value: The project activities contributed to the achievement of policy objectives promoted and improved by the application of the rules of Directive 96/71/EC. The results of the project supported the EU policies through raised awareness on the EU legal framework and its national transposition.

Dissemination strategy: The project team conducted an analysis about posted workers using questionnaires in all partner countries. The research on the legal, social and economic situation of posted workers and the problems faced by persons providing work as part of posting were shared with all members. The outputs produced as a result of the activities carried out were disseminated through final publication on social networks and the project website.

Sustainability measures: Social partners and relevant national authorities agreed upon common ground and highlighted the improvements that could be made with respect to monitoring the Enforcement Directive and revising of the Directive on Posted Workers. Social partners pledged to continue to share information on posted workers among other participants after the project implementation.

Horizontal objectives: The project has addressed the following issues:

- Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment;
- Guarantee adequate and decent social protection.

3.1.2. ECMIN 3.0 – Workers' information and portal website on applicable working conditions

'The ECMIN 3.0 project responds to the ambition of the European legislators to increase the accessibility, transparency and quality of information concerning the terms and conditions of employment and the existing practices in the Member States to monitor and enforce the provisions of the Posting of Workers Directive.'



Call identification number	VP/2017/003
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0354
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Mobility
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Specialised bodies provided for under Union law; • Media; • Posted workers; • National construction trade unions; • European specialised bodies, such as the European Platform tackling undeclared work, European expert group on Posting, European Labour Authority; • National specialised bodies such as consulting organisations, labour authorities, experts / academia.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on terms of condition of employment of candidate countries (Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey) and EEA countries (Iceland and Norway) was added to the website; • Seven additional languages were added to cater for the workers of the new countries; • Information on the website was adapted to the new provisions foreseen by the European Court of Justice and the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	27 EU Member States and United Kingdom.
Coordinator	European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)
Partners	EFBWW affiliates and DG EMPL
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 293 043.00
Project duration	1 January 2018-21 December 2019
Project/organisation website	https://www.constructionworkers.eu/en

Socioeconomic context: The construction sector is by its nature characterised by a highly mobile workforce. Therefore, temporary migration and in particular posting of workers is of vital importance to the sector. A lack of accessibility to and transparency of the applicable working conditions lead to resistance of workers to work in an EU

Member State other than their home country. Often posted workers end up being trapped in jobs where they face sub-standard conditions which are below the legal minimum. These cases highlight the violation of the rule of 'same wage for the same work at the same workplace'.

In this context, the ECMIN 3.0 project acknowledges the need to raise awareness and provide proper information about the rights of posted workers to be protected against possible exploitation. The project is a follow-up of a European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) action which included the creation of a website where posted construction workers can find practical information on minimum rates of pay, working time, premiums, holidays, wage deduction and sickness and injuries applicable in all 28 EU Member States in all 24 official languages of the EU.

Aims of the project/organisation: as a follow-up of an EFBWW action, the project aimed:

- to include in the existing website information on terms and conditions of employment of candidate countries (Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey) and European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Iceland and Norway);
- to add seven additional languages to cater for the workers of the new countries;
- to adapt the information provided on the website to the new provisions foreseen by the European Court of Justice and the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive;
- to improve the reachability of the website in all the languages;
- to further develop and improve structural synergies and cooperation with existing networks working with / for the protection of posted workers and respect of workers' rights;
- to further disseminate the website among workers and public authorities.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: the project team carried out three steering group committee meetings, a dissemination event, an evaluation meeting and a training seminar. In addition, transnational administrative cooperation and trust between national competent bodies, stakeholders and social partners were achieved through a continuous open dialogue between all parties. As a result, the accessibility, transparency and quality of the information of ECMIN were improved. As planned, the number of countries on the website was increased by seven additional countries (Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Iceland and Norway). The same number of languages were added to cater for the workers of the new countries involved.

The project team successfully modified information on travel, board and accommodation to align it with the adapted European legislative framework.

The evaluation of the activities implemented highlighted several important aspects that need to be continuously and simultaneously considered. Providing proper information on wages and working conditions to posted construction workers in all the official languages proved to be very important. In addition, the project team found that a reasonable balance needs to be reached between the accessible information and the formal information, which is a continuous, difficult methodological exercise. The evaluation also emphasised the need for more structural cooperation with other organisations and the further development of a clear targeted communication strategy.

Transnational dimension: The ECMIN website / database contains information on 30 countries in total. The transnational dimension was even extended outside the scope of EU Member States and included candidate countries and EEA countries.

Dissemination strategy: The ECMIN website has been disseminated through many different platforms such as social media, European Platform for Undeclared Labour, European Labour Authority, national websites and EFBWW website.

For each target group specific actions and tools were developed and promoted. National trade unions received the information through various internal meetings and project-related events. The EFBWW organised a dissemination event in December 2019 which took place in Vienna. National trade unions were also informed via promotional posters, publication in the EFBWW newsletter and through a permanent link on the EFBWW website. European specialised bodies were mainly informed of the ECMIN tool by the national trade unions.

Information about the ECMIN tool for posted workers was disseminated through hardboard cards which were designed to be distributed on a wide scale.

The project team has also maximised the use of its social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. For this, a practice of a weekly post on different social media platforms was introduced.

European added value: The activities implemented by the project team contributed to the Enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC and the new Posting of Workers Directive 2018/957 by making the information on conditions and terms of employment in the posted worker's country easily accessible in a transparent way. Specifically, the increase in the number of languages and countries already available on the website will cater for an important number of construction workers on the European continent.

Horizontal objectives: the objectives of the project derived from the overall aim of the Posting of Workers Directive 2018/957 to ensure equal treatment to all workers. Through this, the project directly contributed to the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Nonetheless, ECMIN operationalised their activities in line with the overall objective to promote high-quality employment.

3.1.3. CAREurope – Enhancing transnational administrative cooperation among social partners from EU and candidate countries and securing better information prospects for all posted workers in the care sector



CAREurope

Enhancing transnational administrative cooperation among social partners from EU and candidate countries and securing better information prospects for all posted workers in care sector



'Joint visits, national panel discussions, short training courses and a transnational round table gathered together 350 participants who learned, shared, raised awareness, and were directly involved in generating change at the national level.'

Call identification number	VP/2018/011
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0461
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Mobility
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National, regional and local authorities Social partners from five EU Member States (Germany, Poland, Spain, Bulgaria and Romania) and three candidate countries (Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) Trade unions Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised international and national events, training courses, national press conferences; Produced printed material on guidelines for posted workers and companies as well as leaflets; Developed a dedicated website and translated it into each partner language; Delivered a final publication in all partner languages; Disseminated results to stakeholders and the wider public; Evaluated the outcomes and impact of the project.
Implementation country (-ies)	Serbia
Participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serbia; North Macedonia; Montenegro; Spain; Bulgaria; Romania; Poland; Germany.
Coordinator	Sindikato Zaposlenih u Zdravstvu i socijalnoj Zaštiti Srbije
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verband für häusliche Betreuung und Pflege (VHBP) e.V. / Association for Home Care and Nursing (VHBP) e.V.- Germany Ministry of Health of Republic of Serbia- Serbia Federația Solidaritatea Sanitara din Romania- Romania Trade Union of Public and State administration of North Macedonia- North Macedonia Medical Federation – Podkrepa- Bulgaria
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 165 424.90
Project duration	1 January 2019-30 November 2020
Project/organisation website	www.careuropeworkers.com

Socioeconomic context: For every person over the age 65 in the European Union, there are four people of working age but, by 2050, there will only be two. Demand for long-term healthcare, of which home care forms a significant part, will inevitably increase in the decades to come. Therefore, there is a clear need to strengthen transnational administrative cooperation among social partners from EU and candidate countries to secure better access to information for all posted workers in the care sector.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project "CAREurope" aimed to strengthen discussion on the revision of Posted Workers Directive which is supposed to ensure better protection and reduce inequality between posted and local workers. Trade union organisations and employers' organisations from participating countries were invited to take part in a broad-based dialogue through sharing of best information and awareness-raising activities for posted workers so as to be more informed about their rights and obligations.

The project team set the following specific objectives:

- To improve transnational administrative cooperation between national competent authorities and social partner countries in order to detect irregularities in the posting of workers in the healthcare sector and to exchange best practices;
- To raise awareness of social partners, stakeholders and workers at national and EU level about the regulatory frameworks on posting of workers within joint transnational actions undertaken by social partners;
- To support posted workers and posted temporary agency workers from the healthcare sector with relevant information and guidance to prepare them for the labour market before and after departure.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project organised three meetings on an international level attended by 474 participants; two categories of national events with a total number of 303 participants and one national press conference to disseminate the results of the project to a wider audience; 7 panel discussions and 6 national trainings with 143 attendees. Furthermore, 700 hard copies of *Guidelines for posted workers and companies* were produced and translated into each partner's language so that posted workers could learn about their rights and obligations and further communicate them with relevant bodies. In addition, promotional leaflets with information about the project were produced and distributed and a dedicated website in all partner language was developed.

The project team also delivered a final publication in all partner languages which included an analysis of the dilemmas, shortcomings and weaknesses related to the regulatory frameworks, types of abuses, best practices and cooperation initiatives that were discussed at the transnational events.

The CAREurope project helped to increase mutual trust among stakeholders and increased the overall accessibility, transparency and quality of information on employment conditions of the posted workers.

The project team recommends reviewing the current regulations on posted workers in the health and care sectors and extend equal employment conditions to all workers in these sectors regardless of whether they are posted or hired based on the free movement of people. The prohibition of replacement among posted workers in the specific field of care services should also be revised, understanding that this type of

social service cannot be subject to the maximum period of 18 months established by the new Directive. The implemented activities highlighted the importance of transnational cooperation of labour inspections on control measures and on the surveillance of irregular hiring procedures. The project stressed the importance of translating documents related to posting of workers as this is essential to further reach a wider audience.

Policy evidence generated by the project: The project team developed a dedicated website to provide user-friendly, sufficient and coherent information for employers, posted workers, trade unions and other stakeholders who are responsible for conducting procedures related to posting. Users can find specific manuals for posted workers which are translated into seven partner country languages. The dedicated website also has the final publication which contains a review of the rules on posted workers; the challenges faced by posted workers and proposed solutions and recommendations for the European Commission.

Transnational dimension: Transnational events allowed for partners of the project to learn from each other and share best practices. Through the implemented activities the project was successful in engaging national stakeholders from different countries and different European regions into a broad-based dialogue on posted workers' rights and the issues they face.

New partnerships created: The project activities were implemented through the creation of a partnership between three candidate countries and five EU Member States. Trade unions in the health and social care sector and employers' organisations took part in this project to support the introduction and harmonisation of a mandatory directive in their respective countries as well as to provide the best models for disseminating information to posted workers and casual workers working through temporary employment agencies. The project has built synergies between different national, regional and local authorities, employment service agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Dissemination strategy: All the stakeholders involved in the project had direct and immediate access to the material developed such as Guidelines and the final publication available in hardcopy (700 copies of the Guidelines and 800 copies of the final publication) and in downloadable format on the project website.

Evaluation surveys were also disseminated to all the participants who attended specific events giving them an opportunity to indicate their level of satisfaction with the meetings, the materials received, lessons learned, accommodation and overall organisation matters. The project team also contracted an external evaluator to provide an interim, and final evaluation of the project. The assessment concluded with corresponding observations and recommendations aimed at improving the possible future initiatives of project partners.

European added value: The delivered project activities supported EU policies through raised awareness on the EU legal framework and their national transpositions. The actions implemented also complements the national policies in the partner countries with regards to posted workers.

Horizontal objectives: The project team aimed to improve the protection of workers' rights through the correct application of the directive on posting employees (1996) which supposed to ensure a better protection of posted workers by reducing inequality between posted and local workers. Therefore, CAREurope supported the

aim of the promotion of fair and equal treatment of workers, for a quality job; an overall sustainability of the labour market; and just and fair social protection.

3.1.4. FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS – Access to fair working conditions for posted workers through sector-specific information and cooperation



'The sector-specific information centres provided individual support and transferred the information which they gained through individual cases to trade unions, public authorities, stakeholders and policymakers. With this, we improved the working conditions of the posted workers and contributed to the discussion on posting.'



Call identification number	VP/2018/011
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0453
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Mobility
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities • Employment services; • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Media; • Posted workers.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • five sector-specific information centres were set up; • six national expert meetings of trade unions and relevant stakeholders in the field of posting workers organised; • 12 transnational expert traineeships organised; • Transnational information campaign carried out; • Dedicated project website developed.

Implementation country (-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany; • Poland; • Romania; • Hungary; • Slovenia; • Croatia.
Coordinator	Non-profit educational organisation of the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Trade Union Bloc (BNS); • Non-profit educational organisation of the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB); • All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ); • Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia; • Iron Trade Union (VSS); • The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia (ZSSS)
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 433 789.93
Project duration	1 January 2019-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	-

Socioeconomic context: Posted workers are forced to work in a shadow world of the labour market in which labour law is circumvented and occupational safety and health requirements are undermined. Due to the transnational character of posting, posted workers work in a particularly vulnerable environment. They work in a country, where they do not live; they work in cities, in which they are not integrated. Due to the short term of their stay, most posted workers are not aware of the labour rights in the respective country, nor do they speak the same language. Wage fraud, salary discrimination, incorrect dismissals, unpaid overtime, violation of health and safety regulations, incorrect social security contributions, and the loss of accommodation after dismissal are part of the day-to-day dealings for posted workers. As the construction sector is one of the main employment sectors for posted workers, it is crucial to strengthen transnational cooperation, increase accessibility to information and promote the evidence basis regarding the situation of posted workers.

Aims of the project/organisation: The "FAIR working conditions" project aimed to implement a twofold approach towards counselling posted workers and transferring the gained information to trade unions, public authorities and policymakers.

The project established transnational cooperation among the above-mentioned stakeholders through the creation of five sector-specific information centres in sending countries (Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia) and strengthened cooperation with already existing counselling centres in Germany, which is the largest receiving country of posted workers. It also aimed to boost information-sharing practices on posted workers with trade unions in France.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: As planned, five sector-specific information centres were set up and began operations at the beginning of 2019. Every information centre specialised in one specific sector (care, construction, transport and metal sector). During the project, the information centres worked on 1 800 cases involving 1 958 workers; 180 cases were related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To further improve the quality of counselling and gain better knowledge on the legislation of the specific sectors and exchange know-how, the counsellors participated in four transnational workshops which took place in Germany, Croatia and Slovenia.

In addition, six national expert meetings of trade unions and relevant stakeholders in the field of posting workers were organised by five partners individually and the leading applicant. The meetings informed the relevant stakeholders about the

activities of the project and the information centres, and established cooperation with local authorities involved in the administration and monitoring of posted workers.

The project team successfully organised 12 transnational expert traineeships to further exchange experience, know-how and best practices on an international level. It also ran a simultaneous transnational information campaign which included explanatory films, posters and the creation of a dedicated website (<https://www.fair-labour-mobility.eu/>).

Throughout the project, several key areas of concern were highlighted. According to the project team, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, coordinated prevention measures for posted workers are essential. In addition, social security protection and regulation of placement agencies must be ensured. The project also concluded that further improvements on accommodation conditions, a legal right to labour law advice and support for posted workers need to be considered.

Identification of potential good practices: The project team carried out an extensive information-sharing campaign to raise awareness on the rights and obligations of posted workers. The activities implemented provided an avenue for posted workers to receive and gain access to comprehensible information on their labour rights in their mother tongue. The free of charge, multilingual counselling and support proved to be successful.

Transnational dimension: The scope of the project was transnational towards a common identification, learning, sharing of experiences by six countries. The project aimed at uniting trade unions from EU Member States and candidate countries in collaborating on enhanced access to information on posting.

New partnerships created: To implement the activities foreseen, the project team successfully created a partnership between six trade union organisations of the participating countries.

In turn, trade unions mobilised resources to further create specific partnerships with national, regional and local authorities. For example, in Romania, BNS invested a lot of time in developing reliable cooperation with the respective organisations and policy officials. During the inauguration of the BNS sector-specific information centre for Romanian posted workers in Germany, BNS signed a partnership framework agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice and a Cooperation Agreement with the Labour Inspection.

Dissemination strategy: The project team generated a quantitative collection of cases to retrace the problems of posted workers. Additionally, activities, cases and media reports were collected and stored in different qualitative databases. From this data, findings and recommendations have been drawn up to inform different national and EU bodies. The reports were disseminated to all the stakeholders involved and not only informed the status quo of posted workers but also gave insight on the implementation of Union law, especially the Posting of Workers Directive and the Enforcement Directive.

The information about the activities of the project was also disseminated through a dedicated website, leaflets, posters

European added value: The action focused on the main policy areas of employment, social affairs and inclusion, moving and working in Europe and contributed to the better implementation of the Posting of Workers Directive and the Enforcement

Directive. By helping to identify bogus companies and working closely with control bodies, the action contributed to lower costs for taxpayers. Through the counselling activities, evidence was provided to the authorities for further investigations. The action has also significantly contributed to better networking among stakeholder organisations on the EU level through national expert meetings and workshops. As a result of intensive cooperation and a high level of benchmarking within the international consortium members, the mitigation of cross-border risks has been also ensured through direct contacts on the local level.

Continuing the action without EU support would have been impossible since all consortium members have very limited financial capabilities and rely on external funding. Furthermore, trade union organisations are in most cases limited by their statutes from providing support and counselling to posted workers who are not members of their organisations.

Sustainability measures: The sustainability of the networking impacts will be ensured by the follow-on project "Network fair posting". It is also ensured by the lasting online accessibility of the project's materials and the care for the network through activities by "Faire Mobilitaet".

Horizontal objectives: The sector-specific information centres offered posted workers information and supported them in claiming their rights. With this, the dedicated centres helped to fight poverty and social exclusion, to combat long-term unemployment, to guarantee adequate and decent social protection and to combat discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin.

3.1.5. Con3Post -Posting of third country nationals: Mapping the trend in the construction sector



'The Con3Post project provided new knowledge on intra-EU posting, especially the trend of recruiting and posting of third country nationals from the EU neighbourhood to work in the construction sector.'

Call identification number	VP/2018/011
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0459
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Mobility
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nine joint visits in six Member States were organised; • three research seminars took place in Ljubljana; • three case study reports and three policy briefs published; • final comparative report with multi-stakeholder recommendations published.
Implementation country (-ies)	Slovenia
Participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slovenia; • Poland; • Italy; • Austria; • Finland; • Belgium; • Estonia.
Coordinator	Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research; • The University of Jyvaskyla; • Ca' Foscari University of Venice; • University of Warsaw.
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 419 018.55
Project duration	1 January 2019-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://www.zrc-sazu.si/en

Socioeconomic context: Con3Post explored the growing and under-researched trend of recruiting and posting of third country nationals (TCNs) in order to produce new evidence-based knowledge, provide space for multi-stakeholder transnational cooperation and exchange of information within and beyond the EU, contribute to nourishing social dialogue at the sectoral level and promote fair and safe working conditions for workers. The main objective of the project was to establish transnational cooperation, share information and conduct empirical research to outline current challenges, future scenarios and possible strategic responses to the far-reaching yet largely unexplored implications of this trend.

Aims of the project/organisation: the project team has set out these specific objectives:

- to establish and facilitate cooperation between key stakeholders in the EU-sending, EU-receiving and third countries through the lens of regional posting flows;
- to produce new information and increase access to information through the organisation of transnational events, publications, and by providing information to be uploaded to the existing websites and relevant online platforms;
- to strengthen the evidence base by collecting and analysing primary data.

The project team addressed existing and new challenges across different thematic areas and EU regions: 1) regional and EU labour market dynamics and shortages, 2) labour migration and mobility trends, 3) labour rights, violations and representation of posted workers who are third country nationals, 4) social welfare, occupational safety and health and vulnerabilities of posted workers who are third country nationals, and 5) managing transnational workplaces. The project also put a special focus on exploring the plausible futures in the countries covered by the report in order to provide different scenarios of what could happen in 2035.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: in the first year, the project focused on transnational networking, information sharing and data collection. As a result, nine joint visits in six Member States were organised. During these events, nine focus group discussions (attended by 66 experts), nine foresight workshops (attended by 48 stakeholders) and nine seminars (with 45 presenters) for stakeholders and the wider public were conducted.

In addition, three research seminars took place in Ljubljana in December 2019. Each seminar discussed one migration / posting flow.

In the second year the project team focused on analysing the collected data and wrote three case study reports, three policy briefs (translated into 10 languages) and the final comparative report with multi-stakeholder recommendations.

Finally, a transnational conference took place online, on 10 December 2020. The conference brought together researchers and stakeholders from different MSs to share information, know-how, best practices, research findings, build capacities and explore possibilities for further collaboration.
<https://www.euro.centre.org/events/detail/38959>.

During the evaluation of the project, the project team indicated that the immigration of TCN workers is driven largely by economic discrepancies and wage disparities

between the third countries and EU countries, as well as political and economic instabilities in the third countries. The activities implemented during the project have led to the following conclusions:

- some companies have become quite active in the wider European markets providing services through posting of TCNs, which has in many cases become a business model for profit maximisation;
- the intersection of the migration and employment regimes may enhance the vulnerabilities of posted TCN workers, who tend not to defy or report their employers on whom they depend not only for employment but also for the renewal of their work and residence permits in the sending country;
- despite the mechanisms for control and enforcement of national / EU standards, the vulnerability of TCN posted workers persists due to the cloaking effect of posting employment characterised by sub-contracting, cross-border mobility and temporary service provision.

Policy evidence generated by the project: Three regional case study reports were produced, each identifying a specific migration / posting flow. These reports included a comprehensive literature review, analysis of national databases relating to the posting of workers and results of the empirical research (qualitative research – focus groups and foresight workshops).

Three regional policy briefs with multi-stakeholder recommendations in 11 languages:

- Here, not to stay – The posting of third country nationals between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, and Austria: https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/con3post_policybrief_0.pdf
- From Morocco and Tunisia to Belgium via Italy: migration and posting of third country nationals: https://www.unive.it/pag/fileadmin/user_upload/dipartimenti/filosofia/doc/la_boratori/laris/Con3Post_POLICY_BRIEF_IT_EN_FR.pdf
- The posting of third country nationals from Ukraine through Poland to Estonia and Finland: http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Con3Post-policy-brief_UK.pdf

It also produced four newsletters in nine languages: https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/newsletter_translations.pdf

Finally, the final comparative report²¹ was produced and contains the findings from empirical research and recommendations for national and EU-level competent authorities. Due to the immense data collected during fieldwork, the report is longer than was initially anticipated.

The project provided important new data for evidence-based policymaking in all involved states and beyond. It opens up space for further research in the field of posting of workers by including the overlapping concepts of migration and mobility, which is undoubtedly an important new research venture.

The project's findings indicate that immigration of TCN workers is driven largely by economic discrepancies and wage disparities between the third countries and EU countries, as well as political and economic instabilities in the third countries. The project found that some companies have become quite active on the wider European

²¹ https://isim.zrc-sazu.si/sites/default/files/con3post_final_comparative_study_0.pdf

markets providing services through posting of TCNs, which has in many cases become a business model for profit maximisation. The project also found that the intersection of the migration and employment regimes may enhance the vulnerabilities of posted TCN workers, who tend not to defy or report their employers, on whom they depend not only for employment but also for the renewal of their work and residence permits in the sending country. Despite the mechanisms for control and enforcement of national/EU standards, the vulnerability of TCN posted workers persists due to the cloaking effect of the posting employment characterised by subcontracting, cross-border mobility and temporary service provision.

Transnational dimension: The project team was successful in building collaborative efforts with several EU Member States and candidate countries, as well as third countries. All the activities implemented had a transnational dimension and involved stakeholders from national, regional and local authorities; non-governmental organisations and higher education institutions coming not only from European Union but neighbouring countries as well.

Dissemination strategy: Con3Post provided three regional case study reports, three policy briefs and a final comparative report. These reports were published on partners' websites, promoted at partners' events, shared on social media and presented at the final transnational Con3Post conference. The target audiences were primarily national, regional and EU-level policymakers, government officials, trade union representatives and researchers.

European added value: The EU funding has enabled the project team to work with colleagues and stakeholders from different Member States, exchange and discuss research findings and develop new networks that have resulted in research partnerships. The EU support has also opened up a space for discussion between stakeholders from different countries, including third countries, by inviting them to the joint visit events and to present their work at the seminars.

Sustainability measures: Research on posting of third country nationals will resume within a follow-up EaSi-Progress project Posting.Stat – Enhancing the collection and analysis of national data on intra-EU posting (<https://hiva.kuleuven.be/en/news/newsitems/posting-stat-enhancing-collection-and-analysis-national-data-on-intra-eu-posting>). The project brings together a consortium of universities and research centres from 10 different Member States to promote the evidence basis through the collection and analysis of national micro-data. One of the specific objectives for ZRC SAZU will be to collect more data on posting of third country nationals from Slovenia.

Horizontal objectives: Con3Post regional and comparative studies provided evidence-based argumentation on the extent and nature of vulnerabilities experienced by posted workers who are third country nationals. The empirical research focused on exploring the issues related to their occupational safety and health, social protection and working conditions. The activities implemented contributed to the promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment; aimed to guarantee adequate and decent social protection and combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation; paid particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people.

3.1.b. Activities in the field of undeclared work

The main objective of this call for proposals was to complement and add value to the activities indicated in the work programme of the European Platform tackling undeclared work²². Hence, projects funded under this call are designed to develop and fund initiatives that will contribute to enhancing the implementation, application, knowledge and better enforcement of EU and national law in the area of undeclared work.

This contributes to the reduction of undeclared work and the emergence of formal jobs. The knowledge gained from these projects helps to build up evidence-based knowledge for better policy design.

The project presented in this section well-reflects the objectives of the call. It fosters joint cross-border activities to improving partner countries' technical capacity to implement preventative measures in the fight against undeclared work.

3.1.6. Tackling undeclared work in the construction sector (TUWIC)

'We believe that an effective and efficient policy based on zero tolerance with regard to undeclared work will promote and value equal treatment of workers, while at the same time ensure a fair level playing field for all law-abiding companies'



Call identification number	VP/2018/012
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0370
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Undeclared work
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National, regional and local authorities; Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; Social partners
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organised five steering group meetings; Organised 11 national meetings to discuss various actions to tackle undeclared work in the construction industry Produced promotional posters and seven films; Held two-day European e-conference
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> France; Belgium; Bulgaria; Austria; Romania;

²² <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1299&intPageId=4875&langId=en>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italy; Spain.
Coordinator	European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)
Partners	Fédération de l'Industrie Européenne de la Construction (FIEC)
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 243 296.67
Project duration	1 January 2019-31 October 2020
Project/organisation website	https://www.cfdt-construction-bois.fr/

Socioeconomic context: National policy measures to tackle undeclared work range from direct controls that seek to alter the costs of undeclared work (UDW) and / or benefits of operating on a declared basis, to indirect controls that seek to encourage voluntary compliance of suppliers and purchasers of construction services.

At present, most emphasis is put on altering the costs of undeclared work by increasing the perceived or actual probability of detection, such as by using identity cards, supply-chain responsibility, joint inspections and so forth. The social partners have played an active role in developing initiatives to tackle undeclared work both at national and EU level.

Less emphasis is currently put on direct incentive measures that make it beneficial and easier to operate on a declared basis, and indirect policy measures that seek to encourage voluntary compliance using awareness campaigns and addressing the structural conditions that cause undeclared work in the construction sector.

In order to ensure that the work done at EU-level, and in particular by the “European Platform tackling undeclared work”, has a concrete follow-up at national level, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and Fédération de l'Industrie Européenne de la Construction (FIEC), European social partners of the construction industry, proposed the project “Tackling undeclared work in the construction industry”.

In order to ensure the highest possible effectiveness, the project activities are focused on a limited number of countries (Belgium, France, Austria, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Spain), from which the national social partners of the construction industry and the national authorities have committed themselves explicitly.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project team ambitions were threefold:

- to implement a European campaign on prevention / awareness of UDW in the construction industry, including providing appropriate promotional material to all EU national members (in their own language) on the prevention / awareness of undeclared work (UDW) in the construction industry. The activities aimed to target all the EU Member States;
- to foster national initiatives by developing national toolkits and / or organising national tripartite UDW meetings for seven countries. The existing EU tools and approaches are the basis for tackling undeclared work in the construction industry;
- to organise a two-day European congress in Croatia.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project team were successful in implementing the activities foreseen. Eleven national discussions between the social partners and labour inspectorates were held with the aim to develop joint actions to tackle UDW in the construction industry in seven countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Romania, and Spain).

In addition, the project facilitated the production of European promotional films in English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Romanian, and Bulgarian and disseminated promotional posters in the same languages. As a result of the action, six testimonial films of the national social partners and labour inspectorates were created to share the outcomes of the discussions on national measures on how to tackle UDW in the construction industry at national level.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a European Conference was held online on 24 September 2020 to discuss the challenges of UDW in the construction sector.

In addition, the project team produced a European toolkit which was translated into 19 languages to foster discussions between the national social partners and labour inspectorates in all the Member States.

The action concluded that UDW is a challenge that should be tackled at both EU and national level, with consideration given to the different national challenges, policy frameworks and competences / practices. Tackling UDW requires a huge variety of actions, based on a partnership between social partners and the national authorities, using a long-term policy approach and with a focus on the practical (enforcement) level.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: The innovative aspect of the project lies in the fact that the national social partners and the labour inspectorates committed themselves explicitly before the start of the project to work in close collaboration. The project provided sufficient flexibility for implementation of the action.

Policy evidence generated by the project: A practical toolkit was produced containing a short overview of the best practices to tackle UDW at national level (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Romania, Spain).

Transnational dimension: The project involved all the affiliated members of the EFBWW and FIEC. EFBWW and FIEC have member organisations in almost all EU Member States. The transnational dimension was also ensured by the close cooperation with the European Platform tackling undeclared work.

Dissemination strategy: The EFBWW and FIEC created a dedicated website page to disseminate the activities of the project. Other outputs were also disseminated through various EU and national platforms, bodies and social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

European added value: The biggest added value of the action was giving to the national labour inspectorates and social partners an opportunity to develop joint actions to tackle UDW in the construction industry.

Sustainability measures: The project will continue to work on the set objectives at European and national level. As part of the EFBWW-FIEC project on "Tackling undeclared work in the construction industry", the EFBWW and FIEC agreed on a "Joint statement by the European social partners in the construction sector – Concrete recommendations for tackling undeclared work and social fraud in the construction sector". It is important to underline that the joint statement also covers social fraud, which is a substantially broader concept than UDW.

The joint statement is particularly relevant for the EFBWW and FIEC affiliated members because it refers to several commitments at national and European level.

Currently, a discussion is evolving as to whether the project should have a follow-up as a TUVIC 2 project and how the already developed tools and outcomes can be integrated in a common capacity building project to strengthen industrial relations in Central and East-European countries.

The project also put the issue of undeclared work high on the EU agenda which is seen as a major lasting impact of the actions implemented.

Horizontal objectives: By organising actions at EU and national level to tackle undeclared work in the construction sector, a high level of quality and sustainable employment was promoted. For this, the social partners agreed to work in close cooperation with the national authorities. By doing so adequate and decent social protection to the vulnerable workers were also guaranteed.

3.2. Employment

3.2.a. Fast-track integration into the labour market for third country nationals targeting exclusively asylum seekers, refugees and their family members

Two projects funded under this call for proposals aimed to promote the development and testing of innovative and effective mechanisms to ensure fast-track integration into the labour market. They also worked on developing sustainable multi-level partnership models for the integration of the targeted groups into the labour market. And finally, they foster knowledge and experience sharing between different Member States of already functioning swift and successful insertion mechanisms into the labour market of the targeted groups, with a strong emphasis on the challenges faced by women. The funded actions resulted in effective integration of the targeted groups into the labour market. The success of the actions was ensured by the following activities:

- The activities took job market needs into account;
- Activities targeted groups matching job market needs;
- Activities covered the different dimensions of a fast integration of the target groups;
- They demonstrated a long-term vision;
- The activities challenged stereotypes as to gender roles among migrant communities and ensure that work practices promote gender equality and do not reinforce gender stereotypes, segregation and inequalities ;
- They proved to be sustainable and included mechanisms for transfer and replication.

3.2.1. RIAC - Regional Integration Accelerators

'RIACs are focusing on the actual need of the respective participating ("cooperating") employers. By operating on a regional or local level, RIACs are able to map the structures of the respective employers.'



Call identification number	VP/2016/015
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0469
Policy area	Employment, social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	Social protection, social inclusion, poverty reduction, gender equality, youth unemployment, improvement of the working opportunities and sustainability
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities • Employment services • Social partners • Non-governmental organisations • Higher education institutions and research institutes • Volunteer associations • Media
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing 21 RIAC Units (4 in Germany, 7 in Turkey, 4 in Denmark, 6 in Italy); • Involving 1 078 participants of which 224 were integrated into the labour market; • Creating two cooperatives (1 in Italy and one in Turkey); • Establishing more than 25 start-ups (Turkey / Germany); • Activating 21 speed managers, one for each RIAC unit; • Activating 24/7 integration measures in relation to the learning of the language of the host country; • Creating opportunities for refugees to volunteer and socialise with the locals; • Establishing 5 RIAC units dedicated to female refugees and asylum seekers (implemented by Alisei in Italy, KIZ in Germany and Esbjerg in Denmark); • Establishing dedicated RIAC self-employment programmes to enhance the entrepreneurship (self-employment) skills and employability of the target group (KIZ in Germany, Habitat and IGAM in Turkey and Alisei in Italy); • Implementing three cycles of optimisation - e.g., pilot, adjustment of concept, proof of adjusted concept, final concept; • Designing a handbook, a toolkit "How to RIAC" and a sustainability plan; • Creating teaching materials (CIDIS and ALISEI) for teaching the local language as L2 and for awareness-raising on the topic of workers' and women's rights; • Disseminating project achievements through newsletters, website, films, and brochures in several languages; • Implementing at least one conference in each partner country, and implementing a European conference in cooperation with ESN European Social Network; • Being present on media, social medias conferences and events at local, national and international level in all project countries.
Implementation country (-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	Germany, Denmark, Italy and Turkey.

Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stadtverwaltung Offenbach (Germany) changed to Pro Arbeit-Kreis Offenbach-AöR (Germany)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alisei Societa Cooperativa Sociale (Italy) Centro Informazione Documentazione E Iniziativa Per Lo Sviluppo - C.I.D.I.S. - Onlus (Italy) Esbjerg Kommune (Denmark) Habitat Dernegi (Turkey) Iltica Ve Goc Arastirmalari Merkezidernegi (Turkey) Kiz Sinnova Gesellschaft Fur Soziale Innovationen Ggmbh (Germany) Ruhr-Universitaet Bochum (Germany)
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 2 027 203.14
Project duration	1 January 2018-30 June 2020
Project/organisation website	http://riac-project.eu

Socioeconomic context: In recent years, the policy landscape has become favourable toward refugees and asylum seekers. Nevertheless, they still face significant obstacles in accessing the labour market. They remain among the most vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion. The challenges such as long waiting times for asylum applications, the lack of local networks to help with the job search process, poor knowledge of the local language, and persistent discrimination inhibit the ability of refugees and asylum seekers to access dignified and sustainable forms of work.

Since refugees frequently lack legal clarity on their status and have poor language skills, they seek a faster and more tailored support. The uncertainty and length of this process can make refugees feel impatient, helpless, and become dependent. Hence, it is important to help them gain socioeconomic autonomy, to activate their personal resources and sense of responsibility in a timely manner.

When it comes to female refugees and asylum seekers, the challenge to employability is even more complex and goes beyond their role as caregivers in families as mothers, wives, daughters or daughters-in-law. Therefore, simple provision of family services will not be sufficient.

The Regional Integration Accelerators (RIAC's) aim to address these challenges by reducing the initial inequalities and making the integration process more effective.

Aims of the project/organisation: The Regional Integration Accelerators (RIAC) project promoted high-quality and sustainable jobs, greater social protection and inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Germany, Denmark, Italy and Turkey. The project aimed to develop tools, expertise and a common strategy for fast-track and sustainable labour market integration of refugees through parallel processes and intensive support.

RIACs are decentralised units responsible for quick placement ("integration") of migrants and refugees into the labour market. They are established through cooperation with employers. Given that RIAC units operate locally, they are able to map the structures of the participating ("cooperating") employers and focus on their actual needs.

The sub-goals of the project include:

- 21 RIAC units in 4 countries, 756 participants, 225 labour market integrations of which 138 men and 87 women.
- Reduction of integration time for participants from a long time like 24 months to 12 months or less.
- Inclusion of 50 employers.
- Establishment of at least 4 Speed Managers.

- Integration of 200 mentors.
- Development of 3 special 24/7 offers.
- Operating at least five mother-child RIAC units in three countries.
- Implementation of at least five self-employment RIAC units in 2 countries.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: Activities under this project helped bring indirect and immediate changes in the local landscape. This was brought about by the commitment of partners to link the RIAC actions to other projects and initiatives promoting social cohesion and democratic values. This promoted a new way of thinking about “integration”. Instead of focusing solely on placement in the labour market, the project had a broader focus, ranging from employability to social justice, inclusion of vulnerable groups, and the inclusion of gender and ethical values of a society in general. While partners followed this broad objective, they also established their own individual goals and actions taking into account specific conditions in their own countries. Each country set its own priorities and designed the best strategy that helped them address local challenges, common to their context.

RIACs helped design personalised pathways for refugees which took into account their personal ambitions as well as the needs of the marketplace. They operated on a regional or local level and were co-designed and launched in specific economic sectors in close collaboration with employers. This helped to tailor professional training to the needs of specific employment and to minimise imbalances between employers and workforce.

Identification of potential good practices: RIAC's methodology for integration respects the individual characteristics of participants, supports the development of learning and interpersonal strategies and their personal and professional growth. Small numbers, targeted measures, and the processing of emotional experiences ensure greater effectiveness of integration strategies. RIAC's approach can be particularly useful when implementing personalised activities aimed at vulnerable groups.

RIAC's approach is also beneficial for the host country. It takes place in specific economic sectors which are carefully selected based on the needs of the territory, the driving sectors of the local economy, the skills and professional roles required by the market. The RIAC's methodology allows the supply and demand for work to be matched much faster and more effectively.

The project focused on securing sustainable work positions for a very fragile target group by tapping into the locally available resources, opportunities and partnerships. For instance, in northern Europe local institutions supported the placement by financially contributing to the vocational training of participants. In countries with a fragmented labour market characterised by small and medium-sized enterprises, especially artisans and family-run businesses, the placement was made possible by the capillary acquisition of small businesses and the continuous accompaniment and tutoring of employers and employees.

Another good practice that can be learned from the RIAC project relates to engaging diverse stakeholders both from public life (politics) and society – who play a major role in integrating the refugees, such as voluntary associations, employees in a job centre or advice centres. The project has dedicated every stakeholder a role in labour market integration because it was obvious that for successful and sustainable labour market integration not only were the employer and employee relevant, so too were politics, the economy, one's own community or institutions.

Similarly, successful local implementation of the project and involvement of local communities was possible through formal and informal involvement of diverse stakeholders. The consortium maintained active networking, respected roles and functions, and adapted to the characteristics of social dialogue in the individual countries. Moreover, continuous exchange with the regions, between partners and with European players enabled ideas, practices and innovations to be shared and adapted to the regional contexts of partners.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: RIAC units were able to develop, test and outline a scalable and transferable model for the accelerated integration of refugees in the labour market on a regional scale. Because RIACs are able to use local conditions as a starting point and to provide an individually coordinated solution, they can be modified to adapt to local, regional, and national particularities. This makes the concept easily transferable to different contexts because it does not contain abstract or rigid definitions which have to be strictly followed.

RIAC's methodology prioritises an integration process that respects individual characteristics of refugees as well as the needs of the local labour market. Instead of focusing solely on job placement, it promotes long-term employability of refugees by considering their life as a whole with different aspects influencing their life and their socioeconomic integration in the host country. As integration pathways aimed at small groups, RIAC's approach can be particularly useful for carrying out personalised activities aimed at vulnerable groups.

The model was constantly adapted to local conditions (political and economic) which helped to create innovative solutions and share them with the project partners. This repeated transfer of knowledge and adaptation of practices to local contexts ensured the transferability and scalability of this model. In particular, tools for the integration of specific target groups (women and self-employed workers) in the labour market were translated and transferred in very different regional contexts. For instance, in Italy female refugees who were trafficked and deprived of residence permits for humanitarian purposes were supported to establish structured cooperatives as a form of self-employment. This approach was picked up by other partners in Turkey and Germany.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: RIAC's actions were implemented in an innovative, clear and scalable way. During the 3 years of the project, partners have experienced local, financial, political and global (COVID-19) challenges which forced them to create, transfer and implement innovative solutions on a European scale.

The RIAC project modified the logic, methodology and timing of the standard integration process by implementing different pathways simultaneously instead of in sequence. By simultaneously promoting the socioeconomic autonomy of refugees and activating their personal resources, the project was able to match the motivation that migrants bring with them with the needs of the host society. RIAC's approach focused on a constant and gradual evolution by focusing on small but consistent steps taken every day. It focused on employability and not solely on placement. In RIAC, the acceleration of socio-labour integration processes is not intended as a race for employment. Instead, it consists of anticipating and synthesising the various activities useful for integration, to prepare participants to face the labour market autonomously and in a reduced timeframe.

RIAC's approach can be impactful when the project focuses on a holistic approach to integration by taking into account diverse areas, including social, economic and political areas that affect the whole life of the individual.

Policy evidence generated by the project: The project coordinator (since early 2018) Pro Arbeit-Kreis Offenbach-AöR has established a designated website and social media channels (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) where they share information about the transnational RIAC project, partner organisations, relevant resources and events. The website provides [downloadable resources](#) such as teaching materials and brochures available in English and other languages as well as the RIAC Handbook and RIAC Sustainability report which are available in English. It also shares seven newsletters running from 2019 to 2020 highlighting the major achievements of the project. Moreover, the website [has a page](#) about the sub-project evaluation - "Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for Refugees' Labour Market Integration" which was conducted by Ruhr University in Bochum. A pre-post-measurement-approach contains indicators for individual employability, employers' prerequisites for refugees' integration into the workforce and other regional conditions of the labour market. It also focuses on refugees' entrepreneurial skills by measuring their self-employability. To measure the effectiveness of the RIAC-specific initiatives, the evaluation also includes a control-group.

Transnational dimension: The project was transnational with partners from Germany, Denmark, Italy and Turkey. The partners exchanged experience across national borders. In addition to the local events in each of the partner countries, there was also a final a transnational event involving all participating partners as well as representatives from the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion).

New partnerships created: Different partnerships have been created at all levels of the project ranging from local partnerships with employer organisations, local authorities, RIAC target groups, social partners as well as partnership at consortium level and between lead partners and European institutions. For instance, in northern European countries partnerships with the local institutions were instrumental in successful placement as they financially supported the vocational training of participants. In countries with fragmented labour markets characterised by small and medium-sized enterprises, partnerships with family-run businesses were crucial for the placement of refugees. Moreover, each partner organisation created their own network which was instrumental to the local success of the project. Some of the country-specific partnerships include – partnerships with volunteering organisations in Turkey, small and medium-sized enterprises in Italy and institutional partners in Germany and Denmark. Equally important is the partnership created between the participating organisations, which thanks to this project and funding from the EU were able to cooperate, share best practices and learn from each other throughout the 3 years of the project, but also beyond.

Dissemination strategy: Activities and project results have been disseminated to national authorities, city councils, national ministries, employers, NGOs, job centres, European networks and research institutions. Information dissemination included: presentations, a designated project website and social media channels, websites of the individual partners, meetings with project partners and external stakeholders, job centres, and partner networks.

The dissemination strategy of the project partners was oriented towards the following actions:

- Recruiting participants;

- Recruiting employers;
- seeking endorsement from public authorities;
- dissemination of the model at regional and national level;
- dissemination of the model at international level.

Communication activities and products were tailored to different target groups by differentiating the approach, language, communication media and channels. For instance, to recruit participants, project team mainly relied on flyers in local languages which were distributed in places where refugees gather and at the first reception facilities as well as social media platforms. Similarly, teaching materials and event documentation were shared on the project website and uploaded to the Pro Arbeit cloud platform. Links and log-in details were provided to the relevant stakeholders to access these resources. Moreover, for meetings with employers and public administrations, the project team relied on brochures in local languages. Partners also helped promote national and regional conferences during their events.

To transfer and scale up the project, a “Blueprint” brochure was produced in all the partners' languages and disseminated locally. Given the high volume of dissemination products a special QR code was provided to programme participants to access these materials on the RIAC website. In addition, the toolkits were sent to relevant international and national stakeholders and also to the partners for their local dissemination. Finally, given the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, most events moved to an online format.

European added value: The project would not have achieved the same impact or geographic scope without the EU funding. It provided an opportunity to share information and knowledge with several European partners and develop a successful model for socioeconomic integration of refugees.

The RIAC methodology encouraged local authorities to critically examine existing approaches to the integration of refugees and to move from a dogmatic idea of sequenced actions to a new holistic approach of parallel processes. This helped speed up the different actions and keep the motivation of participants high. European added value is an objective assessment of the current integration strategy. This is something many institutions cannot afford due to lack of time and financial resources. The European dimension offered each partner organisation the opportunity to benefit from the experiences and know-how of other partners.

Sustainability measures: To ensure the sustainability, the scalability and the transnational relevance of this approach, project partners produced standardisation and documentation of the functionality and the results of the RIACs²³. This included formulation, publication, and implementation of guidelines, rules, and specifications for common and repeated use, aimed at achieving an optimum degree of order or uniformity in a given context, discipline, or field. The [handbook](#), manuals and templates will allow any third-party organisation to use and apply this integration approach within their country or region. Because RIACs are able to use to local conditions as a starting point and to provide an individually coordinated solution, RIACs can always be modified to adapt to local, regional, or national particularities. This makes the concept easily transferable since it does not contain abstract definitions which can only be implemented in certain regions. Moreover, in the Blueprint brochure the project partners have generalised the model by proposing its methodologies to potential decision-makers and local stakeholders active in policies for the integration in the labour market of vulnerable groups. In the Sustainability

²³ <http://riac-project.eu/index.php/results-and-standardization/>

Plan they tried to address possible scenarios for a long-term effect of the RIAC experience while maintaining its identity, integrity and intrinsic logic.

Horizontal objectives: In all its axes and activities, the EaSI Programme should contribute to promoting gender equality (including through gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting), with particular attention to vulnerable groups, such as young people and ensuring non-discrimination on all grounds, promoting fair working conditions and sustainable work and combating long-term unemployment, ensuring adequate and decent social protection, and fighting social exclusion and poverty²⁴. This section focuses on how these horizontal objectives of the EaSI Programme were considered in the technical implementation and content of project activities. How did a project team pay attention to vulnerable groups? Is there any evidence on the use of non-discrimination and gender equality measures (including gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting)? Do the projects in any way promote high-quality and sustainable work, adequate and decent social protection and tackle long-term unemployment, social exclusion and poverty?

Improving the employability of refugee and asylum seeker women was one of the main topics in the RIAC project. Some of the partners, Alisei in Italy, KIZ in Germany and Esbjerg in Denmark implemented a total of five RIAC units dedicated to this target group. They also transferred their knowledge and output to the other partners. Esbjerg took the lead in designing the topic and sharing it with the rest of the partners. Some partners (CIDIS and ALISEI) also created teaching materials for the local language as L2 and for awareness-raising on the topic of workers' and women's rights.

Some migrant women / mothers often give up their career goals due to household responsibilities and childcare. To address this challenge, RIAC's integration approach focused on individual needs and the activation of strategies centred "around the mother and child". This encouraged young women to invest in their training and their autonomy, without giving up their perceived parental and marital obligations. These strategies included child support services, self-employment courses, support for the intercultural redefinition of gender roles and related issues, strengthening of interpersonal networks, and accompanying steps to promote the elaboration of emotional experiences. However, the experience from different local contexts showed that the target group of the women in the RIAC project is not homogeneous. Due to the differences between ethnic groups and the geographical background, the provision of family services cannot always resolve the obstacles to improved employability of women. Refugee women from Arab countries and women arriving from Africa show very different attitudes towards their roles and have different expectations. An important lesson learned is that the definition of roles is always a question of expectations - what do migrant women expect from the host society and what does the host society expect from them? Before planning any activity, one should start by understanding these divergences.

Relationships with project staff was crucial in providing confidence and security, enabling women in particular to be open about their current situation, and their challenges. Good relationships and group cohesion have contributed particularly towards keeping women involved in the process. Similarly, the women participants were informed about the opportunities available for employment and education, which helped increase their motivation. Likewise, workshops provided guidance on different aspects of everyday life, combining working life and leisure, health and disease awareness, information on cultural differences in general, e.g. the need to involve the husband in domestic duties for the women to be able to join the workforce.

24 Regulation EU No 1296/2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation.

Moreover, in cases where job placement of female refugees was not possible, the project partners considered alternative solutions such as self-employment. For instance, in Italy, women who were victims of trafficking and deprived of residence permits for humanitarian purposes were helped to establish a well-structured cooperative as a form of self-employment. The German RIAC also adopted the idea of creating a shared business for women for those who were not able to get full-time employment.

3.2.2. ALMIT project - Acceleration of labour market integration of immigrants through mapping of skills and training



'The ALMIT project aims to develop a number of steps in order to facilitate the integration of immigrants, by developing immigrants' skills and abilities and to prepare them for vocational life.'



Call identification number	VP/2016/015
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0448
Policy area	Employment and social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language training for refugees, level of learning (A1, A2); • Adaptation to the labour market requirements; • Development of social skills for refugees; • Youth employment • Combat long-term unemployment • Fight against poverty and social exclusion • Promotion of equality between women and men • Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities • Employment services • Social partners • Non-governmental organisations • Higher education institutions and research institutes • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing training materials for language courses and induction civic and intercultural skills sessions; • Preparing a train-the-trainer handbook in the Bulgarian, Serbian, Turkish and German languages; • Compiling ICT tools for the courses, incl. e-L platform: Moodle which was implemented in all partner languages²⁵ • Piloting of the integration courses by recruiting pilots / attendees and training facilitators; • Conducting assessment and collecting feedback on the impact of the pilot integration courses;

²⁵ ALMIT: Course categories, <https://almit-project.eu/elearning/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling information on local labour market rules and trends and on the rules for social aids per country and embedding them in the online tool; • Mapping the educational background, skills and work experiences of refugees; • Advising refugees on recognition / validation of competences; • Identifying the needs of the local labour market and matching these needs to the identified skills; • Providing individual psychological consultations on jobseeking and on settlement issues; • Organising information sessions for people working with target groups and information meetings with local business; • Organising joint events linking jobseekers and local enterprises; • Developing helpful materials for entering the local labour market, e.g. pocketbooks; • Implementing quality control and monitoring activities both for internal and external reporting purposes; • Conducting regular dissemination activities on the local, national and international level as well as the final project dissemination conference.
Implementation country (-ies)	Bulgaria
Participating countries	Austria, Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey.
Coordinator	Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beogradska otvorena škola (Serbia) • Council Of Women Refugees in Bulgaria (Bulgaria) • Covekoljublje, Dobrotvorna Fondacija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve (Serbia) • Düzce Province (Turkey) • Opština Šid (Serbia) • Österreichische Jungarbeiterbewegung, Öjab (Austria) • Türkiye Cumhuriyeti (Turkey) • Zgura-M Eood (Bulgaria)
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 979 177.50
Project duration	1 January 2018-30 June 2020
Project/organisation website	https://almit-project.eu

Socioeconomic context: Europe is facing unprecedented challenges as a result of the refugee crisis and this has been challenging for EU Member States to cope with. Since many refugees decide to stay and live in European countries, at least for the medium term, their entrance into the labour market is key to their successful integration into European society. This is important for refugees not only to live independently, but also to address other needs that they might have. For instance, it can help refugees to improve their language skills, to increase their cultural awareness, to build local and social networks, to increase social participation and to improve their physical and mental health. However, refugees face a number of obstacles when entering the labour market; these include: lack of language knowledge, documents and credentials, and information about the cultural / religious specifics which often provokes subconscious fears, stereotypes and prejudices. Moreover, the uncertain length of stay makes it challenging for employers to plan and make long-term investments in training refugees.

Moreover, given the realities and trends of the labour market, employment opportunities for people with little or no education are diminishing. In relation to refugee integration this means that refugees and migrants have to upgrade their skills and qualification and improve their knowledge of the local language to meet the requirements of employers. In general, employers are ready and willing to support the refugees in this learning process with the hope that refugees will be motivated to invest in and commit to the aims of the company.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project aimed to find a quick way to integrate immigrants and refugees with legal residential status into the labour market through revealing their abilities, empowering them to enter employment and matching their skills to the need of the local labour market.

Specific objectives included:

- To coordinate the actions of organisations from Balkan countries (Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey), as well as Austria to find quick access to the labour market for the immigrants and refugees who obtained legal residential status.
- To help immigrants and refugees showcase their abilities and match their skills to the needs of the local labour market.
- To lower the language, civic and intercultural barriers between immigrants and the host country society towards facilitating their entry to employment.
- To map and profile the skills of immigrants in order to match to the needs and shortfalls of the local labour market.
- To provide counselling and support on settlement and job-seeking issues.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: To accelerate the labour market integration of immigrants, the ALMIT project developed immigrants' skills and abilities and prepared them for vocational life. The general target group of the project consisted of immigrants and refugees, organisations working with immigrants, NGOs working for immigrants and refugees all over Europe.

The project produced:

- Multilingual language training courses;
- Induction civic and intercultural course materials;
- Train-the-trainer handbook;
- E-learning platform;
- Guidelines on labour market regulations;
- Practical tools on settlement;
- Case platform in support of matching process.

The project first designed and piloted initial language courses and induction civic and intercultural skills sessions. Partners also trained people working with the target groups. Following the initial pilot, the project team conducted an assessment and collected feedback on the impact of the pilot integration courses. Moreover, the project partners provided individualised support to refugees by mapping their educational background and work experiences, profiling their skills and advising them on the recognition and validation of competences. It also included raising awareness of refugees to address discriminatory practices and violence, in particular against women.

The main impact achieved by the project included addressing the following issues:

- Youth employment by job skills' matching, profiling and settlement support;
- Long-term unemployment by focusing on refugees' language and civic skills which helped minimise barriers and promoted easier integration in the job market and in the society;
- Poverty and social exclusion by improving refugees' employability and helping them access jobs;
- Gender equality by providing civic and intercultural courses specifically addressing equality among genders and highlighting the need for integration;
- Quality and sustainable employment by helping refugees obtain recognition of their qualifications and matching their skills with jobs.

Moreover, through relevant trainings provided by partner organisations, participants gained more confidence in moving freely and communicating with the local population; they received information on how to behave in the post office, bank, on the street, when talking to an employer and in presenting their personal characteristics and abilities. All this influenced the local population to accept migrants without any prejudice.

Identification of potential good practices: One of the good practices from the ALMIT project is related to using digital tools (e.g., e-learning platform developed within the ALMIT project) for mapping the competencies of immigrants and refugees in participating countries. It can be used to share relevant resources with the target group and ensure access to essential information and training materials.

The training modules for the language course and civic and intercultural sessions can be identified as good practice that can support the first step in the integration process. Those modules could be implemented in similar initiatives on the national or EU level by adjusting them to the local contexts. However, as identified by the partner organisations, it would be more effective if language courses could be longer and include a certificate at the end. Similarly, the project had an online tool “Matching the needs to the identified skills” where they shared a couple of job profiles for common occupations in participating countries to provide a broad overview of the different jobs. The ALMIT joint events for immigrants and employers can be highlighted as another good practice as it provided a great opportunity to get more relevant information about immigrant employment issues and possibilities and opportunities of the local job market.

Moreover, collecting peer feedback was a beneficial practice and was a positive side effect as older participants encouraged youngsters to focus on their (vocational) training and further education.

Involving relevant local stakeholders is another good practice that organisations can adopt to increase the success of refugee integration projects. For instance, the Turkish Employment Agency became very interested in using the online tool for competence checking. Likewise, the Government Directorate of Düzce (Turkey) worked on the ALMIT project in close cooperation with the Düzce General Directorate of Migration Management as they are one of the important stakeholders of the action.

The ALMIT programme distinguished between economic and social objectives of vocational training programmes which are not always easy to combine. Hence, the ALMIT programme consisted of two main parts:

- Language, civic and intercultural training, aimed at the provision of skills for (self)employment focused on the economic objective;
- Non-vocational activities, aimed at occupying immigrants not interested in language, civic and intercultural training with positive activities for working in a group with people with a similar destiny for the social objective.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: Within the ALMIT project, project partners developed useful resources that can be easily transferred and used in different countries by adjusting to the local contexts. For instance, training modules for language courses and civic and intercultural sessions as a support in the integration process as well as the handbook for trainers with detailed training content and recommended methodology.

Based on the experience from this project and challenges faced during its implementation, the project partners shared the following recommendations to be

applied to other organisations when developing similar projects. First, the need for cooperation between all relevant stakeholders including local, national, government, and non-governmental. Second, the need to develop digital skills of refugees in the context of learning and future employment. Third, to make such projects last for a longer period of time in order to train as many project beneficiaries as possible and accept, improve and apply the applied knowledge and skills. In particular, it is important to include more vocational training modules in order to improve the skills of immigrants and to increase their employability, as well as to focus on practical knowledge (e.g., create how-to kits to on how to perform daily activities such as buying groceries, paying bills, etc.). Similarly, it might be useful to create a support mechanism on the national level for refugees who decide to stay in a given country and to use different career opportunities. Furthermore, organising awareness-raising events to discuss important topics such as discrimination in society with the local communities can be beneficial in supporting the integration process.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: There are several components of the project that could be highlighted as innovative. First, is the use of digital tools and setting up of an e-learning platform for mapping competencies of immigrants and refugees, sharing the relevant resources, showcasing available job vacancies, providing training and so on. Similarly, project partners also developed training modules for language courses and civic and intercultural sessions as a support in the integration process. The Handbook for trainers with detailed training content and recommended methodology was developed as an innovative tool created with the experts' support and adjusted to the local context of participating countries. Moreover, the ALMIT online tool for competence check is also very innovative and useful for, e.g. Turkish stakeholders as the Turkish Employment Agency plans to use it in the future.

Second, ALMIT joint events, linking jobseekers and local enterprises, were innovative and worked well for both parties: the immigrants and the local enterprises. Participants had the opportunity to exchange their experiences and expectations with each other.

Policy evidence generated by the project: As part of the ALMIT project, partners have developed and made available resources such as a dedicated website, an e-learning platform²⁶ in all partner languages, train-the-trainer handbook, documents such as a strategy and plan, cooperation agreement and exploitation plan which were uploaded to the Dropbox platform as well as the final online conference²⁷ and the project presentations²⁸ from the final conference. Similarly, the outcomes produced through the project activities, which are spread over seven Work Packages (WPs) were also made available on the project website.

Moreover, project partners conducted assessments and collected feedback on the impact of the pilot integration courses and shared it as consolidated report on their Dropbox platform. Following the mapping and profiling of immigrants' education, skills and experiences and matching them with the needs of the local labour market, project partners produced a report describing the conclusions and recommendations on the matching process, which they also shared on their Dropbox platform. They also developed and shared helpful materials for entering the local labour market in the form of pocketbooks in all partner countries. Quality control and monitoring activities were implemented both for internal and external reporting purposes. This included a

²⁶ ALMIT: Course categories, <https://almit-project.eu/elearning/>

²⁷ ALMIT Final Conference 26 November 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulDuXpPnk18&feature=youtu.be>

²⁸ Final conference of the ALMIT project – presentations, <https://almit-project.eu/2020/11/30/final-conference-of-the-almit-project-presentations/>

quality monitoring and evaluation plan and quality management internal reports, as well as reporting to the European Commission which included monitoring reports, such as two interim technical implementation reports and one final technical implementation report.

Transnational dimension: The ALMIT project was transnational with partners from Austria, Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey. The partners exchanged experience across national borders. During the project, joint meetings of all partners were organised where they exchanged experiences, country-specific examples and good practices. In addition to the transnational project partner meetings, the project team also organised a visit to Brussels and met with EU officials. The project was also presented at events outside the Republic of Serbia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Austria, whose institutions are under the auspices of the EU.

New partnerships created: During the ALMIT project different partnerships were created including with academic institutions as conceptual leaders and project supervisors, public authorities, business sector, refugee organisation, national agencies for VET training, organisations working with immigrants, educational authority, organisations supporting intercultural dialogue, employment and youth empowerment, and others. For instance, the National Advisory Board, a body formed through the ALMIT project included representatives of several national organisations that were directly or indirectly involved in resolving the migrant issue.

Moreover, the ALMIT project had a unique composition of project partner countries. Austria is a major target country for Third Country Nationals while Serbia and Bulgaria are mainly considered as transit countries. Meanwhile, Turkey mainly deals with refugees from neighbouring countries who consider returning when local conflicts are settled. These different circumstances provided different approaches in the work with immigrants on a political level but also in terms of the activities that NGOs / VET centres carry out to serve the target group. This partnership through the ALMIT project provided a diverse overview of how migration and integration are perceived within different European countries.

Similarly, important new partnerships were created with diverse local stakeholders who played an instrumental role in the success of the project. For instance, in Turkey the Government Directorate of Düzce and the Düzce General Directorate of Migration Management worked closely on the ALMIT project. Likewise, the Turkish Employment Agency, which was closely involved in the project, will be using the online tool created by the ALMIT project for competence check.

Dissemination strategy: Project outputs, relevant resources, learning platform, information on the partner organisations, and national and translational events were disseminated using the project website, Dropbox platform and social media channels.

The dissemination activities were divided into regular dissemination activities on the local, national and international level and the final project dissemination conference. Documents such as the strategy and plan, cooperation agreement and exploitation plan were uploaded to the Dropbox platform as were the dissemination materials. The final online conference was made available on the [YouTube channel](#) and accompanying [presentations](#) shared on the project website.

Target organisations that benefited from ALMIT project results included higher education bodies, national agencies for VET training, representatives of ministries of education and science, ministries of labour and social affairs, general immigration offices, Bulgarian Council on Refugees and Migrants, representatives of state

institutions involved in immigrant policy, employer organisations, employment agencies, NGOs and others.

Through national and EU-wide web promotion (via the interactive portal, social media channels and the project website) project partners promoted the ALMIT concept to the relevant stakeholders and authorities as well as social forums and groups all over Europe. There was also a final project dissemination conference which attracted 100+ participants and external experts from across Europe. Some of the project events were conducted online given the travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

European added value: The ALMIT project and relevant activities would not be possible without the EU funding primarily due to the limited funds that participating organisations have. Moreover, the fact that this project was co-financed by the EU helped with the promotion of the project among the local population. In particular, it showcased that the EU not only sympathises with the problems of refugees, but also contributes to overcoming the animosity caused by the situation. Similarly, without the financial support from the EU it would not be possible to hire local experts who provided trainings throughout the project. EU funding has also contributed to organising specific meetings and trainings, creating a practical website and e-learning platform with helpful information and resources. Lastly, the funding also helped cover other costs such as work materials, renting training space and providing food and drinks, which was a motivating factor for the participants.

Sustainability measures: During the ALMIT project activities, partners have developed a network of organisations and individuals that will continue to follow-up and contribute to improving the situation of immigrants in Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Austria. Throughout the project, partners matched representatives of other organisations and employers with immigrants in joint events in which they could discuss all the challenges and possibilities regarding employment. These relationships are also expected to last even after the project is over.

The learnings and experiences gained from the project will remain and benefit stakeholders in the long-term. For instance, the ALMIT team and facilitators who provided job orientation sessions became familiar with the necessary competences for various occupations and learned about job profiles and companies that will be useful for long-term integration purposes. Similarly, the partner organisations in Serbia, Bulgaria, Austria and Turkey will apply ALMIT examples of good practice and strengthen the same or similar project activities in the future.

The ALMIT project was a very good example for NGOs, educational institutions and policy organisations working on refugee issues, who can use ALMIT results and outputs in their future programmes. To illustrate, the online tool for competence check developed during ALMIT project was useful for Turkish stakeholders and the Turkish Employment Agency plans to use it in the future.

In addition, all the resources, learning materials, reports and lessons learned from the ALMIT project can serve as distinctive good practices for the organisations in different countries. As the project results and materials continue to be available on the project website and e-learning platforms, interested organisations can use these resources by adjusting them to their local reality. Another sustainability factor is that all project partners agreed to continue cooperating with each other and with other organisations involved in the project in order to serve refugees and immigrants.

Finally, another important impact of the project is the fact that a representative of project partner Zgura-M delivered a training in a summer school in Medellin, Cartagena, Colombia using the outcomes of the ALMIT project. During a discussion with the local organiser of the training and the representatives of regional authorities, potential transfer of the project concepts, methodology and approaches was agreed. According to the feedback the approach applied in ALMIT could be used to contribute to overcoming Venezuela's refugee wave. Hence the strategy described in the ALMIT project could be a useful tool to reduce labour market tensions in Latin America. Through transferring our European experience to a Latin America country, the project team ensured that ALMIT innovation would be sustainable and transferable to other countries on other continents.

Horizontal objectives: The activities implemented within the ALMIT project also focused on issues such as gender equality and youth employment. For instance, the civic and intercultural courses specifically addressed equality among genders and highlighted the need for integration. Similarly, through job-skills' matching and profiling and settlement, the project supported the employability of young people with a refugee background.

3.2.b. Awareness-raising activities on "Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults"

This section presents three projects that fall under two calls for proposals with an overall objective to support the implementation of the [Council Recommendation on "Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults"](#).²⁹

Two projects presented in this section specifically focused on facilitating the access of low-skilled and / or low-qualified adults to flexible pathways for enhancing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

The third project implemented actions in line with a specific objective to support the deployment by national and / or regional authorities, as an integral element in their implementation of the Council recommendation.

3.2.3. The development of an adaptive, web-based assessment tool for evaluating the literacy, numeracy and digital skills levels of low-skilled / low-qualified adults in Turkey



'The Online Skill Assessment Project is a successful project implemented by DOKA since its outputs will be used at national level.'

²⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1224>



Call identification number	VP/2018/008
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0127
Policy area	Unemployment
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong Learning; • Combating long-term unemployment; • Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment; • Active Labour Market Programmes; • Upskilling and reskilling of adults.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Media; • Local Public Education Centre part of LLLP in Turkey; • Local Trabzon İŞKUR (Employment Agency).
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up a technical evaluation team at Trabzon University Faculty of Education; • Preparing skill-level assessment tool questions; • Revising assessment tool questions based on expert feedback; • Creating visuals for the assessment tool questions; • Running three pilots to test the web-based assessment tool for evaluating the literacy, numeracy and digital skills levels of low-skilled / low-qualified adults; • Designing a web-based assessment environment; • Hiring a software company to create a web-based adaptive system; • Running the web-based skill and skill level assessment system with the target group; • Conducting a statistical analysis of the skill assessment tool application results; • Writing and presenting two papers at the 'Teaching & Education Virtual Conference' held at the University of Economics, Prague, Czechia; • Visiting the OECD office in France to learn from their experiences; • Organising a staff training for the Turkish Employment Agency and National Education ministry General Directorate of Lifelong Learning • Organising a closing meeting with project partners, domestic and foreign partners, politicians, academicians, participant institutions, and corporate companies, local and national press to present project results.
Implementation country (-ies)	Turkey
Participating countries	Turkey
Coordinator	Doğu Karadeniz Kalkınma Ajansı Başkanlığı
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi • Trabzon Chamber of Commerce and Industry • Trabzon Public Education Centre • Trabzon Employment Agency (İŞKUR)

EU contribution in euro	(initial) 260 665.00
Project duration	1 April 2019-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://onlinebeceri.com

Socioeconomic context: The labour market analysis in Turkey shows that one of the main reasons for long-term unemployment is the lack of 21st century competencies among adults and mismatch between their skills and the needs of the labour market. Similarly, assessing and tracking adults' skills levels is another important challenge. The existing methods to assess skills levels among adults are not effective as they rely on a manual approach and use the Likert scale. Hence, the project aims to design a reliable and objective web-based adaptive skill assessment tool. The project focused on adults aged 18-40 with low qualification / low-skilled at secondary school level education as the main target group. To support low-skilled adults to prepare a career plan and to participate in the labour market, it is essential to first determine their level of qualifications / skills.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project aimed to develop an adaptive, web-based assessment tool for assessing the literacy, numeracy and digital skills of secondary school graduates aged 18-40 who represent the low-skilled / low-qualified adults in Turkey.

The project aims to contribute to Lifelong Learning, Active Labour Market Programmes, and upskilling and reskilling policies in Turkey. Moreover, the Web-Based feature of the Skill Assessment Tool will help to reach wide target groups as anyone will be able to assess their skills in Turkish Literacy, Numeracy and Digital field up to EQF level 4. This will allow a database with skills levels of relevant target groups to be built, help measure the outputs of the current education and training system and serve as a support for further upskilling and reskilling programmes. It will be possible to observe, track and evaluate the yearly changes in the skills levels of adults and contribute to planning the Lifelong Learning and Active Labour Market Programmes.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The major impact of this project is the fact that this adaptive, web-based assessment tool will be used on a national level in Turkey to evaluate the literacy, numeracy and digital skills levels of low-skilled / low-qualified adults. One of the main users of the tool is the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR). The project strengthened İŞKUR's technical infrastructure by providing them with a digital tool to measure the competencies of unemployed people. The project team also provided training for the Turkish Employment agencies where 300 job and vocational counsellors participated. This tool can contribute to İŞKUR's efforts to combat long-term unemployment in Turkey. Moreover, the Regional Development Agencies of Turkey (26) have the option to use this skills assessment tool in their regional and local initiatives targeting unemployed and low-skilled people.

The insights gathered in the database will help to design advanced adult learning programmes that match the current needs of the labour market. It can also be used as an impact analysis tool to evaluate the current adult learning training programmes. In the long term, the project will contribute toward making the employment services in Turkey more efficient and effective.

Identification of potential good practices: The important good practice from this project is to have an end user who will use and sustain the project outcomes. One of the main users of the skills assessment tool is the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) and potentially the Regional Development Agencies of Turkey (26). The project team helped strengthen İŞKUR's technical infrastructure by providing them

with a digital tool to measure unemployed people's competencies, and trained their staff (over 300 people). Thus, the project impact will continue even after the project is over and hopefully, contribute to İŞKUR's goals of combating the long-term unemployment in Turkey.

Another good practice from the project is having the right partners who can help. For instance, in order to reach the proper target group, the project team partnered with the Trabzon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Trabzon Public Education Center and Trabzon Employment Agencies who had databases with target group information as well as the experience in organising meetings with target groups.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: One of the most important lessons learned from this project, which can be applied in other contexts, is the importance of integrating the final user outputs to the design process. Furthermore, while the project implementation was initially done on a local level, its impact area was on the national level. Therefore, the project team also established national level partnerships to widen the scope and coverage of the project. Similarly, having a specific end user from the start of the project and involving them throughout the project cycle helped increase the buy-in and ownership of the final skills assessment tool.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: The project developed an adaptive, web-based assessment tool for evaluating the literacy, numeracy and digital skills levels of low-skilled / low-qualified adults which will be used on a national level in Turkey. Previously, such assessments were done manually. Thus, having a digital solution to assessment can help improve efficiency, effectiveness and scale of coverage. It can help a realistic picture of the skills levels and design appropriate training programmes that help to develop market relevant skills and competencies.

The assessment system will be online and adaptive. It will feature a mouse tracking utility. This will enable researchers to obtain quantitative data about the individual qualities of participants which affect their level of skills, and which are difficult to assess, such as whether the decisions of the participants are conscious or not, the time spent for thinking and whether they follow the texts using the mouse or not.

Policy evidence generated by the project: As part of the project the team has produced several reports, handouts, training materials and organised local and national-level events. The team has produced 'A Conceptual Framework of Adaptive Web-Based Skill Assessment Tool Designed for Low-Qualified Adults in Turkey', and 'Assessment of Basic Skills of Low-Qualified Adults in Turkey for Labour Market: Needs Analysis' reports which they presented at the 9th Teaching & Education Virtual Conference in Prague on 23 June 2020. Similarly, an evaluation study named 'Usability Evaluation of the Online Skill Assessment Tool' was submitted to an academic journal for publication. It is expected to be published in June-July of 2021. A reliability and validation analysis of the skill assessment question pool and CAT system has been performed. Statistical analysis has been shared with the end user of the web-based adaptive skill assessment tool – the Turkish Employment Agency.

The project team also organised several events and workshops. For instance, they provided training to the Turkish Employment Agency and National Education Ministry General Directorate of Lifelong Learning. The training focused on sharing the purpose, application and interpretation of the results of the web-based skill assessment tool. Likewise, the project team organised a closing meeting with the participation of the project partners, domestic and foreign partners, politicians, academicians, participant institutions, and corporate companies, local and national press. Information on the

project activities, relevant events, workshops, dissemination activities, project implementation and international visits can be accessed on the [project website](#).

Transnational dimension: A team of four people from the project team (project administrators and the representatives of each participant institutions) visited the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in France and the European Commission institutions and European Parliament in Belgium. The project team benefited tremendously from the know-how of the European partners and meetings with the OECD and European Training Foundation (ETF). OECD PIACC experience was beneficial when designing the skill assessment tool. The project has been promoted beyond the national level and gained international visibility.

New partnerships created: The project team established new partnerships both on local and national levels. On a local level, partnerships included Trabzon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Trabzon Public Education Centre and Trabzon Employment Agency (İŞKUR). At a national level, Industry and Technology Ministry – Development Agencies General Directorate and the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) and the Industry and Technology Ministry – Development Agencies General Directorate (DAGD).

This cooperation accelerated the design of the web-based adaptive skill assessment tool. All stakeholders combined their resources toward a common goal to create a fully functional result-based tool. Moreover, the local partners also shared their database to reach target groups – adults aged 18-40 with secondary school education. This allowed the project team to run pilot applications with target groups to check demographical effects, level of difficulty and validity of the question pool and usability of the system. Another positive outcome of these partnerships is that the Turkish Employment Agency will be using the assessment tool in the future.

Dissemination strategy: The project team relied on several different means to disseminate project-related activities. First, a designated [project website](#) was set up. Promotional brochures (1 000 units), [posters and roll ups](#) were prepared, distributed and used at promotional events and meetings. Moreover, social media accounts were created and used effectively during all project activities. Similarly, partner organisation websites (DOKA and KTU) were also used to promote the project. The project team also produced press releases which were shared with relevant media outlets. In addition, local and national partners helped with disseminating the project activities and in reaching the target group.

European added value: The project would not have been possible without the EU funding. It not only helped implement the project successfully and bring an innovative digital tool to national actors, but also positively contributed to addressing skills assessment and unemployment challenges in Turkey. The project's main goals were achieved successfully by providing an online assessment tool to actors operating at local, regional and national levels and ensuring both national and local utilisation via delivery of software training to İŞKUR and regional development agencies.

Sustainability measures: The major achievement of this project is the fact that the team managed to ensure its sustainability by securing the final user for the web-based assessment tool. The Turkish Employment Agency will be using this tool for evaluating the literacy, numeracy and digital skills levels of low-skilled / low-qualified adults in Turkey. It is also a web-based adaptive skill assessment tool that everyone can reach at any time to assess their skill level on digital, numeracy and literacy up to EQF level 4.

The collaboration between DOKA-KTU and the Turkish Employment Agency is expected to continue even after the project is over. The results of the web-based adaptive skill assessment tool will be monitored to ensure any defects or errors are detected and fixed. The partners also plan to upgrade the system by adding artificial intelligence tools that would suggest a particular training programme to users depending on their skills gap.

Horizontal objectives: The project addresses long-term unemployment of low-skilled adults including youth. The project target includes people aged 18-40 with secondary school education. This can help support and improve the employability of vulnerable groups such as youth and low-skilled workers.

3.2.4. BASIC - Building Alternative Skills Innovative sChemes

'The future of work is expected to entail lower job security, and more changes throughout a career. Skills management will be needed to anticipate and prepare for change and career development, thus skills audits are and will be useful in that regard.'



Call identification number	VP/2017/011
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0022
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskilling for adults • Combating long-term unemployment • Promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment services • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law • Social partners • Higher education institutions and research institutes • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment

Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping, identifying, and prioritising potential target groups in need of upskilling interventions: National Report • Identifying and mapping of the available upskilling pathways and opportunities in Greece: National Report • Mapping of skills' assessment tools: Three reports on mapping, recommendations and the digital platform standards of the assessment tool • Mapping and reviewing of adult upskilling learning/teaching theories and effective methodologies: National Report • Developing the Pilot Learning Action: four training manuals in three fields of basic skills development, addressed to adult learners, basic literacy-numeracy science and respectively three Guides for Trainers, E-learning platform
Implementation country (-ies)	Greece
Participating countries	Greece
Coordinator	Organismos Apascholis Erganikou Dynamikou (OAED)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elliniki Dimokratia (Ypourgeio Paideias & Thriskevmaton - Geniki Grammateia Epaggelmatikis Ekpaidefsis, Katartisis & Dia Viou Mathesis – GSLLL) • Institutouto Mikron Epichiriseon Genikis Synomospondias Epaggelmaton Biotechnon Emporon Ellados Imegsebee (IME GSEVEE) • Kentro Anaptyxis Ekpaideytikis Politikis G.S.E.E. (Kanep/Gsee) Astiki Etaireia (KANEP GSEE)
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 353 567.10
Project duration	2 May 2018-2 January 2021
Project/organisation website	https://www.easibasic.gr/en/home/

Socioeconomic context: In Greece, there is no framework to define adult learning and basic skills. While there are many programmes developing and reinforcing skills and competences, the programmes for upskilling actions in favour of low or very low-qualified adults have only been ad hoc. Due to the difficult connection of formal education to work, many people, even those with upper secondary education, have not participated in any kind of vocational training or skills enhancement programmes (basic and social). In Greece, one of the key priorities for employment and social policies is the development of human capital. The percentage of Greeks who are rated as proficient in language literacy and in solving mathematical and technological problems is significantly lower than the average of OECD countries. For example, about one in four adults in Greece (26.0%) ranks at level 3 in literacy, below the OECD average of 35.4%. The Greek vocational education and training system fails to successfully attract learners and employers and to respond to labour market needs.

Aims of the project/organisation: The BASIC project has set as a National Policy Objective to recommend that certain actions and policies be adopted to ensure easy access to upskilling. This includes credible skills, assessment tools, customised and flexible quality learning and recognised / validated educational outcomes (qualifications). The main objective of the project was to reinforce the upskilling of adults with low levels of basic skills or low qualifications, to adjustable pathways, improve their literacy, numeracy, and digital skills and/or progressing towards a higher qualification and re-engaging of learning, according to the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways.

Project partners attempted to capture the need to upgrade skills of low-skilled adults in Greece on a more systematic level, to contribute in detail in the relevant dialogue and propose, at pilot level, specific actions regarding low-skilled adult education / adult training. This was particularly critical since the data show that unemployment,

and in fact long-term unemployment, mainly concerns people with low qualifications and skills.

The BASIC project aimed at:

- formulating national policy proposals for upgrading skills;
- enhancing the elaboration of actions and policies, to ensure easy access to upskilling pathways of low-skilled adults;
- promoting customised and flexible quality learning, which in combination with reliable skills assessment tools, seeks to lead to recognised / certified learning results.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project partners successfully mapped and prioritised the target groups in need of upskilling in Greece. They also developed an innovative “package” of vocational training for basic skills, in four fields of literacy (linguistic, numerical, scientific and digital). While designing the coursework the developments and modern approaches in modules and pedagogical methodology were taken into account to ensure relevance to the current trends. The training was implemented at pilot level to be tested and optimised. Moreover, the project partners mapped upskilling pathways, learning methodologies and skills assessment tools in order to identify the most appropriate methods and tools of vocational training and skills assessment.

The BASIC project successfully achieved its initial goals by:

- contributing to the national policy by presenting the results of the project to policymakers as an “opportunity” to further implement and influence relevant policy measures;
- contributing to the creation of level 3 of the EQF / NQF index – Basic Skills through the provision of specialised methodological and assessments tools, which did not exist until recently in the country.

Identification of potential good practices: There are several good practices generated from this project that can be applied in other contexts. Firstly, the project team’s decision to narrowly define their target audience and focus on the most vulnerable group was a great idea. It can help address long-term unemployment trends in a given country. Second, the BASIC project has set as a National Policy Objective to recommend that certain actions and policies be adopted to ensure easy access to upskilling. This includes credible skills, assessment tools, customised and flexible quality learning and recognised / validated educational outcomes (qualifications). The project partners were able to raise awareness of diverse stakeholders and get buy-in from key decision-makers. This allowed adoption and implementation of BASIC project activities and resources on a local and national level even after the completion of the project.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: The project developed innovative adult learning approaches, methods and tools as well as qualitative training materials which are flexible and transferable in the field of low-skilled / qualified adults in different contexts.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: The innovative component of the project was the creation of a “package” of vocational training for basic skills, in four fields of literacy (linguistic, numerical, scientific and digital) based on the mapping and need assessment for upskilling among the target group. The coursework was designed with reference to recent developments, modern teaching approaches and pedagogical methodology to ensure relevance to the current trends. As part of this innovative

adult learning approaches, project partners have set up a qualitative training material, flexible and transferable, in the field of low-skilled / qualified adults.

Policy evidence generated by the project: As part of the BASIC project several reports were produced including a national report on the existing groups in need of upskilling pathways, a report presenting and reviewing the existing upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults, recommendations report for designing and deploying a sound assessment framework and a final evaluation of the BASIC project report. [Work Packages](#)³⁰ developed during the project are published on the project website.

The external evaluation focused on the assessment of the project's efficiency and effectiveness, according to the call objectives. It also included an interim report and final report submitted by the external evaluator. The main objective of these two reports was to identify and explore the key issues, the critical requirements for success and the major constraints and significant lessons which had been exported during the lifetime of the project, in the field of upskilling pathways for low-skilled / qualified adults.

Transnational dimension: Although the partnership had a purely national composition, the transnational dimension was introduced by organising study trips to:

- Ireland [(15-17/04/2019)] in order to gain relevant European know-how. A study team, comprised of representatives from all partners visited the following organisations: City of Dublin Education & Training Board, Quality & Qualifications Ireland, Further Education & Training Authority (SOLAS) and Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI). The visit helped partners to exchange ideas and practices related to the methodological approaches for upskilling pathways.
- Paris, France (23-26/09/2019), in order to integrate relevant European best practices. Representatives from partners visited the following organisations: GRETA- AC-VERSAILLES, Centre Info – Department of Local European and International affairs, Certif'Pro, AFPA, APP and Ministère d' Education Nationale

While the working languages of the project were Greek and English, the final outcomes of the project also included a European dimension. The project also contributes to transnational efforts to certify basic skills by raising awareness on validating non-formal learning outcomes, as a tool to further improve the career prospects of adults as well as to stimulate their interest in further education and training.

New partnerships created: The BASIC project brought together four strong national actors in Greece who are involved in planning, organising and promoting adult learning. All partners were committed to creating a sustainable network, in order to effectively act towards facilitating the access of low-skilled and / or low-qualified adults to flexible pathways for enhancing their literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Thanks to this partnership, for the first time in Greece an integrated intervention and comprehensive proposal on upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults was built.

Partnerships between the national PES, the Ministry of Education and the Social Partners were crucial for reinforcing the added value of the BASIC project and for strengthening national policy in this field. As part of this partnership a large debate was opened among the partner organisations and an ad hoc partners' meeting took place at the Ministry of Education (21.10.2020), to exchange views about the next

30 BASIC: Work Packages, <https://www.easibasic.gr/en/work-packages/>

steps needed to promote BASIC Action results as the keystone to build further, in the relevant policy field, the basic skills of low-skilled / low-qualified adults.

Dissemination strategy: The main stakeholders addressed and targeted by the communication and dissemination activities of the project include the authorities working on VET and youth issues, policymakers, potential users and supporters, the Ministry of Education-EOPPEP (National Organisation for Certification of Qualifications & Vocational Guidance), the Ministry of Labour, Youth Bodies, Social Partners, VET policy design institutions, relevant networks and institutions acting in the relevant local / regional / national / EU level field. The dissemination and promotion actions of the project objectives, practices and results led to fruitful dialogue and proposals, related to the field of upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults, in order to contribute to the development of relevant policies.

The means used for the dissemination included:

- Project and partner websites;
- Multimedia Project Presentation (videos);
- Social networking (Facebook, twitter etc.) sites;
- Direct dissemination activities (conferences, webinars, info days, internal meetings);
- Other dissemination products and tools (Presentation of the project's objectives, results and deliverables in related conferences, leaflets, press releases).

The dissemination activities of the project were primarily addressed to and aimed at:

- Bringing on board supporters such as public and local authorities, social partners, training providers as the multipliers with the highest potential with regard to a sustainable use of the project's results.
- Gaining the interest and acceptance of end users (professionals, practitioners, low-skilled / qualified adults) for the project's outcomes, via the "transfer"-tasks scheduled, in order to facilitate their sustainable transfer into practice.
- Bringing partners' internal stakeholders / networks on board, via the partners' internal dissemination of the project's results.
- Introducing further stakeholders to the project's approach and its recommendations and engage them in a wider dialogue on practices for supporting upskilling pathways.

European added value: For the first time in the country, an integrated intervention and comprehensive proposal on upskilling pathways for low-skilled adults was built, thanks to the EU funding and the relevant initiatives taken by a partnership among strong national actors. Through the EaSI programme and funding from the EU, the four Greek collaborating partners successfully captured, on a more systematic level, the situation in Greece regarding the need to upgrade skills in low-skilled adults, contributed in detail to the relevant dialogue and proposed specific actions regarding low-skilled adult education / adult training. It allowed national interactions and relevant consultations on the policy field of basic skills for low-skilled / low-qualified adults. Moreover, the EU funding made it possible to organise study visits to Ireland and France to learn from their experience and adopt European-level best practices in the field of adult education.

Sustainability measures: Project implementing partners focused on building strong relations with relevant stakeholders and building policy discourse on the upskilling of adults. The project partners aimed to create Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (not applied in Greece until December 2020) for basic skills and to promote the BASIC Package, as the basis to act towards a certificate of basic skills level 3. According to the recently introduced law of the Ministry of Education (Law

4763/21.12.2020, art.9), on the National System of Vocational Education, Training and Lifelong Learning, level 3 is foreseen to be provided by Vocational Training Schools and the Apprenticeship Vocational Education Schools of OAED – art.9 (1). This is a great achievement and *inter alia* a result of the commitment of the leading project partners.

Moreover, the Municipality of Larissa, known as the “Learning City” showed interest in implementing the actions from the BASIC project at a local level. They will use the vocational training actions to address unemployed low-qualified adults, fully adopting the methodology of BASIC, in collaboration with the Greek PES (initial meeting in mid-February 2021). Similarly, discussions with the Ministry of Education will be continued, to promote the BASIC package as the keystone for the necessary actions to be implemented for the validation of basic skills.

Horizontal objectives: With the goal to combat long-term unemployment, the BASIC project focused on vulnerable groups such as unemployed with low educational qualifications with particular attention to women. Out of 25 applications, 17 (4 men - 13 women) trainees registered for the training programme and 15 of them (3 men - 12 women) participated and successfully graduated.

3.2.5. Support for upskilling pathways in the Netherlands

'Education providers amongst others face difficulties with regard to the complexity of rules and regulations, limited insights into the best approach in a given context / sector, and the development of partnerships with regional stakeholders.'



Call identification number	VP/2017/011
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0107
Policy area	Unemployment
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development; • Combat long-term unemployment; • Fight against poverty and social exclusion; • Promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Social partners; • Public and private education and training providers; • Teachers and trainers; • Policy advisers, managers and directors; • Adult learners.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting desk research by gathering relevant information on adult education and training, including detailed information on public and private education institutions, quantitative data on adult education and training, and insights into the factors influencing the participation of adults in learning; • Conducting field research by speaking to relevant stakeholders about the provision of flexible learning pathways. The main

	<p>target group consisted of public and private education institutions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing active support to education and training providers via meetings and service documents; • Organising a national conference by gathering all relevant stakeholders in order to solidify commitment for adult learning, exchange knowledge and good practices, and build a sustainable network of partners.
Implementation country (-ies)	Netherlands
Participating countries	Netherlands
Coordinator	Koninkrijk der Nederlanden
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 271 363.50
Project duration	1 July 2018-30 June 2020
Project/organisation website	-

Socioeconomic context: Over the past decades, the Netherlands has successfully promoted basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) development via multiple inter-ministerial basic skills programmes. Nevertheless, the link between basic skills and VET has generally been weak. Furthermore, the Dutch VET system has long been oriented towards initial education, with a strong focus on diploma-oriented trajectories. In the coalition agreement of the current government (2017) and the governance agreement between the ministry and the Association of VET Colleges (2018), the importance of flexible learning pathways and tailoring the educational system to the needs of adults, especially those that are low-skilled and/or low-qualified, has been reinforced.

In the Netherlands, a participation gap in adult learning continues to exist between lower and higher qualified and skilled adults. The major barriers to learning include negative learning experiences, a lack of self-esteem, juggling work-life balance and a focus on the short, instead of the long term. Similarly, development of flexible learning pathways is also a difficult process with challenges including limited knowledge on rules and regulations, difficulties regarding the development of partnerships with regional stakeholders, and a lack of knowledge on the various options and best approach in a given context / sector.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project aimed to gather information on the status quo of flexible learning pathways for adults in the Netherlands and actively stimulate and support relevant stakeholders to develop these. The end goal was to stimulate the availability of flexible learning pathways up to EQF level 4 for (low-skilled / low-qualified) adults. To achieve these goals, the team conducted desk and field research and provided active support to the public and private education and training institutions, via inter alia service documents, meetings and a national conference.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project has contributed to an action-oriented approach and helped eliminate the gap between policy and practice. Through the desk and field research, the team gathered valuable insights into the status quo, ambitions and barriers regarding the development of flexible learning pathways for adults in the Netherlands. The findings from the study highlighted that there is confusion related to how to develop flexible learning pathways for adults, challenges

with developing sustainable cooperation with regional partners, and significant differences between education and training institutions across the country.

These insights have provided the basis for action-oriented support in the second phase of the implementation period. By providing an accessible service, directly speaking to relevant stakeholders, developing service documents that respond to current needs, and organising meetings and a national conference, the team has proactively stimulated and supported education and training institutions to progress in their efforts to develop flexible learning pathways.

Major challenges faced by education providers in the Netherlands has to do with the complexity of rules and regulations, limited insights into the best approach in a given context / sector, and the development of partnerships with regional stakeholders. Hence, the project team focused on organising one-on-one meetings, disseminating newsletters, developing service documents, organising national meetings and a large-scale conference. As a result, education and training providers have been effectively stimulated and supported to develop flexible learning pathways for adults. Over the course of the project, many education providers have managed to take the next step based on the new information received and have already seen positive outcomes. For instance, between 1 October 2017 and 1 October 2019, the number of adults enrolled in formal vocational education and training has increased from 72 438 to 88 114 students.

Identification of potential good practices: The main good practice from this project is the combination of action and a policy-oriented approach to adult learning. On the policy front the project was a great addition to the inter-ministerial programme on adult learning initiated by the current government, including policy measures such as personal learning budgets and a digital overview of learning possibilities.

The project has also enabled experimentation with an action-oriented approach in the field of adult learning. The direct interaction with education and training providers has proven valuable for both sides and has, amongst others, led to an increase in mutual understanding and closed the gap between policy and practice. Furthermore, the action has led to a strengthening of national partnerships and has contributed to the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: One major lesson learned from this project, which could be transferred elsewhere is to experiment with an action-oriented approach by trying to find solutions within the given policy context, without necessarily wanting to change it. The major benefit of the project to the Ministry of Education in the Netherlands came from adopting an action-oriented approach in the field of adult learning as it helps to close the gap between policy and practice. What is needed is not always a change in rules and regulations and / or more budget, but rather the provision of more information on the opportunities within current rules and regulations and the facilitation of knowledge sharing and the exchange of good practices. Similarly important is the coordination and cooperation of diverse stakeholders involved in the field of adult learning at all levels.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: The major stakeholders of this project including the ministry and the education and training providers found the action-oriented approach inherent to this project as innovative and valuable. This approach

not only fits the field of adult learning but is also it is in line with the ministry's more general ambition to move towards a more responsive government that adopts a bottom-up approach whenever suitable and possible. Given the success of the project and the remaining challenges with implementation, the type of support and stimulation initiated by this project will be continued. Education institutions have plans to shift from developing visions and plans to focusing more on implementation over the next few years. Hence, focus will shift to project managers and teams of teachers and trainers. Similarly, more emphasis will be placed on regional stakeholders by organising visits, meetings and disseminating relevant information.

Policy evidence generated by the project: Through the desk and field research, the project team produced various outputs including two factsheets and six thematic two-pagers on public-private partnerships, the link between basic skills and VET, validation of knowledge, skills and competences, teachers and trainers, generic courses (languages, maths and citizenship) and alumni policy. These documents primarily served as input for internal policymaking processes and the development of a vision for the future by the department. In addition, insights from the factsheets and two-pagers have been shared in the various newsletters, as well as orally during individual meetings with diverse stakeholders.

The project team also organised a mini conference on recognition and validation together with the Service Centre on VET / Adult Learning, the Association of VET Colleges, the umbrella organisation for private education and training providers and the platform of validation providers. They produced a report³¹ on the conference which was published on the website of the Service Centre on VET / Adult Learning. Similarly, following a national conference with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and the Social and Economic Council, the project team produced relevant materials. In particular, the project team produced a talking-head video,³² an e-magazine and four newsletters related to policy developments on adult learning.

New partnerships created: During the implementation of the project several important partnerships were established or strengthened. Firstly, partnerships between different ministries, including the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy. .

Second, public-private partnerships in particular with education and training providers. The direct interaction with education and training providers has proven valuable for both sides and has, among others, led to an increase in mutual understanding and closed the gap between policy and practice.

Third, developing partnerships with regional stakeholders was also prioritised by organising visits and meetings with local municipalities, social partners and education and training providers.

By organising a national conference, the project team gathered together all relevant stakeholders, which helped to solidify commitment for adult learning, exchange

³¹ Terugblik Miniconferentie 'Erkennen werkervaring en maatwerk voor volwassenen' op 21 mei 2019, <https://levenlangontwikkelen.nl/praktijkvoorbeelden/miniconferentie-elw/>

³² Leven Lang Ontwikkelen, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41uqBuM3F6Y>

knowledge and good practices, and to build a sustainable network of partners who can work on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults.

Dissemination strategy: The project team produced and disseminated various outputs including two factsheets and six thematic two-pagers on public-private partnerships, the link between basic skills and VET, validation of knowledge, skills and competences. These documents were used as input for internal policymaking processes and the development of a vision for the future by the department. These documents were also disseminated through various newsletters, as well as orally during individual meetings with education and training providers, national meetings of the Service Centre on VET / Adult Learning, and a work meeting from the department with the Foundation for Cooperation on Vocational Education, Training and Labour Market (SBB).

The main means to disseminate information included:

- One-on-one meetings with education and training providers and other national and regional stakeholders;
- Thematic and network meetings across the country (knowledge sharing);
- Communication materials such as newsletters, handouts, and worksheets;
- Thematic and national conferences;
- Provided input for policymaking and the new VET / adult learning strategy of the department.

The project team has visited around 90 % of all public VET institutions in the Netherlands, as well as various private education providers – either once or multiple times. These meetings involved diverse stakeholders such as the executive board, managers, teachers and students at public and private education institutions as well as provinces, municipalities and Regional Service Centres for Learning and Work.

The project team also organised a mini conference on recognition and validation together with the Service Centre on VET / Adult Learning, the Association of VET Colleges, the umbrella organisation for private education and training providers and the platform of validation providers. They [produced a report](#)³³ on the conference which was published on the website of the Service Centre on VET / Adult Learning.

A national conference was organised on 27 November 2019 together with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and the Social and Economic Council. The event attracted 500 participants, ranging from national, regional and local-level policymakers, public and private education and training providers, social partners, Regional Service Centres on Learning and Work, researchers and the European Commission. The project team produced [a talking-head video](#)³⁴ with the project manager, three ministers, teachers, social partners and adult learners. It was disseminated via various websites (Service Centre on VET / Adult Learning), social media channels (LinkedIn and YouTube of the ministries and Social and Economic Council) and newsletters. Similarly, [an e-magazine](#) was produced on the day of the conference which participants could access with a special QR code. Finally, four newsletters related to policy developments on adult learning were

³³ Terugblik Miniconferentie 'Erkennen werkervaring en maatwerk voor volwassenen' op 21 mei 2019, <https://levenlangontwikkelen.nl/praktijkvoorbeelden/miniconferentie-elw/>

³⁴ Leven Lang Ontwikkelen, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41uqBuM3F6Y>

produced and disseminated to hundreds of stakeholders via email and the website of the ministry.

European added value: The project was possible thanks to the funding from the EU. It allowed the project team to conduct desk and field research, meet with 90 % of all public VET institutions in the Netherlands, establish lasting partnerships, raise awareness of education and training providers and achieve policy impact in the field of adult education. The funding support also made it possible to organise several thematic, local and national conferences which attracted hundreds of stakeholders and positively contributed to the project.

Sustainability measures: The results of the project and impacts of the actions will be sustained in the long run thanks to the buy-in generated from policy actors as well as the education and training providers. During the two-year period of 2017-2019 an additional 15 676 adults enrolled in formal vocational education and training. The project also contributed to the inter-ministerial programme on adult learning initiated by the current government including policy measures such as personal learning budgets and a digital overview of learning possibilities. Moreover, the direct interaction with education and training providers has proven valuable for both sides and has, among others, led to an increase in mutual understanding and closed the gap between policy and practice. Project helped to strengthen national partnerships, which will focus on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways.

Horizontal objectives: The project promoted the availability of flexible learning pathways up to EQF level 4 for low-skilled / low-qualified adults, including women. Using the insights from the desk and field research and by organising meetings and a national conference the project team actively supported the public and private education and training institutions.

3.3. EURES: projects promoting geographical labour mobility

In total, two projects funded during the analysed period in the area of geographical labour mobility (EURES) supported the European multilingual classification of skills, competences, qualifications and occupations (ESCO). Specifically, the projects were aimed to build support for national classification inventories and innovative online services for mobile workers. The activities described below were implemented in Italy and Germany.

3.3.1. A Data-driven bridge towards ESCO using AI algorithms – AI4ESCO

'AI4ESCO employs state-of-the-art artificial intelligence algorithms to build a bridge between Italian Official Occupation Taxonomy and ESCO.'



Call identification number	VP/2019/010
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0423
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Skills
Target groups	National, regional and local authorities
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A machine-readable structure of the lexicon used within the Italian National Occupation Taxonomy created; • Italian National Taxonomy was connected to ESCO by means of word-embedding similarities; • Quality evaluation of generated mapping tables conducted
Implementation country (-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Italy
Coordinator	University of Milan, Italy
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 64 613.39
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	-

Socioeconomic context: The Commission has put in place several measures to support Member States in establishing an inventory to map their national, regional and sectoral classification to and from the European classification or to replace national classifications with the European classification.

Member States who choose not to use the European classification in their national systems for job vacancies and jobseeker profiles connected to the single coordinated channel, within the meaning of Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, must make a mapping between the classifications used by those systems and the European classification to allow interoperability. The mapping between national, regional or sectoral classifications and the European classification requires the establishment and regular updating of inventories and tables for mapping.

To facilitate the establishment and updating of such mapping inventories and tables and the subsequent exchange of information based on the mapping the Commission has provided the necessary technical standards and formats and the appropriate technical applications to support it.

Aims of the project/organisation: AI4ESCO aimed at realising the objective that is to support the Member States, EURES members and partners to establish high-quality mapping tables allowing for matching job vacancies and CVs in the European Job Mobility Portal.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: the project was successful in its aim to derive a machine-readable structure of the lexicon used within the Italian National Occupation Taxonomy. This goal has been achieved by realising two mappings: one from the Italian National Occupation Taxonomy towards ESCO and from ESCO to the Italian National Occupation Taxonomy.

The project has also connected ESCO to the Italian National Taxonomy by means of word-embedding similarities. This goal has been achieved by using state-of-the-art word-embedding algorithms to automatically suggest a match between two different mapping platforms. Each match has been validated by a human-expert to confirm or refuse the matching.

In addition, AI4ESCO used domain-experts to review and validate the results. The experts were employed from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (ANPAL). The experts have been involved in many iterations of the mapping validation, resulting in a complete validation of both mappings.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: through a reproducible report and a specific code describing in detail the steps made to realise the AI system, the approach used by the project team can be easily applied to establish high-quality mapping tables for other national taxonomies.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: the approach employed by AI4ESCO is part of the research activity of CRISP and published in the conference on the semantic web at "NEO: A Tool for Taxonomy Enrichment with NEW Emerging Occupations. ISWC 2020: 568-584". The novelty of the action lies within the drive to test new approaches on the mapping activity by using artificial intelligence algorithms.

Sustainability measures: the sustainability of AI4ESCO that will allow the mapping table to be updated over time will be guaranteed by:

- a specific and reproducible report describing in detail the steps taken to realise the AI system which could work as a manual for a future re-implementation of the process for other national taxonomies;
- a code to reproduce and re-iterate the procedure that maps the Italian Occupation taxonomies on ESCO;
- the use of a multi-criteria-decision-making model to provide evidence on the judgements and criteria use by labour market experts.

Horizontal objectives: the project contributes to the promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment as the mapping activities directly contribute to job mobility across Europe and therefore a more integrated and efficient labour market, by offering a "common language" on occupations and skills that can be used by different stakeholders on employment and education and training topics.

3.3.2. EURES: ESCO under Regulation (EU) 2016/568, Article 19



Bundesagentur für Arbeit

'The use of ESCO within the interoperability of EURES will support the matching possibilities between jobseeker profiles and job vacancies on a European level. Structured and transparent information on occupations, skills and competences is the basis to achieve the goals of interoperability in the EURES network.'



Call identification number	VP/2019/010
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0391
Policy area	Employment
Policy sub-area	Skills
Target groups	Employment services
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a mapping concept considering the specific demands of the involved national classification systems and the mapping guidelines developed; • mapped occupations, skills and competences in a bidirectional approach; • verified and integrated all the mapping tables in the IT-systems of the German Public Employment Service Agency.
Implementation country (-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	Germany
Coordinator	Federal Employment Agency (DE)
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 100 000.00
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	-

Socioeconomic context: The Commission has put in place several measures to support Member States in establishing an inventory to map their national, regional and sectoral classification to and from the European classification or to replace national classifications with the European classification.

Member States who choose not to use the European classification in their national systems for job vacancies and jobseeker profiles connected to the single coordinated channel, within the meaning of Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2016/589, must make a mapping between the classifications used by those systems and the European classification to allow interoperability. The mapping between national, regional or sectoral classifications and the European classification requires the establishment and regular updating of inventories and tables for mapping.

To facilitate the establishment and updating of such mapping inventories and tables and the subsequent exchange of information based on the mapping the Commission has provided the necessary technical standards and formats and the appropriate technical applications to support it.

Aims of the project/organisation: The main objective of the action was to assist the mapping between ESCO and the German classifications of occupations, skills and competences as foreseen in Regulation EU 2016/589 with the use of the ESCO mapping platform and the support offered by the European Commission.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project team first developed a mapping concept considering the specific demands of the involved national classification systems and the mapping guidelines offered by the European Commission. This concept ensured a homogeneous use of the foreseen mapping relations within the team responsible for the mapping. The mapping project was registered on the ESCO mapping platform, and the project team first concentrated on the mapping of occupations in a bidirectional approach. This was followed by a quality control involving classification experts and placement agents.

As a next step, the mapping concentrated on skills and competences following the same bidirectional approach.

As a result of these activities, all mapping tables were verified and integrated in the IT-systems of the German Public Employment Service Agency.

The project team learned that combining and mapping classification systems of occupations, skills and competences produce a lot of obstacles. These can only be managed by supporting the work with binding mapping guidelines. Besides this, there has to be a constant exchange within the team on specific cases.

Sustainability measures and transnational dimension: The use of the ESCO within the interoperability of EURES will further support the matching between jobseeker profiles and job vacancies on a European level. Structured and transparent information on occupations, skills and competences is the basis to achieve the goals of interoperability in the EURES network. It directly facilitates the transparency of the demands and needs of the labour market, and following that, labour mobility within the European Union.

Horizontal objectives: The project contributes to the promotion of a high level of quality and sustainable employment as the mapping activities directly contribute to job mobility across Europe and therefore a more integrated and efficient labour

market, by offering a “common language” on occupations and skills that can be used by different stakeholders on employment and education and training topics.

3.4. Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship: projects supporting social enterprises

Six projects presented in this section tested various transaction cost support schemes combined with financial instruments as a means to address the mismatch of needed and sustainable ticket sizes. More particularly, the projects aimed to catalyse smaller risk capital investments of below EUR 500 000 that otherwise would not happen.

Financial intermediaries were able to undertake long-term risk capital investments in ticket sizes of less than EUR 500 000 in the form of equity, quasi-equity, or hybrid financing to social enterprises in the EaSI Participating countries. The EU support was expected to lower the transaction costs for these small investment tickets and thus help to overcome a market failure in the social enterprise finance market.

3.4.1. SEFEA IMPACT



'Sefea Impact's intervention has contributed to making the business models of companies more sustainable, resilient, effective and efficient in offering their social products and services, expanding their impact potential and in some cases also favouring the intervention of third-party investors by making them even more attractive to other lenders.'

Call identification number	VP/2017/013
Grant identification number	VS/2017/0339
Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social partners; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Social enterprises.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social impact assessment model developed;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A panel of 183 social enterprises created, 142 enterprises analysed; • Funding provided to 7 companies (one currently being under evaluation to receive funding) with a ticket size of less than EUR 500 000.00.
Implementation country (-ies)	Italy
Participating countries	Italy
Coordinator	Sefea Impact – Savings management company
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 500 000.00
Project duration	1 February 2018-31 January 2020
Project/organisation website	https://sefeaimpact.it/

Socioeconomic context: The Si-Social Impact fund launched by Sefea Impact intends to follow an impact investing strategy by investing in companies, organisations and funds, to generate a quantifiable impact on a social and environmental level, as well as financial returns. The Si-Social Impact fund specifically targets Italian enterprises that could generate a positive social and environmental impact. Sefea Impact SGR, through the fund, aims to support companies operating in sectors such as Education and Training; Health and well-being; Sustainable Food Production; Creative industry and culture; Management and recycling of waste; Microfinance; Sustainable tourism; Sustainable mobility.

Sefea Impact’s impact investing strategy involves the adoption of a long-term perspective characterised by:

- available portfolio offer of tailor-made financial products adapted to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises with a clear social impact mission;
- offer of technical assistance services to strengthen the companies in the portfolio from an organisational and economic-financial point of view;
- adoption of management and measurement processes of the social and / or environmental impacts to maximise and optimise the results.

Aims of the project/organisation: the project aimed at developing the internal framework needed to build, in the long run, a pipeline of long-term risk capital investments for social enterprises in ticket sizes of less than EUR 500 000.00 (that otherwise would not happen), taking as a reference the procedures already developed for investments in ticket sizes higher than EUR 500 000.00. The project aimed to implement the activities in three stages:

- First screening. This phase is divided into three consecutive steps: 1) analysis of the eligibility of investment applications; 2) qualitative assessment of the applications deemed eligible, including the provision of investment readiness support for the preparation of the information material required by the Fund; 3) drafting and subscription of the Term Sheet for applications evaluated positively.
- Due diligence. This phase involves a detailed verification of all the data that were provided by the applicant for the previous qualitative assessment, as well as the legal and fiscal aspects which lead to a drafted proposal to allow the Board of Directors to decide on the investment.

- Investment management. This stage deals with the ordinary management of the investment, from the moment of disbursement to the exit, focusing mainly on the monitoring of the beneficiary and of the results achieved.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: Sefea Impact SGR was able to develop a panel of 182 companies, analyse 142 enterprises and finally invest in 7 companies (one more is currently under evaluation), with a ticket of less than EUR 500 000.00. The projects funded concentrate specifically on job and social integration of disadvantaged people; promotion activities of sustainable and responsible tourism; environmental education initiative; promotion of car-sharing services; initiatives of local integration events; education programmes. The companies which were evaluated and then carefully chosen were analysed using an impact assessment model developed by Sefea Impact SGR.

In addition, four workshops were carried out in collaboration with the International Research Centre on social impact assessment and innovation of the Politecnico di Milano. The workshops included some of the first beneficiaries and aimed to present, explain and further elaborate on the impact assessment model.

During the project, various reports which represent the peculiarities of the impact assessment model, and its functionality were elaborated. Additionally, a final report was drawn up, indicating the assessment process used by Sefea Impact.

The project reached several important conclusions:

- To ensure the development of the social economy sector, it is necessary to process ad hoc projects and solutions taking into account the target company, the reference territory and the social and economic presence there;
- The counterparties, as well as financial resources, also need technical and organisational support to ensure the development and long-term sustainability and resilience of their businesses;
- The attention of investors towards the impact investing sector is growing; also given the actual increase in recognising the need for sustainable development, the work of Sefea Impact and other similar organisations is essential to direct the resources towards these new sustainable models.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: Sefea Impact will further spread knowledge about the importance of impact investing by directing resources towards the social economy sector and highlighting the potential of the impact assessment model for it to be transferred to other specific sub-areas of the sector and other countries in Europe.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: With the EaSI support, Sefea Impact was able to develop and test a social impact assessment model which focuses on investments lower than EUR 500 000.00 and, in addition, provide solutions for specific small and medium enterprises.

Dissemination strategy: The reports on the social impact assessment model and a final report indicating the assessment process were disseminated publicly through the information systems (mainly newsletters) to various subjects operating in the social economy sector with which Sefea Impact collaborates (Febea, Fondazione Comunita di Messina and Fondazione con il Dus). The reports were uploaded on Sefea Impact's website and disseminated through social media channels.

European added value: Through the investment in the selected enterprises with a clear social mission, Sefea Impact allows the development of projects that not only have a direct positive short-term impact on the users of goods and services provided by the subsidiaries but that also have an impact on the entire local community as well as the wider society as a whole. The investments made lead to less State expenditure on supporting disadvantaged people; change in social habits by the promotion of more sustainable social behaviour; greater feeling of acceptance and solidarity and growth in GDP.

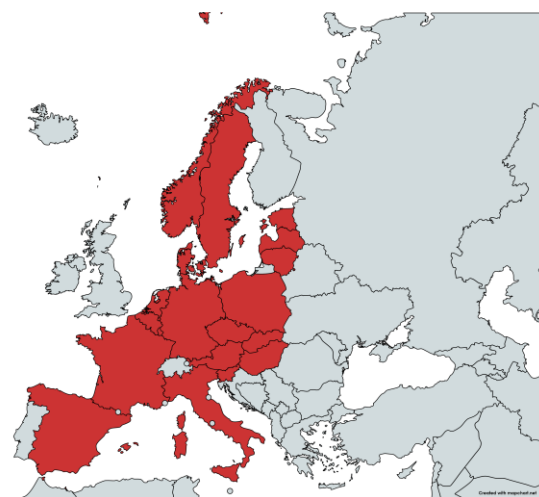
Sustainability measures: The next Sefea Impact's steps include constant monitoring of the beneficiaries to guarantee support for each activity and ensure that the financial and impact targets will be respected.

Sefea Impact SGR will also continue selecting and investing in worthy activities, in the panel of companies collected during the project. The organisation will further support the development and implementation of social innovation and impact measurement projects.

While continuing to implement the investment processes targeting small social enterprises will not be without problems, the participation in the EaSI programme has allowed Sefea Impact to experiment with the created model and to take advantage of it.

Horizontal objectives: The project objectives were pursued through the intervention of Sefea Impact SGR, and in particular, through the contribution of financial resources and technical assistance to companies that carry out specific social impact projects aimed at mitigating social problems related to social and job integration of disadvantaged people, corruption and discrimination and promotion of sustainable development and environmental education initiatives. Sefea Impact's intervention favoured the development of a network of virtuous businesses by promoting the growth of the social economy sector in Italy.

3.4.2. Building an open, pan-European pipeline of early-stage, investment-ready social enterprises with customised deal-by-deal support



FASE

'[...] we were able to extend our investor network from core markets in Germany and Austria to further European countries by adding more than 700 new impact investors.'

Call identification number	VP/2017/013
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0294
Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Social enterprises; • Impact investors across the entire return spectrum
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screened and analysed more than 300 investment-ready social enterprises in Germany, Austria, Benelux countries and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE); • Supported more than 20 social enterprises in raising hybrid growth capital; • Supported 10 additional enterprises which were not yet investment-ready • Expanded investors network by adding more than 700 new impact investors.
Implementation country (-ies)	Germany
Participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany; • Austria; • Belgium; • Luxembourg; • The Netherlands; • France; • Spain; • Italy; • Estonia; • Latvia; • Lithuania; • Czechia.; • Slovakia; • Poland; • Hungary; • Slovenia; • Denmark; • Sweden; • Norway.
Coordinator	Financing Agency for Social Entrepreneurship GmbH (FASE)
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLS Treuhand; • SNE Invest;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMW Stiftung; • Scheuch Family Foundation; • ERSTE BANK; • KOIS INVEST; • Shaerpa Fund Management; • La Bolsa Social; • Creas; • Oltre Venture; • Nordic Impact; • EVPA; • Ashoka Italy; • Ashoka France; • Ashoka Spain; • Ashoka Scandinavia; • NESsT; • Zavod Viva.
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 700 000.00
Project duration	1 June 2018-31 May 2020
Project/organisation website	www.fa-se.de/en/

Socioeconomic context: The Commission has recognised the potential of social enterprises for innovation and their positive impact on the economy and society at large in particular. Social enterprises develop innovative approaches, models or practices for resolving societal challenges in an entrepreneurial way to promote inclusive, socially fair and environmentally sustainable economic development and social change. Their economic operations cover a broad spectrum of activities.

However, lack of or poor access to finance is still a significant barrier for starting up a social enterprise, ensuring its sustainability and growth. The financial needs of social enterprises are relatively small: the most important financing gap in the market between EUR 100 000 and EUR 500 000 for early-stage social enterprises. As the transaction costs of these small tickets are comparatively high, social impact fund managers have an incentive to focus on higher amounts to preserve the fund's sustainability. This leads to a mismatch of needed and sustainable ticket sizes.

Aims of the project/organisation: The Financing Agency for Social Entrepreneurship aimed to build a pan-European pipeline of investment-ready, early-stage social enterprises with customised deal-by-deal support. Bearing in mind the high transaction costs of sourcing, preparing and executing small, customised deals, the action focused on catalysing smaller risk capital investments of below EUR 500 000 that otherwise would not be possible.

The action focused on addressing the shortages of smaller financing for social enterprises and aimed to mobilise EUR 7 million of risk capital investments. It sought to further extend the scope of the successfully piloted deal-by-deal support to other European regions and increase the penetration in existing markets.

Since 2013, FASE has built a successful track record: an investor base with more than 500 impact investors and successful support for more than 30 social enterprises in Germany, Austria, and Benelux countries, raising over EUR 14 million in hybrid growth capital. In addition, FASE has already set up an early-stage co-investment fund to mobilise more capital for social enterprises.

In particular, the action supported by the EaSI Programme planned five activities:

- To extend the orchestrated transaction support to 3-4 new European countries / regions (e.g., France, Spain, Italy, Central and Eastern Europe and

Scandinavia) through a rigorous assessment of appropriate regions, detailed market analysis, set up of regional teams and building partner networks.

- To source deals for appropriate social enterprises seeking smaller risk capital investments of below EUR 500 000 in current core markets (Germany, Spain and Benelux countries) as well as in further European countries (e.g., France, Spain, Italy, Central and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia) by screening, selecting and meeting potential pipeline candidates and providing investment readiness support.
- To extend current investor networks by deepening the existing relationships in Germany, Austria and Benelux countries and adding more than 200 new potential impact investors specifically interested in smaller, early-stage deals.
- To provide transaction support on a deal-by-deal basis for 20-30 selected social enterprises seeking risk capital investment of below EUR 500 000 in current markets and further European countries.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: While the deal-by-deal approach has been successfully tested with multiple cases previously, FASE has expanded these practices further in Germany, Austria and additional regions. During the action activities in Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland have been successfully started.

FASE has screened more than 300 investment-ready social enterprises in Germany, Austria, Benelux countries and Central and Eastern Europe and supported more than 20 social enterprises in raising hybrid growth capital:

- Ten of these enterprises have already completed their financing rounds, while two needed to end their fundraisings primarily due to lack of interest from investors.
- In three other cases the financing rounds are still ongoing and are expected to be completed after the official end of the project.
- In two cases, FACE developed pay-for-success models and discussed them with different impact investors as well as outcome payers;
- Two social enterprises received targeted investment readiness support to develop their business models and test these with grant money before pursuing an investment round.

In addition, FASE managed to support more than 10 social enterprises which were not yet investment-ready or hesitant to start raising rounds due to lack of commitment, management expertise or too many operational challenges to cope with.

FACE was also able to expand the investors' network from the core markets in Germany and Austria to further European countries by adding more than 700 new impact investors. In total, more than EUR 5 million in investment capital were mobilised towards early-stage investees.

Furthermore, during the project, another milestone was reached by advancing the launch of a new, innovative co-investment fund called the European Social Innovation and Impact Fund (ESIIF).

To disseminate knowledge and expand the outreach to potential impact investors, FASE organised 8 online Social Finance Events in 7 different locations, attended by 148 participants in total. In addition, to educate potential investors about the "do's and don'ts" of impact investing FACE carried out 10 web lounges and online impact

investors' hangouts which were attended by more than 200 potential investors. The knowledge on impact investing was shared at various conferences, workshops, sector events and panels (e.g., UN Summit Geneva, ChangeNOW summit in Paris, Digital Social Summit in Berlin etc.). During the project, FACE participated in more than 80 events of this kind.

Throughout the project implementation period, FACE contributed to compendiums and publications by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), EVPA and the European Commission. In total, 15 such contributions were made. Several insightful pieces were also written for sector-relevant media such as Alliance, Impact Magazin, Venture Capital Magazin and Die Stiftung and bank-owned client magazines such as Bethmann Bank and BW Bank.

FASE has also successfully published 12 case studies³⁵ on closed transactions with a specific focus on the individual hybrid financing packages and the investors that supported the deals.

Identification of potential good practices: The implemented action has shown that customised deal-by-deal support from FACE can be a very effective mechanism to provide hybrid capital to social enterprises in the early stages of their growth. The chosen approach resulted in more than 50 closed deals, channelling more than EUR 25 million in new resources to the social finance ecosystem in Austria, the Benelux countries, Germany and Scandinavia. Such customised deal-by-deal support proved to be specifically helpful for catalysing smaller risk capital investments of below EUR 500 000.

Policy evidence generated by the project: FASE communicated the findings of the project to the relevant national and European social finance market and published 12 case studies on closed transactions and made an additional 15 contributions to compendiums and publications of OECD, EVPA and the European Commission.

Transnational dimension: The transnational dimension was addressed through the European-wide rollout of FASE's customised deal-by-deal support to new regions (e.g., the Netherlands, Central and Eastern Europe) and the preparation to build an open, pan-European pipeline of investment-ready social enterprises.

New partnerships created: The action mobilised and committed additional investors, donors, banks, crowd-investors and public authorities from different European countries to cooperate on specific hybrid financing packages. FACE was able to extend the investor network from the core markets of Austria and Germany to further European countries by adding more than 700 new impact investors.

Dissemination strategy: The cross-national knowledge was disseminated through a consortium of impact investors prepared to invest or co-invest in the supported hybrid deals. The knowledge was also shared with the GECES group of the European Commission and other public authorities (e.g., Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs in Germany (BMW)). FASE has also used its professional website³⁶ to disseminate the key insights and lessons learned from this action, [including the project report 'Developing the Social Enterprise Finance Ecosystem'](#)³⁷. Detailed case studies are publicly available and can also be found on the official website. The information on the action and implemented activities were also shared via newsletters.

³⁵ <https://fa-se.de/en/category/case-studies/>

<https://fa-se.de/en/category/case-studies/>

³⁶ <http://www.fa-se.de/en/>

³⁷ https://fa-se.de/static/fa_se_de/uploads/2020/08/FASE-EU-III-Project-Report-2020-FINAL.pdf?x69731

European added value: The action served to effectively lower transaction costs for small financing rounds and actively support the development of a pan-European social finance market. It generated effective demand among social enterprises for social finance, encouraged more social enterprises to take on repayable finance and helped to boost the supply of social finance in general. The action contributed to the objective to test a transaction cost support scheme as a means to address the mismatch of needed and sustainable ticket size. This action would not have been feasible without the support from the EaSI Programme.

Sustainability measures: The activities implemented during the project will continue on a sustainable basis after the end of the project. FASE plans to expand successfully tested customised deal-by-deal support with hybrid finance packages to further Member States of the European Union. By now, FASE is a well-established, leading financial intermediary in Austria, the Benelux countries, Germany and the CEE region.

After many discussions during multiple events, the project team indicated that there is a huge demand for shaping the financial ecosystem for social innovation across Europe. FASE aspires to cover all Member States of the European Union and to contribute to the establishment of a Single European Market for Social Innovation.

In addition, the launch of an innovative co-investment fund called the European Social Innovation and Impact Fund (ESIIF) will complement FASE's deal-by-deal support model by mobilising additional investment capital for the benefit of early-stage social enterprises.

Horizontal objectives: FASE supported social enterprises that develop innovative approaches to resolving societal challenges. With raised hybrid growth capital these enterprises were able to continue and strengthen their mission by addressing issues such as long-term and youth unemployment; poverty and social exclusion; equality between women and men, provision of adequate and decent social protection and especially discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability.

3.4.3. SEED CAPITAL – FEIS

'The main aim of the FEIS Fund is to support the promotion and consolidation of socially innovative business initiatives and to finance novel, profitable and valuable initiatives for people and the environment.'



Call identification number	VP/2017/013
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0403
Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Social enterprises; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed the creation of 10 new social enterprises; • Supported the creation of 169 jobs; • Raised EUR 1.5 million for selected social enterprises.
Implementation country (-ies)	Spain
Participating countries	Spain
Coordinator	Seed Capital Bizkaia, S.A.
Partners	The Provincial Council of Bizkaia
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 109 699.54
Project duration	24 May 2018-23 May 2020
Project/organisation website	www.seedcapitalbizkaia.com

Socioeconomic context: FEIS SEED CAPITAL is a Venture Capital Fund that receives EUR 1.6 million from the Provincial Council of Bizkaia (DFB) with the mutual commitment from two Departments, the Social Action Department and the Economic Development Department. FEIS is investing 100 % of its funding in companies with added social value in sectors of renewable energy, ecological agriculture, bioconstruction, supporting people at risk of social exclusion, development cooperation, fair trade etc. The fund does so by temporary participation in the creation of innovative social projects which are prospective, attractive and profitable.

According to the Strategic Plan 2030 of the Provincial Council of Bizkaia, the region faces several challenges that need to be addressed. The overall goal is to make the region more competitive, inclusive, modern and open. The creation of innovative social enterprises and management of incubators will support the achievement of the initial goal.

Given its prior experience in the field of social innovation investments, SEED CAPITAL has been able to see first-hand the creation of enterprises with a clear social mission in mind, and thus can facilitate further support to social enterprises by promoting and consolidating socially innovative business initiatives.

Aims of the project/organisation: The general objective of the action was to generate economic activity, boost entrepreneurship, and promote sustainable employment and social innovation. To reach this objective the project intended to:

- allow the creation (through risk capital investments) of at least six new social innovative enterprises with an induced investment amounting to EUR 1.5 million;
- create about 30 new quality jobs in the social enterprise sector;
- evaluate and monitor the social impact in addition to standard financial metrics.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project was successful in the implementation of the objectives set. FEIS was presented and promoted by organising information days, seminars, participating in conferences (especially the Annual Conference for the Promotion of Social Innovation in Bizkaia) and through the publication of brochures, an official website, and press releases.

The project searched and analysed 16 potential investees working in the social innovation market in Bizkaia, conducted feasibility and market studies, pilot projects, testing of prototypes and provided bespoke advice on the development of business projects. It further analysed 16 business plans according to an established set of criteria.

Ten companies were selected to receive support from the Fund. The project has also executed a due diligence process on these companies and simultaneously met with the Board of Directors of selected social enterprises to align further actions, give support in managing the investments and measure the social impact of the projects.

All the specific expected results were reached by the project which led to the creation of 10 new social enterprises and the provision of 169 new jobs. In total, EUR 1.5 million were invested.

Through the activities implemented during the action, the project team indicated that most often, the participants of social innovation projects do not have any business experience or entrepreneurial vision, therefore more help and advice are needed which consequently increase the transaction costs.

Identification of potential good practices: FEIS was recognised as a best practice in 2019 by the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) for “Creating social impact through innovative financing tools for an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth”. The prize was received in Maastricht in November 2019.

Dissemination strategy: The Fund and the activities implemented were presented and promoted mainly among the social innovation stakeholders in Biscay. SEED Capital organised information days, published brochures, uploaded the findings of the project to the official website³⁸ and carried out press releases. SEED Capital has also

³⁸ <http://www.seedcapitalbizkaia.com/>

participated in conferences, (especially the Annual Conference for the Promotion of Social Innovation in Bizkaia) and seminars.

European added value: The project resulted in the creation of 10 new social innovative enterprises and received in total an investment of EUR 1.5 million. It provided financial and human resources to social enterprises with a clear social mission. The action directly contributed to the promotion of sustainable employment, boosted and enhanced the entrepreneurship skills of the beneficiaries and promoted social innovation. It gave the selected social enterprise access to funding which would otherwise not have happened due to high transaction costs and exclusivity of the social economy sector.

Sustainability measures: 100% of the expected capital was invested. Seed Capital is still developing the evaluation and monitoring of the social impact created, with the expectation of the fund to be more specialised and more efficient in reducing the transaction costs and the due diligence process. Seed Capital does not end with the provision of funds from the European Union. Instead, through the follow-up process, it will continue to monitor the partly owned companies so that all the requirements are met. In addition, Seed Capital is considering expanding its economic capacity over the next few years.

Horizontal objectives: the projects which received support from the action are operating in sectors such as health, education, social inclusion and the environment. With the raised capital these enterprises can further expand on their activities and strengthen their mission by promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, combating discrimination of any kind, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups.

3.4.4. Increasing the number of quality impact investments into investment-ready early-stage social enterprises in Spain and Portugal

'Bolsa Social created an investment-ready pipeline of early-stage social enterprises in need of capital investments below EUR 500 000 in Spain. [...] after a proper financial and impact analysis, Bolsa Social selected 12 early-stage social enterprises that had the highest social impact and business potential.'



Call identification number	VP/017/013
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0309
Policy area	Social Economy
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social enterprises; • Retail impact investors

Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created an investment-ready pipeline of social enterprises in Spain comprised of 342 projects; • Provided deal support to 15 early-stage social enterprises; • Expanded the investor network by attracting 445 new retail investors; • Improved the overall management to ensure adequate reporting of performance and social impact to investors.
Implementation country (-ies)	Spain
Participating countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spain; • Portugal.
Coordinator	La Bolsa Social SL
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 351 439.79
Project duration	1 August 2018-31 July 2020
Project/organisation website	https://www.bolsasocial.com/

Socioeconomic context: a vibrant ecosystem of social enterprises is essential for facing the social and environmental challenges framed in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There is a nascent and promising ecosystem of social enterprises in Spain. However, very often the early-stage social enterprises lack access to much needed initial finance due to high risks, the lack of investment readiness and the important support for the transaction costs involved in the investment operations. The social entrepreneurship sector in Spain needs to be strengthened by creating the necessary conditions for connecting impact investors and early-stage social enterprises and produce, as a result, a higher number of equity investments of below EUR 500 000 to social enterprises in need of finance.

In this context, Bolsa Social is a community of social enterprises and impact investors based in Spain and built around a participative financing platform³⁹ which was authorised by the Spanish securities market regulator (CNMV) in 2015. Bolsa Social has built a successful track record in financing early-stage social enterprises through serious and rigorous processes and practices, with more than 7 000 community members that have channelled EUR 5 million to more than 20 social enterprises. Bolsa Social is focused on funding companies whose mission is to produce a positive and measurable impact on society and the environment, aligned with the SDGs and divided into five areas: health and social well-being; inclusive education; responsible production and consumption; action for the climate and social integration and development.

Aims of the project/organisation: Bolsa Social set four main objectives which are as follows:

- To create an investment-ready pipeline of early-stage social enterprises in Spain;
- To provide deal support and investment for 10 to 15 early-stage social enterprises;
- To expand the investor network that could invest in these deals by setting up an impact fund, and
- To follow on, manage the investments and ensure adequate reporting of performance and social impact to investors.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: Bolsa Social activities resulted in:

³⁹ www.bolsasocial.com

- The creation of an investment-ready pipeline of early-stage social enterprises in Spain comprised of 342 projects, from which 15 were selected to receive funding.
- The provision of deal support to 15 early-stage social enterprises, with funds amounting to EUR 4 million.
- The expansion of the investor network by attracting 445 new retail investors. This makes a total of 910 investors currently active on the Bolsa Social platform. The expansion was reached through the creation of an impact investing fund and investment rounds which were opened up to retail investors through the participative financing mechanism of Bolsa Social's equity crowdfunding platform.
- Follow-up and improvement of the overall management to ensure adequate reporting of performance and social impact to investors. Bolsa Social is actively following up on the projects funded and ensuring that the business and the social impact performance are reported a quarterly basis. This was achieved through the creation of an IT tool which made the reporting for social enterprises easier.

The detailed descriptions of the 12 social enterprises funded through the platform and their specific social impact can be found on the official website of Bolsa Social.



María González, co-founder and CEO of Tucuvi. Tucuvi, is a virtual assistant that offers continuous monitoring at home for older people and chronic patients. They raised €140 000 through Bolsa Social in 2020, from a total of 59 investors.

The project team has reached some valuable conclusions:

- Investment rounds are much more effective when they are accompanied by a match funding structure with some renowned investors. This generates trust among retail investors, encouraging them to invest.
- "Social impact returns" are more important for investors than could be thought. This is why it is so important to provide support for helping social enterprises define their theory of change, measure their social impact and report it regularly to their investors.

- Face-to-face, better than virtual: We can try to automate the processes all we want, but face-to-face meetings with investors are always more effective than virtual ones.
- The social finance market in Spain is still a challenge: Initially we estimated that the average investment round for early-stage social enterprises would be EUR 400 000. But after two years, we saw that most of the companies in need of these rounds are younger and in an earlier stage. The average round was EUR 230 000, almost half what we envisaged.

Identification of potential good practices: The Bolsa Social investment protocol implies a rigorous analytical process and a legal due diligence with the support of an external law firm. In addition, Bolsa Social imposes high standards of transparency, investor protection and accountability on the social enterprises vis-à-vis their investors.



The team of Hemper, a sustainable fashion brand that combines the artisan tradition of Nepalese hemp to create socially and environmentally fair products. Hemper raised EUR 350.000 through Bolsa Social in 2019, from 90 investors.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: The participative financing mechanism created by Bolsa Social is a powerful tool to finance early-stage social enterprises which led to the launch of 12 successfully funded investment rounds. The project team is confident that the potential of the mechanism can be replicated in other countries as well.

European added value: Without the EU funding it would have been extremely difficult to implement the actions initially foreseen. The costs related to screening, analysing intermediating and structuring an investment in the capital of an early-stage company is too high. The costs are bearable only in cases where the deals are

of high volume, but not on the deals with lower value. In addition, there is a great number of social enterprises which are still young and have a small track record making them too risky for professional investors.

The EU support contributed greatly to boost the capacity of Bolsa Social and cover the high legal costs involved, and also contributed to the development of a more mature market for social enterprises.

Horizontal objectives: The selected enterprises supported by Bolsa Social, had to be aligned with at least one of the Social Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations, covering sectors such as quality education, climate change, decent work, gender equality, sustainable cities, responsible production and consumption etc. From the 15 companies funded with the support from the action, 10 of them have a direct impact on the areas mentioned.

In general, Bolsa Social has indirectly, through the investments made available, contributed to the promotion of equality between woman and men, and a high level of quality and sustainable employment. It has also supported issues related to long-term unemployment and discrimination based on all characteristics as well as helped to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups.

3.4.5. FSSE - Financing Small Social Enterprises



'INCO is a group specialising in entrepreneurship that has a strong social and environmental impact. We actively support start-ups and entrepreneurs through investment, acceleration and training opportunities. We believe that it is through social and environmental entrepreneurship that we can make the world a better place.'

Call identification number	VP/2017/013
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0300

Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social entrepreneurs; • Small and medium enterprises with high social and environmental impact.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a training tool – INCO Academy for entrepreneurs; • Developed a tool to monitor dead flows and companies supported by the Consortium • Attended more than 35 events; • Developed Rating methodology; • Made 79 investment activities amounting to EUR 13 million; • Since June 2018 INCO has funded 64 organisations amounting to EUR 37.7 million; • Created INCO Club to connect experts and start-ups.
Implementation country (-ies)	France
Participating countries	France
Coordinator	INCO
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 327 361.80
Project duration	1 January 2018-31 December 2019
Project/organisation website	https://inco-group.co/

Socioeconomic context: INCO is a consortium specialising in entrepreneurship and particularly in social enterprises with a strong social and environmental impact. The consortium actively supports start-ups and entrepreneurs through investment, acceleration and training opportunities. The comprehensive work undertaken by INCO since June 2018 forms part of a global approach towards encouraging entrepreneurship.

The various opportunities offered by INCO (e.g., trainings, incubators) are free of charge, regardless of the age, gender, race or ethnicity of the participants. The key criteria for pursuing the offered opportunities are a high level of motivation and the will to create added value through an entrepreneurial project that has a social and environmental goal.

INCO specifically operates through the implementation of four main activities:

- Developing incubation and support programmes to encourage and accelerate the development of enterprises with high social impact in France and around the world;
- Provision of training programmes dedicated to people who are far from employment;
- Promotion of social entrepreneurship and impact investing through a series of national and international events;
- Investment through its private equity funds, endowed with EUR 1.05 million.

Aims of the project/organisation: INCO, under the funded action set three main objectives:

- To increase the overall investment portfolio by targeting social enterprises operating in the social economy sector;
- To promote economic development and synergies between key players in the social impact sphere;

- To reduce transaction costs by providing additional early-stage support to social enterprises and prospective business initiatives.

These objectives were anticipated to be met by actions organised around three themes:

- Organisation of events to attract, share knowledge and build connections between entrepreneurs, investors and mentors;
- Development of tools to provide one, open modifiable information system where INCO's investment portfolio can be easily monitored;
- Reorganisation of management by recruiting an additional investment manager to improve INCO's deal flow, reporting and monitoring capabilities.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: with the support from the EaSI programme INCO managed to develop a training tool called INCO ACADEMY for entrepreneurs. The tool⁴⁰ provides access to all the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to launch and develop a social enterprise. The course tackles topics related to social and environmental impact, distinguishing itself from other existing content currently available online. A dedicated training course has been published online and it is completely free of charge. The training course is available in French and English and will be regularly updated with additional specific content.

In addition, INCO developed a tool⁴¹ to monitor deal flows and companies supported by the consortium. The aim of this tool is to grant access to, classify and monitor all data on the companies supported by INCO and / or those in which INCO has made investments.

INCO also attended more than 35 events that brought together financiers and entrepreneurs to further spread the consortium's investment policy and approach to the rest of France. These events also provided a good opportunity to shed light on the solutions to address local social problems and support the ecological transition.

With the support from the Commission, INCO developed a specific Rating methodology which uses precise and efficient impact indicators to measure the real / prospective impact of the social enterprises.

From June 2018 to May 2020, 79 investing activities of less than EUR 500 000 each were implemented which amount to EUR 13 million. In addition, since June 2018, INCO has funded 64 companies / associations with a total expenditure of EUR 37.7 million: 35 of them were new investments and 29 received refinancing.

Lastly, the consortium created an INCO Club to link experts and start-ups. In total, 120 experts specialising in 11 distinct business themes were mobilised.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: The impact measurement system developed by INCO uses a particularly innovative approach. The INCO ratings methodology covers all positive and negative external factors through its 25 indicators.

Dissemination strategy: The training tool developed for social entrepreneurs is available on the INCO website and is free of charge. The consortium has also

⁴⁰ <https://entrepreneurs.inco-group.co/>

⁴¹ <https://cloud.inco-group.co/>

published several reports related to impact measurement which were communicated to the investors in funds managed by INCO Ventures⁴².

European added value: The support from the EaSI Programme helped INCO to increase the number of aspiring entrepreneurs (regardless of their age, level of education, social or professional background, etc.) to kick start their businesses and in general to contribute to the social economy of the future. EU support facilitated greatly the implementation of methodological tools to better monitor and analyse social enterprise systems and helped greatly to implement sustainable tools which improve the quality of entrepreneurial projects.

Sustainability measures: INCO will continue to carry out its activities and expects to capture more mature and investment-ready projects, namely through the training course of the INCO Academy for entrepreneurs. It also anticipates expanding its activities into other European Union Member States as well.

Horizontal objectives: INCO, through the implementation of the action was successful in addressing issues related to youth employment, long-term unemployment and gender equality. It further encouraged a high rate of quality and sustainable employment and supported the prevention of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or personal beliefs with a special focus on vulnerable groups.

Specifically, the financial support given to social enterprises improved the autonomy and adherence to medications for the older population; improved access to care, made available a faster return to employment through digital therapy and rehabilitation activities, increased generation of clean energy; supported the reduction of the use of fertilisers and increased accessibility to employment through learning platforms.

⁴² <https://presse.aviva.fr/communiqu/199423/SEMAINE-DE-LA-FINANCESOLIDAIRE-AVIVA-FRANCE-PUBLIE-LE-PREMIER-RAPPORT-DIMPACT-DE-SON-FONDS-DEDIE-A-L-INNOVATION-SOCIALE-ET-ENVIRONNEMENTALE>

<https://presse.aviva.fr/communiqu/199423/SEMAINE-DE-LA-FINANCESOLIDAIRE-AVIVA-FRANCE-PUBLIE-LE-PREMIER-RAPPORT-DIMPACT-DE-SON-FONDS-DEDIE-A-L-INNOVATION-SOCIALE-ET-ENVIRONNEMENTALE>

3.4.6. EaSI Transaction Cost Support Project



'SHIP2B Impact Forum has become the main annual event for Spain's impact economy, with a growing number of attendees and high-quality speakers. This event attracts the interest of both public and private organisations.'

Call identification number	VP/2017/013
Grant identification number	VS/2018/0302
Policy area	Social Economy
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Media; • Small and medium enterprises; • Social enterprises.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financed 18 operations and formalised 28; • Supported the creation of 142 jobs; • Reduced the transaction costs to on average EUR 27 000 per transaction; • Increased the dead-flow of potential social impact start-ups by identifying 230 companies in 2019 and 312 in 2020; • Increased the professionalisation of the investment team; • Improved the quality of the analysis on start-ups as well as the quality of social impact measurement methodology; • Organised 8 events to further connect with impact investing community.
Implementation country (-ies)	Spain
Participating countries	Spain
Coordinator	Foundation SHIP2B
Partners	-

EU contribution in euro	(initial) 535 250.05
Project duration	1 September 2018-31 August 2020
Project/organisation website	https://www.ship2b.org/en/

Socioeconomic context: SHIP2B is a Spanish Social Investment and business acceleration platform founded in 2014. With a non-for-profit funding, the platform has successfully accelerated 51 start-ups winning recognition from the Spanish Savings Banks Foundation (FUNCAS) as Spain's second-best accelerator. In 2016 the platform launched a Social Impact Investment Vehicle (B-FUND).

While the fund brings together multiple investors, minimising their risk perception, the fund is not currently self-sustaining for the investment tickets of EUR 40 000 to EUR 400 000.

The Platform has recently reached an agreement with the European Investment Fund (EIF) whereby EIF will support the platform with two-thirds of the total financial investment needed to the B-FUND. The Fund platform will be able to add to these further investments from the pool of 474 social impact investors which will result in the creation of B-FUND II.

With this specific project, the platform aims to support their cost structure, to investigate current and future predicted efficiency levels, to improve the social impact measurement metrics and to put in place a framework to reach sustainability with the B-FUND II by 2020.

Aims of the project/organisation: The SHIP2B has set the following objectives:

- To invest in start-ups during the investment period of the new investment vehicle (from June 2018 to January 2021) in compliance with the co-investment agreement made with the European Investment Fund;
- To increase the potential investment in underfunded start-ups, with high growth potential and high social impact;
- To reduce the transaction costs in funding rounds for new investee start-ups;
- To increase the deal flow of potential social impact and improve the quality of start-ups by devoting more effort to explore alternative sources of deal flows in Spain;
- To strengthen and increase the professionalisation of the SHIP2B investment team;
- To improve the quality of the social impact measurement methodology by focusing on the theory of change model;
- To connect with the European impact investing community by attending and organising events.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project was successful in financing 18 operations and formalising 28, in a short period of time during the exceptional circumstance of the COVID-19 pandemic. The investment vehicle managed by SHIP2B invested a total amount of EUR 1.95 million since the beginning of the action, while the total capital raised in the rounds the Foundation participated in was EUR 17.47 million. Through the investments made by SHIP2B, the Foundation supported the creation of 142 jobs and was able to establish the sustainability of the project having made the first closing of a successor fund. Therefore, new start-ups can receive funding to develop their projects.

The objective to reduce transaction costs in capital rounds of new investee start-ups was partially achieved. Before the project implementation the cost per transaction was EUR 35 000. The Foundation was able to reduce the transaction costs to on average EUR 27 000 per transaction.

Additionally, the Foundation was able to increase the deal flow of potential social impact start-ups by devoting more effort to explore new projects in Spain. This led to 230 identified companies in 2019 and 312 in 2020, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Foundation has also been able to strengthen and separate the investment team and therefore increase the professionalisation of SHIP2B capacity building efforts.

SHIP2B has also improved the quality of the analysis on start-ups by establishing a rigorous process and applying a similar method to venture capital funds with extensive experience. In addition, the quality of the social impact measurement methodology was improved by focusing on the theory of change model.

When it comes to the objective to connect with the European impact investing community, the Foundation attended numerous different events and was able to organise its own. The two landmark events that SHIP2B organised were 4YFN event as well as the Impact Forum. In addition, The Foundation carried out the following events during action's lifetime:

- Social Entrepreneurship and Impact Investment: Bilbao, 9 January 2019 (203 attendees);
- LABs Demo Day: online, 22 January 2019 (376 attendees);
- BBK Venture Philanthropy Demo Day: 6 June 2019 (117 attendees);
- LABs Demo Day: Barcelona, 28 January 2020 (309 attendees);
- Rezinkers4Impact, sustainability and scalability in projects of social inclusion: Barcelona, 27 February 2020 (54 attendees);
- Dialogues for impact economy: online, 30 November 2020 (237 attendees).

Finally, the Foundation launched an extensive communication campaign to further promote the social impact investing ecosystem and the activities carried out by SHIP2B. During the period of the action, communication channels such as mail, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube were used. In addition, 207 blog posts⁴³ were created, and 237 digital press releases⁴⁴ were launched.

Throughout the implementation of the project SHIP2B reached several important conclusions:

- The success of the acceleration and investment areas are highly correlated. The greater the availability of capital in the investment area, the better the projects attracted by the acceleration area;
- Traditional and impact investing must converge, including staff compensation to reduce high turnover;
- Investments should have economies of scale. Fixed costs cannot be significantly reduced which puts a strain on scale when investing in small tickets;
- Establishing professionalised processes is the most efficient way to reduce transaction costs;

⁴³ <https://www.ship2b.org/actualidad/>

⁴⁴ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15rrsMWZDjtLT8d6ZasAvex5mofYgMZye/view>

- Impact measurement is continuously developing. It must be updated regularly and requires high engagement with investees. Quasi-experimental methods are the best way to measure impact but they are very expensive;
- Recognition of the fund manager increases the ability to generate high-quality deal flow;
- Large, unprecedented and unexpected events significantly change the results of small-scale projects (COVID-19).

Identification of potential good practices: The SHIP2B Impact Forum has become the main annual event for Spain's impact economy, with a growing number of attendees and high-quality speakers. The event attracts the interest of both public and private organisations.

In addition, with the lobbying and the influence generated by SHIP2B, significant progress has been made in Spain through the recently proposed Entrepreneurs Act which aims to further promote the impact economy.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: The project team suggests that other projects in Spain and in Europe could replicate the model proposed by Ship2B to channel resources most effectively for projects that target social and environmental issues.

Policy evidence generated by the project: The team prepared quarterly reports for investors and an annual summary during the period of the action. These were disseminated online (12 reports in total). Unfortunately, for reasons of confidentiality, the identity of investors could not be disclosed.

The project team has also carried out 59 in-depth analyses on 18 investments. These analyses also included impact assessments.

New partnerships created: With regards to international relationships, the project team established alliances and partnerships with Investir & Plus, Oltre, Mustard Seed Maze, Seroba Life Sciences, CoreAngelsImpact, Hadean Ventures, Optum Ventures, Ring4Good, Impact Partners Europe, Speedinvest, IQ Capital, Eka Ventures, IP Capital, Foresight, and Road Ventures.

The Foundation was also able to establish alliances with crowdfunding platforms such as La Bolsa Social, CrowdCube and Capital.

Dissemination strategy: The reports prepared by SHIP2B were disseminated among the investors. In addition, SHIP2B has published the companies to which it has provided financing on its website with the intention to further disseminate this information to future candidates for the acceleration programme. The model used by the foundation was promoted through the annual organisation of the SHIP2B Impact Forum event.

Finally, SHIP2B has a communication team that periodically prepares newsletters and other types of information materials to spread the achievement of the Foundation. This is done using mailing, social media channels, official website, blog page and press releases⁴⁵.

European added value: The SHIP2B Foundation supported and promoted social enterprises with a clear social vision and tangible social and environmental impact.

⁴⁵ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/15rrsMWZDjtLT8d6ZasAvex5mofYgMZye/view>

The investments which were mobilised and made available helped social enterprises to develop their objectives and further operationalise their activities. The social economy sector encounters a lot of difficulties, which the sSHIP2B Foundation embrace and tries to minimise. Without the support of EU funding, financial intermediaries such as SHIP2B would not be economically viable and, therefore, would not have been able to achieve its impacts.

Sustainability measures: The platform further aims to replicate the model and improve it by allowing for larger tickets in investment rounds. Thanks to the support from the EaSI Programme, SHIP2B will be able to have a greater role in the decision-making of start-ups, with a focus on social and environmental impact matters and without losing sight of economic profitability.

The policy areas that have been developed and consolidated during the project execution will continue through the successor fund. The policy areas targeted will be the same and the sustainable development objectives will remain unchanged with a focus on quality of life of vulnerable groups, climate change, employability, social cohesion and social inclusion.

Horizontal objectives: SHIP2B addresses horizontal objectives through the investments made in start-ups that are social enterprises, with an aim to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment; guarantee adequate and decent social protection; fight against poverty and social exclusion or combat long-term unemployment and discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The enterprises targeted by the Foundation are generally focused on vulnerable groups.

4. EaSI-funded organisations

The EaSI programme has a crucial role to play in promoting the involvement of civil society through financial support for the key EU-level NGO networks. The programme supports these networks with the aim of boosting their capacity to participate in and influence decision-making and policy implementation at both EU and national levels. Furthermore, such involvement fosters the accountability and transparency of authorities and increases the relevance of policy responses.

Below, the report describes activities implemented in 2019-2020 by 11 EaSI-supported organisations active in the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction, microfinance and social enterprise finance. These organisations are major EU-level networks working in different areas of social policy or microfinance and social enterprise finance and holding four-year Framework Partnership Agreements with the European Commission. The overall goal of the funded **organisations active in promoting social inclusion and poverty reduction** is to support the Commission's initiatives contributing to the modernisation of social protection systems and the development of adequate social protection schemes as well as the implementation of [Europe's 2020 Strategy](#)⁴⁶, [EU Structural and Investment Funds](#)⁴⁷ and the [Social Investment Package](#)⁴⁸. The organisations also contribute to the processes related to the [European Semester](#)⁴⁹, the [Open Method of Coordination](#)⁵⁰ (OMC) on social protection and social inclusion. Their activities have also paid particular attention to the key principles of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)⁵¹ initiative (EPSR), including gender equality, work-life balance, support to children, the inclusion of people with disabilities and long-term care, as well as to targets of [Europe's 2020 Strategy](#)⁵² in terms of employment and fighting poverty and social exclusion. To this end, the following types of activities were implemented in 2019-2020:

- **Analytical activities** such as the collection of data and statistics, the development of common methodologies, the monitoring and assessment of relevant legislation, policies and practice, research, mapping projects and evaluations, publication of guides, reports and educational material, and different events, including expert meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences.
- **Training activities** such as staff exchange, workshops, seminars, capacity building actions, train-the-trainer events and developing online training tools.
- **Actions aiming at the creation and improvement of networks** through mutual learning, cooperation, awareness-raising and dissemination activities such as the identification of and exchange of good practices, organisation of peer reviews and mutual learning, organisation of conferences, seminars, media

⁴⁶ For more information, please see https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en

⁴⁷ For more information, please see https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds_en

⁴⁸ For more information, please see <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/social-investment-package>

⁴⁹ For more information, please see https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en

⁵⁰ For more information, please see <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-AaG-542142-Open-Method-of-Coordination-FINAL.pdf>

⁵¹ For more information, please see https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/deeper-and-fairer-economic-and-monetary-union/european-pillar-social-rights_en

⁵² For more information, please see https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en

campaigns, the compilation and publication of materials, and regular information on EU social and employment policy issues.

4.1. The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) – 2019 Work Plan: Leaving no-one behind

'Housing is a right that, can, and must, be upheld.'



Call identification number	VP/2018/016
Grant identification number	VS/2019/0168
Policy area	Social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	Housing exclusion and homelessness
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; • Social partners (e.g. social impact investors and human rights lawyers); • Non-governmental organisations (e.g. European social NGOs); • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • National statistical offices; • Media; • Diverse set of social services working with homeless people or people at risk of homelessness; • Social housing associations; • People affected by homelessness.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research – Produced several research-based reports on homelessness with a focus on quality control of homeless services; • Training – Organised trainings, seminars, toolkits, best practice guides etc. for service providers and policymakers; • Policy work – Lobbying, monitoring, contributing to policymaking and implementation at EU & MS level; • Networking and exchanges – Organised policy and research conferences aimed at a variety of stakeholders involved in the fight against homelessness; • Awareness raising and mobilisation – using social media actively (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) to promote objectives and communicate results to wider audiences. Worked to mobilise interest and support for the homeless cause among other intergovernmental institutions and European NGOs; • Strategic litigation – including the preparation of collective complaint with the Council of Europe on the basis of housing as a fundamental human right;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion – increase take-up of Structural Funds (especially ESF) for the fight against homelessness and promote innovative housing solutions in MS through the publication of the 50 most promising practices from Europe and beyond.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	France, Belgium, Finland, Sweden.
Coordinator	FEANTSA European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPHA (FEANTSA Director currently President); • Social Platform; • Social Services Europe; • European Expert Group on DI; • Alliance for Investing in Children; • European NGO Platform on Migration and Asylum; • European Migration Forum; • EAPN; • Bilateral work with European NGOs such as EDF, EWL, ATD Quart Monde & Eurochild.
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 976 160.16
Project duration	1 January 2019-31 December 2019
Project/organisation website	https://www.feantsa.org/en

Socioeconomic context: The 2019 work plan “Leaving no-one behind” is part of the four-year Partnership Agreement between the European Commission and FEANTSA. The action took place against a background of rapidly growing homelessness during the last decade, in most Member States. It is estimated that at least 700 000 people experience homelessness on any given day in the EU in 2019, which is an increase of 70 % compared to 2009. The action was aimed at better understanding the increase and to develop actions and tools to help reverse this worrying trend, as well as to establish an EU strategy to combat homelessness, which does not currently exist.

Aims of the project/organisation: The main objectives of this work plan were to further develop the evidence base for effective homelessness policies, to increase awareness of the EU opportunities (including funding) to advance the fight against homelessness, to strengthen the role of the EU as a promoter of better services and policies for the homeless, and to further exploit EU processes and actions to ensure progress on homelessness in the different Member States.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: Through FEANTSA’s encompassing activities, which span over a wide variety of areas, the following results have been achieved:

- Raised awareness about the changes in the nature and scope of homelessness to a wide and diverse audience. This has been achieved, largely, due to substantially increasing the reach of communication via the use of social media, complementarily to mainstream media outputs.
- Increased attention to homelessness in relevant EU policies and concrete progress towards an EU homelessness strategy by ensuring wide take-up of *Housing First*⁵³ as the most effective approach to chronic homelessness. In addition, the 2019 work plan has helped to increase the number and quality of national homelessness strategies.
- Mobilised attention of policymakers at EU and national level on the situation of some of the most vulnerable homeless (LGBTQI, women, youth, migrants).

It is expected that these results will result in more long-term impacts, including:

- The formulation of a concrete EU strategy / action plan on homelessness in the coming years;

⁵³ <https://housingfirsteurope.eu/assets/files/2020/12/Introduction-to-HF-and-FAQ-Print-01.12.2020.pdf>

- More national / regional evidence-based strategies on homelessness with a strong *Housing First* approach;
- Increased support from the newly elected European Parliament (across the political spectrum) and the incoming Commission for the homelessness cause;
- Defined EU actions on urgent and often overlooked aspects of homelessness, notably youth homelessness and homelessness among the LGBTQI community, and the health aspects of homelessness.

The implementation of the 2019 work plan has resulted in several lessons learned, including:

- Housing is a right that must and can be upheld through strategic litigation;
- EU anti-discrimination policies (gender, sexuality, ...) should include the issue of homelessness to help reach out to some of the most vulnerable in the homeless population such as LGBTQI, women, and youth;
- EU processes such as the Semester and the Social Rights Pillar are relevant for the fight against homelessness and can help to generate policy impact in the Member States;
- Homelessness among EU-mobile citizens is a preventable and solvable problem if the EU works to secure minimal protection of vulnerable people, making use of their right to free movement;
- Homelessness is as much a health issue as a housing issue and addressing homelessness should and can become part of modern public health policies.

Identification of potential good practices: Through conducting rigorous research and employing comparative empirical methods, FEANTSA has been able to identify and promote best practices such as *Housing First*, Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) for homeless women victims of gender-based violence, effective discharge protocols for the homeless in hospitals, and access to housing through socialisation of private rent and social rental agencies. In particular, the good practice examples in Finland, the country which has the best track record on homelessness in Europe, can be transferred to other country contexts.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: The demand for information and expertise in Europe on *Housing First* is consistently on the rise. In response, FEANTSA has created the *Housing First Europe Hub* to support the transfer of innovation and change in national policies and services. Under the contract with DG EMPL, FEANTSA has paid for a coordinator to manage outputs for 2019, which will include a training programme, advocacy programme, research, national events, steering meetings etc., all of which will support the transferability and take-up of the *Housing First* approach systemically throughout Europe.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: Many of the actions and approaches in the 2019 work plan are considered innovative and progressive in the conventional policy paradigm, most notably treating housing as a right and using this principle for strategic litigation. Equally important, *Housing first* is a social innovation that goes against the traditional approaches to homelessness (housing as the first step, rather than an end goal).

Policy evidence generated by the project: The 2019 work plan focused heavily on the collection and analysis of data. The main deliverables of policy research and evidence is summed up in the following reports:

- [Annual Overview of Housing Exclusion in Europe](#).⁵⁴ Helped to map and understand the trends in homelessness.
- [50 Out of the Box Housing Solutions](#).⁵⁵ Helped to promote housing options for homeless people.
- [European research report on quality of homeless services](#).⁵⁶ Helped to identify problems and focus our action on issues where progress is needed possible.
- [Editions of the European Journal on Homelessness](#).⁵⁷ Helped to spread the most recent research findings on homelessness and homeless policies / services to a wide audience of academics, service providers and policymakers.
- [Legal analysis of the EU legal concept of worker](#).⁵⁸ Helped to define the rights of homeless EU-mobile citizens.
- [Analysis of homelessness in the Semester](#).⁵⁹ Helped to lobby for better inclusion of homelessness in the different stages of the Semester process.
- [Editions of the Homeless Magazine](#).⁶⁰ Helped to disseminate interesting practices / analysis on homelessness to a wide and diverse audience.
- [Editions of the Flash](#).⁶¹ Helped to disseminate relevant news from Member States and the EU on homelessness to a wide and diverse audience.
- [Country profiles on homelessness](#).⁶² Helped to understand country-specific developments on homelessness in a comparative framework.
- [Analysis of women's homelessness and gender-based violence](#).⁶³ Helped to raise awareness of the issue at EU level and in Member States.
- [Report on investment in homelessness](#).⁶⁴ Helped us to make the case that homelessness is an issue for InvestEU and the EIB.

New partnerships created: Given the demand for expertise and support from MS to formulate efficient policies, FEANTSA will try to strengthen partnership with the European Commission (move beyond a more funder-beneficiary relationship) as well as with relevant UN, Council of Europe, and EU actors, to collaboratively take a rights-based approach to homelessness. To secure funding for activities not funded but related to this 2019 Work Plan, FEANTSA managed to establish partnership with Foundation Abbé Pierre for Human Rights Work (HRW) and Overview of Housing Exclusion (OHHE) and the Y-foundation and partners, FRB, OSF, and Schneider Foundation, Just Transition Fund from ECF, EPIM, and is in negotiations with several others.

Dissemination strategy: The actions of the 2019 work plan were disseminated widely to a variety of stakeholders. Primary audiences constitute of service-and-policy-makers working with homeless people on homelessness at local, national and

⁵⁴ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/report/2019/04/01/the-fourth-overview-of-housing-exclusion-in-europe-2019?bcParent=27>

⁵⁵ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/news/2019/12/11/hsp-publication-50-housing-solutions?bcParent=27>

⁵⁶ [Comparative Studies on Homelessness: Number 9 - 2019 \(feantsaresearch.org\)](#)

⁵⁷ [European Journal of Homelessness \(feantsaresearch.org\)](#)

⁵⁸ [working-poor-within-the-eu1026919265820446116.pdf \(feantsa.org\)](#)

⁵⁹ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/feantsa-position/2019/08/07/2019-semester-homelessness-and-housing-exclusion-on-the-european-commissions-radar?bcParent=27>

⁶⁰ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database?search=homeless+in+europe&theme&type=Newsletter&year&page=1>

⁶¹ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database?search=flash>

⁶² <https://www.feantsa.org/en/resources/resources-database?%20search=&theme=&type=Country+profile&year=2019>

⁶³ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/feantsa-position/2019/11/25/feantsa-background-paper-on-womens-homelessness-and-gender-based-violence?bcParent=27>

⁶⁴ <https://www.feantsa.org/en/feantsa-position/2019/03/18/homelessness-and-housing-exclusion?bcParent=27>

European level. Other target audiences include academia, homeless people, media, and European NGOs.

The following means of dissemination were used:

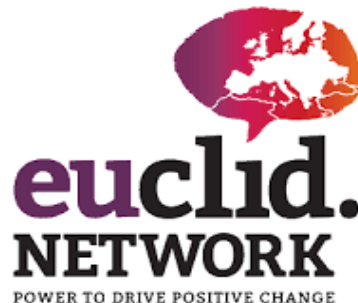
- Traditional mailings (mailings list includes several thousand people)
- Social media (currently FEANTSA runs over a dozen social media accounts including professional accounts of staff – Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn)
- Events (two large events attended by approximately 600 people and a few dozen smaller events attended by several hundred additional people)
- Websites (five different websites reaching more than 10 000 unique individuals on a regular basis)

European added value: Given that FEANTSA is the only European NGO working exclusively on homelessness and as such all the work carried out by FEANTSA is unique, if FEANTSA was not funded by DG EMPL for its annual work plan, it is very unlikely there would be any EU action on homelessness, at least not on the same structural scale. The chosen actions / topics are carefully selected in close cooperation with our members and partners on the basis of added value and potential impact. FEANTSA helps to channel and translate the demand for support from policymakers and service providers into concrete proposals for EU action and lobbies the European Commission to deliver on these proposals. Almost all EU actions on homelessness originate in one way or another from a FEANTSA proposal. In this way, maximum EU added value is guaranteed.

In addition, FEANTSA's work helps to avoid duplication of efforts. The most telling example is *Housing First*. By making the evidence on *Housing First* widely available, Member States and local authorities do not need to carry out their own research and evaluations. The 2019 action, like the actions in previous years, has led to plenty of networking with national governments and other stakeholders in the Member States as well as with intergovernmental organisations and other European NGOs. In addition, FEANTSA strive to ensure the correct implementation of legislation of free movement and the Mortgage Directive as it pertains to the issue of non-performing residential mortgage loans.

Horizontal objectives: While working towards the eradication of homelessness (of which the affected already constitute a vulnerable group), other vulnerable groups or issues are addressed by the 2019 work plan. For example, FEANTSA provided suggestions on how to make the Youth Guarantee more inclusive, promoted gender equality by putting emphasis on women's homelessness and its interlinkage with gender-based violence and inequality, and was actively involved in all EU processes and actions that directly or indirectly relate to homelessness in the areas of health, migration, housing, social inclusion and anti-discrimination.

4.2. EUCLID Network – Empowering Social Enterprises for a vibrant social enterprise finance market 2021



'Through the activities implemented under the EaSI grant agreement Euclid Network has been able to support social enterprise leaders to run their business in a financially sustainable way.'

Call identification number	VP/2018/016
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0194
Policy area	Social Protection & Social Inclusion
Policy sub-area	Social enterprises
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Media.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing and maintaining a good relationship with social finance stakeholders; • Preparing and publishing an EU Funding Toolkit; • Organising workshops and events; • Updating an online Knowledge Centre; • Representing the interests of social enterprises; • Preparing and developing a European Social Enterprise Monitor.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	EUCLID Network
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 256 025.00
Project duration	1 April 2019-31 March 2020
Project/organisation website	https://euclidnetwork.eu/

Socioeconomic context: The Euclid Network works together with the European Commission to increase access to social finance for social enterprises as part of the EU's Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme (2018-21). Social investment offers a significant opportunity to empower social enterprises to drive positive change. The Euclid Network is responsible for supporting and strengthening the capacity of the demand side of the social finance market across Europe – that is, the frontline organisations who could benefit from this investment (social enterprises) and their support structures (such as national federations, networks, universities, accelerators and incubators). Another important aspect of the EaSI programme is to increase awareness as to the current policies and programmes existing in the EU that support social enterprises to access finance and to encourage necessary adjustments in legal and regulatory frameworks for social finance.

Aims of the project/organisation: The main objective of the programme is to improve access to social finance for social enterprises. To deliver on this broad objective, the project is structured around four strategic pillars:

1. Support implementation of European policies in the social enterprise finance market with a focus on the demand side;
2. Reinforce the capacity of Euclid Network members to empower social enterprises to access the social finance market and to repay social finance thanks to a sustainable business model;
3. Voice the concerns and expectations of social enterprises and potential future social entrepreneurs, including disadvantaged groups;
4. Provide high-quality data and research on developments in social enterprise finance with a focus on the demand side.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: To meet the objectives, the Euclid Network has implemented a series of activities, including:

- Maintaining a good relationship with relevant social finance stakeholders, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), European Venture Philanthropy Association (EVPA), European Microfinance Network (EMN), amongst others;
- Preparing and publishing an EU Funding Toolkit for social enterprise support organisations (hereafter SESOs) and social enterprises (hereafter SEs);
- Organising workshops for SESOs and SEs on financial sustainability, social finance and project building;
- Organising events with public officials to improve the local policy environment for social enterprises;
- Updating an online Knowledge Centre featuring relevant SE legislation, reports, toolkits, films, podcasts, research articles and best practices;
- Delivering an online index of SE researchers on the online Knowledge Centre;
- Performing an annual member's consultation to identify their needs;
- Having regular board meetings and an AGM;
- Communicating about the needs of social enterprises through online and offline means;
- Representing the interests of social enterprises in the EC Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprise (GECES) and the UN Taskforce on Social and Solidarity Economy;
- Preparing and developing a European Social Enterprise Monitor in cooperation with national networks of social entrepreneurs and an expert research board.

The most important conclusions and lessons learned are that:

- Social enterprises rely heavily on intermediaries such as the Euclid Network to be informed about European policies and European funding opportunities;
- Social enterprises rely on networks such as the Euclid Network to represent their interests with legislators, finance providers and business;
- Social finance providers are keen to exchange good practices across borders;
- Social enterprises (support organisations) are interested in a stronger sense of community amongst international networks of peers;
- Social enterprises (support organisations) are keen to exchange good practices across borders;
- Public officials are keen to exchange good practices across borders;
- Social enterprises (support organisations) have reached a stage of maturity where they have the capacity to focus more on policy influencing and outreach to external stakeholders;
- Social enterprises (support organisations) are best reached through targeted communication in the form of direct emails and calls;

- Social enterprises (support organisations) respond well to innovative ways of communication, such as podcasts;
- Social media remain important communication channels;
- There is a need to reach out to stakeholders beyond the bubble of “converted” social enterprise supporters.

Identification of potential good practices: The EU Funding Toolkit for social enterprises and social enterprise support organisations proved to be a very useful practical guide. Due to great interest, the EU Funding Toolkit has been translated into French, by French member, Avise.

Policy evidence generated by the project: The Euclid Network prepared and published an EU Funding Toolkit for social enterprise support organisations (hereafter SESOs) and social enterprises (hereafter SEs). It has also updated an online Knowledge Centre featuring relevant SE legislation, reports, toolkits, films, podcasts, research articles and best practices. In addition, it prepared and developed a European Social Enterprise Monitor in cooperation with national networks of social entrepreneurs and an expert research board.

Transnational dimension: In 2019, the Euclid Network continued to be engaged in a very constructive dialogue with the European Commission to provide feedback on the EU social enterprise support instruments and discussing the current obstacles to sector development as well as the future of the sector. In particular, the open letter to the European Parliament prepared by the Euclid Network and 25 national networks for social enterprise serves as one of the key inputs for further conversations on the social enterprise support instruments.

In addition, the Euclid Network continued its cooperation with other international organisations and networks. Euclid Network coordinated regular meetings with CECOP, RREUSE, ENSIE, MFC, EMN and EVPA (face-to-face and online) to discuss joint activities. The Euclid Network also visited 15 countries and attended 12 international conferences to discuss topics related to accessing social finance for social enterprises.

New partnerships created: The social enterprise sector is growing, and the Euclid network is increasingly recognised as being highly valuable to be a part of. Five new member organisations joined the network since the beginning of this year. The Euclid Network now represents over 100 000 social enterprises.

Dissemination strategy: The Euclid Network participated in online and offline events, webinars, and meetings and produced reports. The Euclid Network also introduced its members as keynote speakers at high-level events such as the “Impact Fest and the Social Enterprise World Forum”. The Network delivered a webinar to promote the review and index with 15 researcher participants. In addition, the updated research review was discussed. This resulted in buy-in for future engagement by several of the most prominent professors in the field.

The databases and reports produced by the Euclid Network under the EaSI grant agreement were primarily targeted at the social enterprise sector (support organisations). The reports have been disseminated through the following means:

- Euclid Network website;
- General and member newsletters;
- Social media, specifically Twitter and LinkedIn;
- Webinars;
- Printed copies at events such as Impact Fest, EU project building workshop and the AGM.

The policy reports written by the Euclid Network under the EaSI grant agreement were primarily targeted at public officials working for the European institutions. These reports have been disseminated through a series of means:

- Euclid Network website;
- Social media, especially Twitter;
- Presentations at international events of relevant stakeholders such as the Social Innovations Forum in Belgrade, the Annual Convention on Inclusive Growth and the UNTSSE Retreat;
- 1-on-1 meetings with a member of the European Parliament, members of the European Economic and Social Committee and staff of the European Commission.

European added value: Through the activities implemented under the EaSI grant agreement the Euclid Network has been able to support social enterprise leaders to run their business in a financially sustainable way; to learn from best practices across borders; to be heard by public officials and social finance providers and to become more visible to business, academia, government and wider society.

Sustainability measures: To ensure the continuity of the action, the Euclid Network plans on the following activities in the future:

- Update the EU Funding Toolkit with the latest European developments, scale up the Toolkit and broaden its scope to include funding from banks, foundations and alternative finance providers.
- Intensify relationships with public authorities and create a special membership status for cities to join Euclid Network.
- Increase engagement with local public officials in cooperation with OECD and coordinated with programmes like ESER.
- Organise a crash course on SDGs for our members and partners.
- Increase the online and offline visibility of the Euclid Network through our members.
- Organise more informal activities with members of the Euclid Network to strengthen the sense of community among the network.
- Continue with regular newsletters to members and partners.
- Grow the presence of the Euclid Network on LinkedIn.
- Continue to disseminate existing knowledge in innovative ways, e.g., through a Euclid Network webinar series.
- Grow the visibility of social entrepreneurs outside the bubble of the converted, especially amongst consumers, and social finance providers through a “buy social campaign”.
- Grow the visibility of the concerns and expectations of social entrepreneurs amongst social finance providers and legislators through position papers and policy articles.
- Intensify relationships with researchers in SE and social finance and support dissemination of research outcomes, networking and knowledge sharing.
- Develop and publish a European Social Enterprise Monitor providing insights into trends and needs of social enterprise across Europe.

Horizontal objectives: Social enterprises are pioneers in finding sustainable solutions to societal challenges in an entrepreneurial way. They are working towards an inclusive and circular economy and more cohesive society. Every day in Europe, social enterprises are running their business sustainably while helping to address the above-mentioned issues of youth employment, combat long-term unemployment, fight against poverty and social exclusion, promotion of equality between women and men, promoting of a high level of quality and sustainable employment, adequate and

decent social protection, combat discrimination and the other issues mentioned in the SDGs.

4.3. CARITAS – Cares II Actions Reinforce the European Social Dimension



'The social economy model challenges us to think in different ways about our economy... Rather than focusing on generating individual wealth and maximising profits, it prioritises social objectives and social values.'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0027
Policy area	Social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services of General Interest (SSGI) • Child and Youth poverty • social exclusion
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People experiencing poverty • Council of Europe / EU Institutions and representations • National, regional and local authorities • Social partners • Non-governmental organisations • Media
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building / enhancing strategic partnerships with other stakeholders at EU level; • Exchange of information and consultation with member organisations (MOs); • Support and facilitation of advocacy actions at EU and national level; • Production of evidence-based policy recommendations and institutional development resources and materials; • Participation of grassroots as a cross-cutting feature of all CE activities, also through the new work with the Young Caritas network;
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	44 European countries
Coordinator	CARITAS EUROPA
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN); • Centres for social innovation and entrepreneurship (IHUB); • European network of venture philanthropy organisations (EVPA); • CONCORD; • European Platform on Asylum and Migration; • European Council for Refugees and Exiles; • VOICE; • Others.
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 744 229.66
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://www.caritas.eu/

Socioeconomic context: CARES II is a project run under a four-year Framework Partnership Agreement (2018-2021) co-financed by the European Commission's EaSI programme. The European Commission co-finances European NGO networks like Caritas Europa (CE) to advance the social agenda. CE works in reciprocity with the EU; on the one hand, European NGO networks need to be fully aware of the EU's social policy shaping mechanisms. On the other, the European Commission needs to know what is happening on the "ground" in EU Member States. The economic and financial crisis in 2008 caused unprecedented levels of unemployment and poverty across Europe. It also underlined the weaknesses and limitations of the social protection systems in place across the EU. Through our contact with people experiencing poverty, we are best placed to monitor the national situations and the effects of national policies on the most vulnerable in our societies. CE then feeds this important information back to the Commission.

Aims of the project/organisation: The specific objectives of CE for 2018-2021 have been designed in relation to the priorities identified in the EaSI programme and have been explained in CE's four-year strategic plan. The CARES II work programme 2020 followed those same objectives:

- 1) Actions and recommendations to feed policymaking: collecting of grassroots' input for better informed policymaking in all fields related to social inclusion and poverty reduction.
- 2) Bridge-building actions between EU level and national actors: supporting members in national advocacy efforts and providing their experiences to EU policymakers.
- 3) Awareness-raising and dissemination: in cooperation with MOs disseminating information on the European Social Dimension and raising awareness among stakeholders and society at large
- 4) Network organisation and management: strengthening capacities and sustainability of members as well as of the European secretariat

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The initial plans of CARES II were slightly altered in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, and CE carefully monitored the developments of the crisis as it strongly affected the services provided by the Caritas Network to people in the most precarious situations, who will be the hardest hit by the effects of this global crisis. A CE crisis cell has been set up to liaise with the secretariat of Caritas Internationalis and with all CE members to evaluate the specific needs of the network and the support measures that can be taken at the European level. Through advocacy and strong media presence, the Caritas Network was successful in raising awareness around the impact of the people living in poverty and the increase of inequalities and poverty following the pandemic, as well as the impact on the social service providers, and the need for an adequate policy response.

In spite of the challenges of the pandemic, CE, along with its member organisations, continued providing relevant inputs to decision-makers, both at the national and EU levels, regarding the development and implementation of social policies. The network also identified the impacts, risks and gaps of policies, especially with regard to the people most vulnerable to the consequences of the pandemic, and provided constructive proposals concerning the response to this crisis as well as to the development of the European social model(s) in the future. The relevant inputs were provided through the implementation of activities such as developing policy documents, organising webinars and other capacity building events in different technical, institutional or thematic areas. CE also created and supported social economy projects and enterprises that contribute(d) to job creation, education and training for those furthest away from the labour market, as well as to the EU's climate targets.

CE further disseminated the 16 Caritas CARES country reports and the European Caritas CARES report, which included recommendations for policymakers. Thanks to the strong coordination and regular contacts with the full Caritas network, and the strong and well-respected network that Caritas is, the policy messages reached the relevant levels. The many and regular trainings and exchange opportunities provided for the members with good practices and lessons learned, which allowed for a stronger, more professional network, even better to fulfil our mission in the service of the people facing poverty, exclusion and marginalisation.

Several of the CARES and CARES II activities have been further developed and will continue to be implemented over several years. Examples of these are the different learning paths, such as the Caritas Poverty Observatories, which are crucial for the drafting of the CARES reports, the Caritas mapping system, which is now being transformed from a European into an international database – to name just a few (new ones continue to be developed). Moreover, innovative topics and solutions such as social economy that have been promoted through CARES activities have been picked up and further developed by members and inspired other organisations as well.

Identification of potential good practices: Some Caritas organisations had already indicated a general difficulty of ensuring the sustainability of their staff, of their organisations, etc. well before the outbreak of COVID-19. They had attributed this to limited access to state funding, limited understanding of the legal possibilities, and / or limited opportunities to engage with national governments. In light of this, CE continued to identify good practices on the topic of Institutional Advocacy, which sought to help Caritas organisations create an enabling environment to strengthen their own organisations, and by doing so to be better situated legally, financially and politically to carry out advocacy. In 2020, the **Institutional Advocacy Handbook**⁶⁵ was finally launched. This proved timely and very valuable, especially in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, where even more Caritas organisations worried about the sustainability of funding for social services and the needs of the most vulnerable.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: Many of the actions and approaches of CARES II are considered innovative and progressive in the conventional policy paradigm, such as CE's view on the social economy, which challenges us to think in different ways about our economy. Rather than focusing on generating individual wealth and maximising profits, it prioritises social objectives and social values through innovative solutions to involve people far from the labour market holistically and effectively in training and job opportunities. Seriously concerned about the fair distribution of economic resources, inequalities, and the exploitation of people for financial gain, Caritas presented different examples of social economy enterprises in Europe. This has been promoted through various CARES activities that have been picked up and further developed by members and inspired other organisations as well.

Policy evidence generated by the project: In 2020, in the realm of the CARES II grant, CE produced and launched the following deliverables, including evidence-based recommendations for policy development, as well as institutional development resources for members:

- [The Caritas CARES! European report on access to services](#)⁶⁶;
- The Institutional Advocacy Handbook;
- Spanish and French translations of the [Grassroots Participation Handbook](#)⁶⁷;

⁶⁵ <https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Caritas-Europa-Institutional-Advocacy-Handbook.pdf>

⁶⁶ <https://caritascare.eu/>

⁶⁷ <https://www.caritas.eu/grassroots-participation-handbook/>

- [The Knowledge Management Portal](#)⁶⁸;
- Engagement communication tools for [Young Caritas Europa](#)⁶⁹ (video, logo, website, social media channels);
- Numerous [press releases, press statements, and positions](#)⁷⁰.

New partnerships created: During the course of CARES II, CE pursued numerous activities specific to building strategic partnerships with relevant actors in the field of job creation, achieving a human-centred economy, and social business approach. Some collaborations emerged from this: for instance, the European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN) and the main global network of centres for social innovation and entrepreneurship (IHUB). Also, the principal European network of venture philanthropy organisations (EVPA) invited CE to be part of the advisory board of a project on social and inclusive entrepreneurship.

Dissemination strategy: The main targets of CARES II dissemination strategy were policymakers and opinion leaders in and around the European institutions and at the national level in the Member States, particularly in the context of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the most vulnerable people in our society and our members' work with them. To reach out to these audiences we used our social media channels intensively, with support from our members at the national level. For events, CE equally targeted decision-makers and opinion leaders as well as civil society networks and member organisations. The specific audience was always adapted to the topic and the purpose of the event. In order to be gender sensitive CE did not ask participants to provide their sex on the participants list / registration form (we can provide the European Commission with this data whenever needed). We were however pleased to note good equality in terms of participation of women and men at practically all events. Press releases and statements were promoted on social media in particular, in addition to the traditional dissemination channels among Brussels-based journalists and national ones on the occasions that CE members translate and use them. We also published articles on the CE website to put forward the challenges and achievements of Caritas work in the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

European added value: The most important added value of CE resides in its multi-layered network of 49 member organisations in 46 European countries. Thanks to its geographical extension, CE is able to ensure a capillary presence throughout the European continent and at different levels - European, national and particularly strong presence at the local level. CE therefore bridges the gap between these levels by working closely with its members and other networks, which enables us to monitor the implementation of policies and other instruments such as the European Pillar of Social Rights. The broad network of CE also allows for an ongoing exchange of best practices, which fosters the mainstreaming and upscaling of results of former EU funded projects. The scope and scale of CE activities and influence on policy development would not be possible without the financial support of the EC.

Horizontal objectives: In all its activities, procedures and interactions, CE adheres to a behavioural and attitudinal approach that respects the dignity of the individual and enables every person to human integral development. This effectively results in the promotion of an equality and diversity mainstreaming approach. CE also promotes diversity in the team, is committed to the mainstreaming of equal opportunities and ensures that no staff member is discriminated against. In addition, the topic of gender equality was deepened through a workshop for all staff members by an external

⁶⁸ <https://www.caritas.eu/knowledge-management/>

⁶⁹ <https://www.caritas.eu/empowering-caritas/young-caritas-europa/>

⁷⁰ <https://www.caritas.eu/news/>

consultant. A follow-up event will take place in 2021. The existing good practices are in the process of being systematised and, if need be, improved and completed, leading to a unified, internal policy. Moreover, Caritas Europa stepped up its commitment to safeguarding of Caritas beneficiaries as well as staff members. The whole team attended a training on safeguarding and the topic continues to be high on the agenda of CE. EC also introduced this topic in the Social Platform Management Committee and will continue to follow up on this into 2021.

4.4. COFACE – Families online and offline – protection of human rights in the digital age



‘With different actions and outputs, we bridge the gap between the EU and the local level, highlighting the emerging needs of families to be taken into account in EU law and policy.’

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0069
Policy area	Social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare; • Long-term care; • Active inclusion; • Mainstreaming SPSI.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Media; • Toy industry; • Advertising industry; • ICT industry.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • two contact databases created; • 19 reports produced; • 14 evaluation / assessments carried out; • four internal expert meetings held to strengthen knowledge transfer across countries; • four COFACE statutory meetings held to build common positions on key EU policies.

Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	COFACE affiliate member countries
Coordinator	COFACE-Families Europe
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 490 435.40
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	http://www.coface-eu.org/

Socioeconomic context: COFACE-FAMILIES EUROPE is a network promoting the well-being, health and security of families and their members in a changing society and serves as a trusted entity for family mainstreaming and the needs of families in the EU and beyond.

The organisation achieves this through coordination between the COFACE Member organisations to assess the needs of families at grassroots' levels, to gather evidence and project trends, and to link these needs to the appropriate policy mechanisms at the EU level, such as the European Semester process, the Social Open Method of Coordination, the European Structural and Investment Funds, the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as other key EU legislative and non-legislative initiatives beyond social and employment policy (gender equality, migration, education, consumer policy, financial services, safer internet and more). This is done by liaising directly with key EU policymakers in the European Parliament, the Commission and Council, as well as EU advisory bodies like the European Economic and Social Committee and the EU Committee of the Regions.

The organisation's role is also to drive innovation by facilitating transnational exchanges and foster mutual learning on effective policies and practices between COFACE member organisations, aiming to support national and sub-national policies in the interest of families. COFACE achieves this through the organisation of seminars, ad hoc expert groups, EU presidency and other conferences, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, online and social communication and dissemination and training.

In a spirit of pluralism, working in the name of all types of families, COFACE-Families Europe is rooted in a set of six core values:

- Non-discrimination. COFACE-Families Europe recognises all family forms. Equal opportunities. COFACE-Families Europe believes equality between women and men is a cornerstone for the reconciliation of family and professional life.
- Respect for human rights. COFACE-Families Europe seeks to advance the rights of families and their members to a decent quality of life.
- Empowerment. COFACE-Families Europe aims to give a voice to all family members as citizens, consumers and workers.
- Social inclusion. COFACE-Families Europe advocates for the shaping of policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion of families and their members.
- Solidarity. COFACE-Families Europe promotes intergenerational solidarity between family members.

Aims of the project/organisation: COFACE-Families Europe works towards a family-friendly environment, enabling all families and their members to benefit from sufficient financial resources, available quality services and adequate time arrangements to live and enjoy their family life in dignity and harmony.

The organisation has eight internal strategic objectives to achieve this vision:

1. Giving a voice to families in policymaking and implementation;
2. Promoting fair access to Services of General Interest;

3. Building family-friendly policies and workplaces;
4. Achieving an EU status for family carers;
5. Harnessing the transformative power of technologies for a sustainable world;
6. Supporting the inclusion of vulnerable groups such as migrants, persons with disabilities, one-parent families, and other minority groups;
7. Promoting equal opportunities for all families;
8. Promote child rights and well-being.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: Throughout the implementation of the action, COFACE held four very successful internal expert meetings which were important for knowledge transfer across countries and capacity building to empower national civil society to take part in and shape EU policy and law. In addition, four main COFACE statutory meetings (three Administrative Councils and one General Assembly) took place and were central for strategic exchanges between members for European consensus-building and to build common positions on key EU policies. Four main public affairs events were also organised.

COFACE created two contact databases for the *Families Corner* newsletter and the membership mailing lists; produced three benchmarks such as Internal Monitoring & Evaluation matrix, FamilyLab webinars programme and Child Compass 2030.

In addition, COFACE produced 20 reports: 1 Annual COFACE report, 2 Child Guarantee seminar reports (EN / DE), 6 Position papers, 8 joint statements with other European civil society organisations (EEG DI, Alliance for Investing in Children, EPAM), 3 Joint reports (EEG DI research on deinstitutionalisation, FSUG paper on crypto-assets, Finance Watch report on responsible lending in COVID-19 times).

Furthermore, the organisation carried out 13 evaluations / assessments: 8 assessments (Disability roadmap, Consumer Credit Directive revision, Gender Equality Strategy, Gender pay gap, Pillar Social Rights, Impact of COVID-19 on families & work-life balance, Child Rights strategy of Council of Europe, New Consumer Agenda); 1 study on toys and diversity; 2 policy briefs; 1 joint stocktaking deinstitutionalisation; 1 external evaluation report on COFACE strategic framework; one website accessibility audit.

COFACE has also produced 7 assessments of EU law: 1 assessment of the General Data Protection Regulation (video format), 1 Assessment of the New Deal for Consumers; 1 assessment of the Consumer Credit Directive; 1 assessment of the Gender Equality Strategy; 1 assessment of the Safer Internet Strategy (video format); 2 joint assessments of EU budget (AMIF with EPAM, and ESF+ with the alliance for investing in children).

Transnational dimension: For COFACE, mutual learning and transfer of knowledge are key to including national civil societies more into the European dynamics and to building common positions for advocacy on different EU policies and laws. COFACE achieves a transnational dimension through the organisation of different types of cross-country exchanges. COFACE has also experimented with the use of technology (namely video conference platforms and video editing software) to boost transnational connections between members of the organisation as compensation for the cancellation of the physical events which were initially planned.

Dissemination strategy: COFACE has disseminated all of its reports / outputs with the relevant EU institutions at the EU level including EU Commission DGs (DG EMPL, DG EAC, DG JUST, DG FISMA, DG SANTE, DG REGIO, DG CNECT, DG HOME, DG BUDG, SECGEN), the European Parliament (via select Committees such as FEMM,

EMPL), interest groups (such as the Interest Group on solidarity between generations, interest group on Carers), Intergroups (Disability and Child rights) and national governments (either via our member organisations, which, for example, disseminated physical copies of our publications, or directly by inviting representatives of national governments to COFACE events or attending government meetings in different countries).

COFACE has also disseminated all of its reports / output to key NGO and / or civil society stakeholders at the EU and national level. Among these were organisations such as Eurochild, European Women's Lobby, ETUC, the Social Platform, BEUC, Finance Watch, EU Alliance for Investing in Children, European NGO Platform on Asylum and Migration, EDF.

The organisation also targeted corporate networks, various research organisations, international institutions and national organisations.

COFACE has used several channels to disseminate the reports and outputs produced. These include physical printed copies, QR codes, COFACE website, events and online meetings, a newsletter, social media platforms, email, video creation and media releases.

European added value: With different actions and outputs COFACE bridged the gap between the EU and the local level, highlighting the emerging needs of families to be taken into account in EU law and policy (advocating for a strong EU Child Guarantee and exploring its potential implementation in four countries, pushing for a Gender equality strategy with a strong care component, ensuring that EU consumer law supports vulnerable consumers, keeping up the pressure for a new post-2020 Disability Strategy that meets the demands of COFACE Disability, and giving a boost to the European Pillar of Social Rights as much as possible).

COFACE also linked Social Europe and the global framework through their special consultative status at the UN and the work on the Sustainable Development Goals. The organisation transnationally connects family organisations of all types. Social innovators constantly try to find support solutions for their local communities and use the COFACE network to find ideas and inspiration for their own countries.

Sustainability measures: Protection of human rights in the digital age was the main focus of COFACE work in 2020 and will remain central in the future not only as a result of the pandemic shifting work, school, and leisure online but because digital families have been a core topic of COFACE for at least 10 years now.

COFACE will build on the links created between social and digital policy to ensure real impact for families: through the digital citizenship breakfast bytes including one webinar hosted by DG CNECT on the EU Safer Internet Strategy; the mainstreaming of the digital dimension in discussions to build the new architectures of the Child Rights Strategy of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission; initiating dialogues with the ICT industry namely engaging in discussions as a member of the newly launched Facebook Alliance on digital citizenship; the strong partnership between sociological and digital transformations researchers of the DigiGen Horizon2020 consortium; highlighting the impact of the digital environment on child and family well-being in our recently adopted 2030 Child Compass to guide policymakers towards more holistic thinking in developing and consolidating family policies; and building on the Digital Families Map to feed the newly launched European Family Lab bringing family professionals together to create impactful family support in a complex world. This will not only serve to boost principle 20 of the European Pillar

of Social Rights but many other principles which have a digital dimension more than ever: inclusive education, work–life balance, gender equality, long-term care, decent work conditions. The digital divide and aspects of digital deprivation will be further explored by the COFACE network in 2021.

Horizontal objectives: COFACE is carrying out all its activities by adhering to and addressing issues such as long-term unemployment, promotion of equality between women and men and poverty and social exclusion.

As every year, COFACE highlighted the difficulties of families in vulnerable situations in different EU and national conferences / meetings, by generally promoting a safety net for all families based on access to Resources / Services / Time and by promoting investment in family support systems at the local level through access to childcare, long-term care, but especially a wide range of community-based services. The organisation continued to work with the Right to Energy Coalition to support a just transition towards a greener economy and to raise awareness about the impact of energy poverty on families.

In 2020, COFACE put the spotlight on families in vulnerable situations, namely taking a closer look at single-parent families and large families, highlighting the challenges they face and policy solutions. COFACE's continued work to promote financial inclusion is also part of our poverty prevention work, by feeding our expertise into EU discussions that impact the financial inclusion of families.

To promote equality between men and women, COFACE advocated for reconciliation of work and family life, with work–life balance policies to support more women to enter the labour market and more men to take up their family / caring roles. COFACE was also leading the alliance of European NGOs on work–life balance to develop joint advocacy actions in support of the EU work–life balance agenda, through legislative and non-legislative measures; supported the European Women Against Violence Coalition and advocated for EU ratification of the Istanbul Convention; highlighted the gender dimension of family care (most family carers are women and very much threatened with poverty and exclusion); boosted the EU Disability agenda through actions to promote independent living of family members (a win-win-win-win for persons with disabilities, family carers, society and the economy); and finally advocated for childcare and long-term care services to support families in their caring role from birth to old age.

To further promote a high level of quality employment COFACE reconciliation advocacy focused on pushing for reconciliation economy measures, namely for legislation on adequate family leave and flexible working arrangements to ensure that workers can secure quality employment and have time off to take care of their family without losing employment. Another dimension of high-quality employment that COFACE addressed was the close monitoring of changes in the delivery of family support and care services in 2020. This was especially needed given the extraordinary circumstances caused by the global pandemic which led to the shift in working arrangements.

4.5. PICUM Network – Strategic advocacy, collaboration and activation to address the social exclusion of undocumented migrants



'PICUM's report on "Preventing and Addressing Vulnerabilities in Immigration Enforcement Policies" draws a clear picture of how vulnerabilities are too often overlooked in immigration detention decision-making and practices. This results in situations in which individuals are detained while suffering from pre-existing health diseases, being survivors of torture or ill-treatment, or despite being children.'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0024
Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection and social inclusion; • Employment.
Policy sub-area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active inclusion; • Child and Youth poverty and social exclusion; • Undeclared work; • Mobility.
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Media.
Activities implemented	<p>The project conducted research, policy advocacy and dissemination in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting civic engagement and dialogue; • Influencing the MFF negotiations towards a more inclusive budget; • Employment rights in precarious and undeclared work; • Quality and sustainable work permit and social protection systems; • Policies and procedures that are in the best interest of children and further their social inclusion; • Policies to support inclusion in the context of the pandemic.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	34 countries, primarily based in Europe
Coordinator	Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants ASBL
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 480 605.94
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://picum.org/

Socioeconomic context: The COVID-19 pandemic made the theme of health a more transversal one across PICUM's work, exposing health-related vulnerabilities in the context of work, immigration detention and return. PICUM's work helped to insert the undocumented population into policy discussions about recovery, vaccinations and regularisation both at the EU as well as national levels. Across Europe, many policy

initiatives linked to the pandemic explicitly addressed the situation of undocumented people, and PICUM supported its members in their advocacy efforts for improved and sustained responses. Progressive government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic followed in many cases the long-standing recommendations of PICUM and its members. They confirmed that inclusion of undocumented workers in emergency support measures, measures to regularise their status, release from immigration detention and access to services in policy and practice are possible and beneficial. Significant work remains ahead to push for temporary measures to be maintained and improved through structural reforms.

Aims of the project/organisation: The project had 14 aims, which are listed below:

1. Support implementation of major political EU-driven processes and instruments on social inclusion through cooperation between EU, national, regional and local stakeholders.
2. Consolidate existing expertise and data to develop and promote rights and evidence-based guidance on improving access to healthcare for migrants and other socially excluded populations.
3. Increase evidence on social exclusion across Member States, with particular attention to vulnerable migrant groups, including children, youth, people with healthcare needs, people in or at risk of expulsion, as well as people facing gender-based exclusion.
4. Develop analysis and recommendations on the impacts of EU policies on the social inclusion of undocumented migrants and migrants at risk of losing their status, focusing on the barriers to achieving EU social objectives.
5. Promote confidence in public institutions – particularly those engaged in delivering health and social services and ensuring inclusion in law enforcement procedures – consistency with EU standards and policy coherence by promoting separation of services from immigration enforcement.
6. Increase awareness of the impact of policies across areas of EU action on health, security and welfare of undocumented people, as well as engagement of actors across sectors, and promote the implementation of the EU's obligation to ensure "health in all" policies.
7. Coordinate joint advocacy for national and local policies that promote all children's rights and social inclusion, regardless of their status.
8. Further joint analysis and dissemination of good practice for return procedures in which children have their best interests properly considered in order to increase decisions that uphold their social rights and result in their inclusion.
9. Facilitate exchange to support members' advocacy to increase access to secure residence status and empower and mobilise migrant youth.
10. Advocate for all workers' mechanisms to enjoy fair, safe and secure working conditions, file a complaint, and access remedies in cases of exploitation by further analysing and exchanging on existing practice and outreach and cooperation with key stakeholders and institutions.
11. Consolidate partnerships to advocate for work permit schemes that address critical gaps in admission schemes and protect workers from exploitation.
12. Lead an advocacy strategy to remove barriers in accessing education and care by ending child detention by bringing together medical professionals, teachers' associations, social workers, child rights actors, and international organisations to elicit changes in law collectively, policy and practice on a national level and in the EU standards.
13. Work with the Commission, Member States, and national NGOs to design and implement pilot alternatives to detention, including for families to resolve immigration status while remaining in the community and continuing education, without resorting to social exclusion and harm through detention.

- Promote activities, results and outcomes through print, online, broadcast and social media, targeting: the general public; social partners; social service providers; civil society organisations; researchers; social policy experts; EU, national and local and regional authorities.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The project brought together a broad range of experience and expertise of 167 member organisations in 35 countries. PICUM generated and coordinated a humane and informed response to undocumented migrants' realities of poverty and social exclusion and provided a platform for its members and partners to engage policymakers and the broader public in the full realisation of their rights.

The project addressed the gaps in Europe's social protection systems which are critical to ensure resilience to the pandemic and other crises. PICUM worked throughout the year to bring evidence, arguments and recommendations to broad audiences of policymakers and partners and to provide spaces for PICUM members to share their challenges and insights in the face of an extremely difficult reality. The pandemic made the theme of health a more transversal one across PICUM's work, exposing health-related vulnerabilities in the context of work, immigration detention and return. PICUM's resource page on COVID-19 provided a go-to source on positions, recommendations and perspectives on the pandemic and migrants; and the PICUM publication on relevant policy developments provided important evidence of initiatives at the national and local levels across Europe that explicitly addressed the situation of undocumented people, supporting advocacy for improved and sustained responses.

The project addressed the fact that mistreatment of undocumented people requires a holistic response that prioritises their needs and recovery. PICUM's publications on residence permits for victims of crime in Europe and preventing harm, and promoting rights through improved safety, protection and justice for undocumented people underscore how the criminalisation of irregular migration undermines inclusion and drive abuse. They also gather important evidence about existing legal and policy frameworks at the EU and national levels intended to foster their protection, as well as local initiatives that promote their empowerment and safety. With the input of PICUM members and other national partners, PICUM provides concrete examples of initiatives that illustrate the different dimensions of justice: namely, recognition of and accountability for harm and the availability of services to support recovery without conditions or discrimination. This evidence and related analysis and recommendations are timely in view of the EU's new strategy on victims' rights and its focus on the exchange of promising practices and possible EU-level policy solutions.

The project encouraged that steps be taken to recognise migrant workers. PICUM's analysis of labour migration proposals and recommendations for reform highlight some critical elements or characteristics that should be integrated into labour migration and work permit policies, whether on a national, bilateral / multilateral or EU level, for them to be successful in achieving EU social and employment objectives. However, significant work remains ahead to push for temporary measures to be maintained and improved through structural reforms.

The project addressed the community-based alternatives to detention. Project teams stated that much of the progress achieved at the national, EU and global level on community-based alternatives to detention risks being dramatically undermined by the legislative proposals published by the European Commission in September 2020 (EU Pact on Migration and Asylum). Aware of this risk, the project's advocacy has focused on attempting to reduce the negative impact of the Pact, highlighting the risks for increased detention at borders, and recommending the EU and the Member States

to implement and expand alternatives to detention (ATD). For this purpose, coordination with other regional-level civil society organisations and working with PICUM members has proven key to providing informed inputs on the potential impact of the proposals in different Member States, and monitoring the ongoing developments at national and regional levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has directly and heavily affected immigration detention in the EU. Therefore, such developments required quick coordination and exchange of information. PICUM organised a meeting with the member group on detention and returns to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on immigration detention in Europe. In addition, PICUM and some of its members working on alternatives to detention (ATD) participated in two closed-doors meetings organised by OSF to discuss COVID-19 and immigration detention. Furthermore, PICUM provided inputs to the European Parliament Resolution on the impact of COVID-19 (April 2020) and the European Parliament Resolution on the Implementation of the Return Directive (December 2020) in consultation with its members. In addition, PICUM immediately set up a response system to facilitate the exchange of information on these developments, as well as on members' responses and other initiatives, through the establishment of a Google group and a webpage on COVID-19, and the coordination of a network for volunteers from 10 EU and non-EU countries.

In order to transform positive practices of release from immigration detention into systemic change, PICUM organised a number of bilateral and multilateral meetings with partners and members, with the aim to achieve a better understanding of the preconditions and strategies which made change possible, to pool relevant resources and case studies, and to develop coordinated advocacy strategies towards sustained and systemic change.

As PICUM's publication *Navigating Irregularity: The Impact of Growing Up Undocumented in Europe* shows, undocumented children's well-being and development is put in danger because of the social exclusion their residence status causes. They often grow up in poverty, live in inadequate housing, fear police, and experience high levels of stress – all of which affects their emotional and physical well-being and development. However, undocumented children, especially those in families, continue to be largely invisible in policies and practices affecting them, whether that be policies wanting to alleviate social exclusion and poverty or migration policies. The fact that the upcoming EU Child Rights Strategy will not focus on children in migration, but will treat groups of children transversally, is an example of this blindness. In other cases, harmful policies target children in families specifically: for instance, the fact that families with children older than 12 will be subject to the border procedures if the proposed Asylum and Migration Pact is accepted unchanged.

PICUM's report on "Preventing and Addressing Vulnerabilities in Immigration Enforcement Policies" draws a clear picture of how vulnerabilities are too often overlooked in immigration detention decision-making and practices. This results in situations in which individuals are detained while suffering from pre-existing (physical and mental) health diseases, being survivors of torture or ill-treatment, or despite being children. In the five countries analysed in PICUM's report, situations of vulnerability are defined and interpreted differently. The lack of an inclusive definition of vulnerability often leaves out individuals who do not fit in the closed list of categories, and in particular, those whose vulnerabilities are exacerbated as a consequence of detention itself. Mental illnesses are rarely included in the definition, despite being an important factor affecting individuals' situations of vulnerability. Existing operational tools, such as the IDC / UNHCR Vulnerability Screening Tool, are rarely used to develop a screening and assessment process that officials can

implement. This analysis underlined the need for further work in this area to prevent the harmful effects of detention, in particular on individuals in situations of vulnerability. The recommendations included in the report were developed in close contact with PICUM members and discussed during an online meeting on 25 November 2020.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: PICUM did a significant amount of additional work around the COVID-19 pandemic, which put into sharp relief the inequalities linked to insecure residence status, including the absence of social protection, limited access to healthcare and health information, and unsafe working conditions. PICUM reacted quickly and, as early as March, issued their own statement with recommendations on how to respond to the pandemic in a way that promoted inclusion and ensured protection of undocumented migrants' social rights, including regarding residence status. PICUM published a blog sharing the results of a detailed survey of our members on how the pandemic and related measures affected them and the people they work with. PICUM also published a COVID-19 resource page, with statements, recommendations and guidelines from NGOs and institutions on an inclusive, evidence- and rights-based response. PICUM created spaces for members to share and exchange about the impact of the pandemic on undocumented people and their own work to address needs and advocate for change. In addition, PICUM published a non-exhaustive overview of European government measures impacting undocumented migrants taken in the context of COVID-19.

Policy evidence generated by the project: PICUM increased the in-house and external production of audio-visual material (24 audio-visual products) and upskilled staff and membership. PICUM organised and delivered workshops for PICUM members on how to harness the power of narratives to deliver messages that can resonate with broader audiences. PICUM also upskilled in using Instagram for advocacy purposes and produced a toolkit for members. The project also produced a number of written inputs and participated in outreach events:

- Recommendations on EU funding for effective labour complaints mechanisms. Similar recommendations were also sent by the Greens following outreach to them.
- Input to Greens on the FEMM Committee Draft Opinion on reducing inequalities with a special focus on in-work poverty (2019/2188(INI)).
- Input to the EMPL Committee Opinion on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies: Combating negative attitudes towards people with a Romani background in Europe.
- Input to the EESC Opinion on diversity management in the EU.
- PICUM produced three internal briefing documents for its members on global and regional policy developments impacting migrant workers' rights and EU policy recommendations.
- PICUM also collaborated closely with the Open Society European Policy Institute, EFFAT, the Food Policy Coalition and Slow Food Europe on policy analysis and actions focusing on the rights of the agri-food workers. This included three coordination calls, and a joint statement with others: Without Rights for Agricultural Workers, Europe's
- Food Supplies Rest on Shaky Ground.
- PICUM spoke at a conference organised by EFFAT in the European Parliament on a Social CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) to raise labour standards in agriculture, highlighting the severe exploitation faced by migrant agricultural workers and the recommendation to make CAP payments conditional on respect for the labour and social rights of workers.
- PICUM participated in the OSCE Alliance Expert Co-ordination Team (AECT), including two meetings, a bilateral meeting, and a joint statement.

- PICUM spoke at the 20-year anniversary event of the Palermo Protocol, organised by the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, María Grazia Giammarinaro and endorsed a statement made by the Special Rapporteur on the significant anniversary and ways forward in work to support people who are trafficked.
- Other outreach to key stakeholders on rights at work included dialogues with or written inputs to the British Institute of International and Comparative Law, Amnesty International, trade unions and civil society as part of the Sabir festival, AEIDL – Association Européenne pour l'Information sur le Développement Local, Edinburgh Napier University, and Ashoka.

Transnational dimension: PICUM's growing membership (167 members) across the EU continued to work together through task forces and members in 2020. While moving all meetings online created numerous challenges, in some cases, it also enabled broader transnational participation of organisations that are less able to travel for meetings. Among other partnerships, PICUM led the regional-level advocacy of the European Alternatives to Detention Network, which brought together regional-level organisations with national pilot projects implemented by civil society organisations in seven countries. Furthermore, thanks to PICUM's coordination, ATD implementers have been invited to share their experiences in regional and global level webinars on ATD, including a Conference on ATD organised by EMN Belgium, a Listening Session organised by the UN Network on Migration Working Group 2 on ATD on 20 May 2020, and the Online Global Peer Learning Exchange organised by the UN Network on Migration Working Group 2 on ATD. These events allowed national-level NGOs to share their experiences with transnational networks of civil society organisations and governments.

New partnerships created: In 2020, PICUM consolidated existing partnerships by setting up an Advocacy Group on the Best Interests of the Child Procedures. The group brings together both PICUM members and non-members working on the issue on both regional and national level. PICUM coordinated joint advocacy of regional child rights organisations towards the EU institutions on children's rights in the recasting of the Return Directive and the regulations included in the Asylum and Migration Pact; this included the adoption of joint recommendations in January (on the Migration Pact, non-published), May (on the Return Directive, suggested amendments) and December (Pact).

In addition, PICUM continued coordinating the Initiative for Children in Migration, was co-chair of the Child Rights Action Group (CRAG) from December 2019 to June 2020 and continued being an active member of the EU Alliance on Investing in Children. As CRAG co-chair, PICUM helped develop joint recommendations on the EU comprehensive child rights strategy, carried by 35 organisations. PICUM also joined other organisations in their advocacy on protecting children and families (including undocumented) in alternative care and on the relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece to the other EU Member States.

Partnerships were also consolidated at the global level through participation in the UN Migration Network Thematic Working Group on Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements, providing the opportunity for PICUM's recommendations to be included in the related guidance to governments, including EU Member States. PICUM continued to coordinate the multi-stakeholder group on migrant domestic and care work, fostering continued exchange and partnership to promote better work permits and employment rights protections for domestic and care workers and created spaces for members to exchange.

Dissemination strategy: PICUM wrote, published and translated 60 reports, briefings, fact sheets and position papers in different EU languages, addressing different aspects of the rights and inclusion of undocumented migrants in relation to a wide range of policy areas. This included the finalisation of four major analytical reports in 2020, which will be officially launched in the first semester of 2021 and will be subsequently available on PICUM's website. PICUM's advocacy team met with EU and national policymakers on 69 occasions on issues across PICUM's thematic areas and made 30 submissions and inputs to ongoing policy procedures and consultations. PICUM staff made presentations at 135 meetings and participated in nearly 1 000 external working meetings in total. Speaking at online events also increased PICUM's reach to diverse audiences: in six webinars alone from April to June, PICUM's director spoke to audiences totalling nearly 1 100 people, representing governments, international institutions, civil society and migrants themselves. Although forced to work from a distance and fully online for the majority of the year, PICUM managed to be more connected than ever to its advocacy targets, allies, partners, and members.

Reports are disseminated via PICUM's website, targeted emails through target groups on CiviCRM, Google groups, newsletter and social media channels. PICUM has produced four quarterly reports compiling analytics from their social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn). PICUM has also worked with a consultant to improve their Google Analytics framework to better analyse, learn and improve website traffic and engagement.

European added value: PICUM was a very large-scale undertaking that not only covered a wide range of policy areas (that are not only limited to undocumented migration) but also tackled those issues at the EU level. Such large-scale work was only possible because of the EASI support and funding.

Sustainability measures: PICUM will continue its work in the future. They foresee five areas to focus on: labour, EU migration pact, protection of victims, health, and undocumented children and families.

PICUM will support the European Commission proposal for a Directive on adequate minimum wages by providing inputs and advocacy where necessary, in coordination with trade union partners and members. PICUM is also encouraged by the plans of the European Commission to develop an initiative to address the situation and rights of workers employed via platforms. PICUM will engage with the Platform on Undeclared Work to see what policy follow-up there may be to their study on undeclared work and labour exploitation of third country national workers. PICUM will engage with the due evaluation of the implementation of the Employers Sanctions Directive and forthcoming report from the Fundamental Rights Agency on the Directive.

PICUM will continue monitoring the ongoing legislative developments at the EU level, focusing on the possibilities to improve labour migration pathways and the quality of the residence and work permits granted to migrant workers, the need to expand community-based alternatives to detention, reduce resort to immigration detention, and safeguarding children's rights throughout (including by ensuring that they are never detained). PICUM will also continue supporting the regional and national level advocacy of the expanding network of alternative to detention pilots, bridging between EU and global level actors and national stakeholders.

The new EU Strategy on Victims' Rights provides a solid basis for continued advocacy on the safety, protection and welfare of undocumented people who experience abuse and exploitation. PICUM will advocate with members of the European Parliament on

these issues in anticipation of possible legislative proposals from the Commission in 2022 on access to justice for undocumented people, as foreseen in the Victims' Strategy.

PICUM will use the opportunity to press for equitable responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through specific attention to the vaccine rollout and access for undocumented people, proactively gathering evidence through media monitoring and exchange with PICUM members and partners and social media campaigning. PICUM will also continue to emphasise the importance of responses that are not purely crisis-related but that address structural exclusion from health and social protection systems.

PICUM will disseminate and promote PICUM publications "Navigating Irregularity: The Impact of Growing up Undocumented in Europe" and Hear our Voices: Undocumented Children and Young People share their Stories and continue advocating for opening existing and upcoming social inclusion policies to include undocumented children and families. This includes the Child Guarantee, amongst others.

PICUM will continue its efforts to bridge the migrants' rights and digital rights spaces, by distilling key implications of the use of invasive technologies for undocumented migrants, both in the context of border management but also in relation to the rights of migrant workers and access to healthcare and social benefits, as well as discriminatory policing and profiling.

Horizontal objectives: The project also covered the horizontal policy areas, such as youth employment, long-term unemployment, sustainable employment, poverty and social inclusion, equality between women and men, and adequate and decent social protection.

PICUM's work continued to underscore and address the ways that social exclusion, due to irregular status, is a driver of poverty, poor health outcomes and exposure to mistreatment and exploitation in the context of their work, private lives or elsewhere. PICUM's work on access to justice highlights these inequalities and promotes policies that empower people with irregular status by underscoring their rights under international and EU law and supporting their access to services that support their recovery and flourishing. This work includes a focus on violence against women and the critical role of service providers in promoting resilience and protection measures that promote migrant women's autonomy and economic independence. PICUM's efforts to elevate the situation of undocumented people are reflected in the EU's strategy on victims' rights, adopted in 2020, which explicitly recognises the vulnerabilities of undocumented people to mistreatment, and commits the EU to address this through an exchange of good practices of member states and possible legislative proposals in 2022.

PICUM's long-standing work on access to healthcare champions equitable access to healthcare for all people, regardless of status, emphasising the importance of universal health coverage, especially primary healthcare that integrates medical services with social support services, to promote inclusion. PICUM's messages and recommendations on undocumented people are reflected in the WHO's guidance to Member States on inclusive responses to the pandemic, and PICUM was among the organisations consulted on several occasions by the World Health Organisation's European regional office for insights on the realities and needs of marginalised groups in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and recommendations on appropriate action.

PICUM continued its efforts to increase understanding of the forms of violence experienced by undocumented women, the consequences of this vulnerability to harm, and the need for adequate policy responses through PICUM collaboration with women's rights organisations, like Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE), including through PICUM's active participation in the European Coalition to End Violence against Women. Among other things, PICUM also pressed for EU responses that address migrant women, publishing a blog responding to the EU's adoption of its gender strategy and meeting proactively with representatives of DG JUST to discuss the inclusion of undocumented women in the EU's planned initiative on violence against women and domestic violence.

PICUM's advocacy and partnerships promote labour migration policies and work permits that promote decent work and social inclusion, including specific actions at the EU level, and therefore contribute to promoting quality and sustainability of employment for all workers across sectors with a high proportion of migrant workers. PICUM's advocacy, communications and support to members to promote access to effective complaints mechanisms for all workers also improve conditions for workers, in particular those with precarious or irregular residence status, by increasing their negotiating power with their employers and access to unpaid wages and other due salaries or compensation in cases of non- or underpayment, unfair dismissal or other violations.

PICUM was proactive in highlighting the importance of equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine, in particular for undocumented people, through social media and in PICUM advocacy, including at a UN General Assembly online event. PICUM began gathering existing recommendations and laid the groundwork for more extensive engagement ahead of the national vaccine rollouts in Europe. The pandemic has also revitalised discussions around minimum social protection floors and minimum income. Some protections have been extended to some otherwise excluded groups (in particular, some self-employed), but others have been largely left aside from those working undeclared and in the platform economy. PICUM has raised awareness of how civil society and community groups have stepped in to support people, and the few examples where governments have also stepped in to encourage initiatives to provide minimum social protection to migrant workers and their families, and their inclusion in evolving social protection models post-COVID-19.

4.6. EUROCARERS – Towards care(r)-friendly societies in Europe



'...the long-term care needs of the European population - which are expected to grow as a result of ageing demographics - can only be met through a combination of policy measures focusing on both formal and informal care.'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0029
Policy area	Social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	Long-term care
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • National statistical offices; • Media; • Others (EU, national and regional policymakers; stakeholders (officials and civil servants from social and health sectors, international organisations, health and social care professionals, academics, employers, trade unions); (young) carers).
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions and recommendations to feed EU policymaking; • Bridge-building actions between EU level and national actors; • Awareness-raising and dissemination; • Network organisation and management.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	28 European countries
Coordinator	Eurocarers-Association Européenne Travaillant avec et pour les Aidants Non-Professionnels
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 244 873.77
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://eurocarers.org/

Socioeconomic context: Up until the outbreak of COVID-19, the context for policy debates on care and caring was one in which improvements in population health came to be expected, and infectious diseases were essentially relegated to the past. As a result, the growing incidence of age-related conditions, growing demand for care, as well as the sustainability challenge for care systems caused by Europe's ageing demographics and an overall increase in life expectancy had become the main areas of attention. These challenges were – and remain – compounded by structural problems in the long-term care (LTC) sector, i.e., insufficient staffing, poor job quality and inadequate skills, which all have an impact on the quality of care. Therefore, community care had progressively become a “hot topic”, and home-based care had

been identified as a practical measure to contain the costs of services while supporting widespread preferences among (older) people. Meanwhile, informal carers who, according to some estimates, provide as much as 80 % of all LTC in Europe and are crucial to the sustainability of care systems, were subjected to increasing pressure.

While informal care can be a source of great personal satisfaction, in many cases – and even more so when people have limited choice in their caring roles or when no adequate support is available – being a carer can be a determinant of negative health outcomes, a barrier to education and employment, and a driver of discrimination, social exclusion and poverty. Young carers may (have to) miss out on education and training as a consequence of providing care to a parent or sibling. This, in turn, affects their chances for labour market participation and career development later in life – which increases the chances of falling into long-term unemployment.

The COVID-19 outbreak brought about a major change. It indeed reflects a re-emergence of epidemics of infectious diseases, which renders the situation even more complex and critical. COVID-19 requires patterns of caring that are unlike any Eurocarers societies had seen in recent generations, and from the perspective of informal carers, this comes on top of the challenges that pre-existed the crisis and resulted from the increasing need for personal care and prevalence of long-term impairments and disabilities.

Aims of the project/organisation: The objectives of Eurocarers work programme 2020 were to contribute to the implementation of the EU Pillar of Social Rights and advance the issue of informal care at both national and EU levels by:

- Providing the carers' perspective and supporting EC coordination efforts in the fields of integrated, people-centred and community-based care, access to employment, education and social inclusion, based on the expertise of Eurocarers members and building on the EC work programme, policy initiatives of relevance to the principles of the Pillar, the Social OMC and the European Semester process.
- Providing evidence-based input regarding the situation and needs of (young) carers in Europe as well as sustainable / innovative solutions to address them.
- Promoting the implementation of the 10 steps defined in Eurocarers proposed EU Strategy on Carers (launched at the very end of 2018) at the international, national and regional level in order to drive a steady and multidimensional approach towards a care-friendly policy environment, building upon existing and new policy measures as well as enhanced coordination between them.
- Carrying out research, collecting and analysing new data to support evidence-based and innovative policy developments relating to the situation and needs of (young) carers in Europe as well as their contribution to care systems and the economy as a whole (i.e., connecting the dots between research and policy on care and caring).
- Identifying, fostering and informing EU policy developments of relevance to carers, with specific attention to measures aiming to facilitate access to employment, education and social inclusion (particularly for vulnerable groups) and to curtail the trade-offs between caring and a healthy social and professional life. In that context, Eurocarers activities in 2020 particularly focused on EC efforts, led by DG EMPL, the SPC (including its Indicators Sub-Group), DG EAC (regarding the issue of young carers), DG CONNECT (on ICT-based solutions for care), DG SANTE (on cancer), DG JUST (on gender equality and human rights), DG Research as well as related EU agencies (Eurofound, EIGE).

- Facilitating the dissemination and transposition of EU-driven policy initiatives to national / regional stakeholders through joint advocacy efforts with Eurocarers in-country members and partners targeted at public authorities.
- Fostering the development and reinforcement of synergies and multi-sectoral collaborations with stakeholders at the international, EU and national level (i.e., other civil society organisations, UN / WHO, OECD, EU agencies, etc.).
- Maintaining and improving Eurocarers functioning as a federal-type organisation, ensuring fair and effective operations while strengthening networking among Eurocarers members to support them in providing a united carers' voice at international and EU level.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: In the last few years, the momentum around care and caring has never ceased to grow. The Eurocarers network has continued to support and inform this constructive process, based on evidence (research and practice) so as to promote a consistent and multidimensional approach (based on the 10 steps of Eurocarers proposed EU Strategy on Carers) to the burning challenges facing care systems and carers, across relevant policy areas and levels of governance.

Many recent policy initiatives and instruments at the international, national or regional level explicitly refer to carers, the impact of their caregiving responsibilities on their own social and professional life as well as the importance of addressing their needs. At the EU level, these include the EU Pillar of Social Rights, the Work–Life Balance Directive, the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the relaunched eHealth stakeholder group, the EP report on the gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-COVID period, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and, even more recently, the EU Green Paper on ageing and the EPP proposal on an EU Care Strategy, to name but a few. The much-expected new SPC report on long-term care, the conclusions of the Indicators Sub-Group on LTC, as well as the EC Action Plan for the implementation of the EU Pillar of Social Rights, among others, should come to complement this already impressive list. At a national level, several policy breakthroughs have been achieved in the last couple of years, such as in Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Norway or the UK. Ad hoc measures targeting carers and resulting from the COVID-19 outbreak have also been observed. All of these remain on the organisation's radar, and they will continue to foster new and further developments in these and other European countries.

Eurocarer's detailed review of the implementation of the Work–Life Balance Directive by Member States has shown that while the legislation in place in a huge majority of countries already complies with the Directive, existing benefits and entitlements are too often provided at a minimal level. It is common for these rights to be defined on the basis of a narrow-focused notion of "informal care", strict eligibility criteria or the benevolence of employers. Moreover, existing rights continue to favour those carers who have a first-degree relationship with the person in need of care, who live in the same household or are employees of the public or private sector (thereby excluding self-employed workers and atypical forms of employment). Finally, access to carer's leave and flexible working conditions tend to remain problematic for those who provide care to dependent elderly persons, which is paradoxical given the original premise of the Directive and the need to adapt to ageing societies. Consequently, existing measures often fall short in adequately addressing the needs of millions of informal carers across Europe.

The organisation has also paid specific attention to the diffusion of international / EU interest in care and caring at the national / regional level. Although the list of committed policymakers and stakeholders keeps expanding, the COVID-19 crisis has

understandably disrupted ongoing dialogues on the situation of carers and diverted policymakers' attention to combating the spread of COVID-19 and blunting the impact of the pandemic. As a result, the COVID-19 crisis brings along opportunities and challenges for the European carers' movement. On the one hand, it clearly emphasises the limitations and inconsistencies of prevailing long-term care models as well as the crucial role played by informal carers. This may stimulate the much-awaited reforms to strengthen formal care services and recognise informal carers. On the other hand, the crisis also confirms governments' tendency to over-rely on families, friends and neighbours despite the absence or inadequacy of support measures available to them. Moreover, the crisis also demonstrates that civil society organisations are best placed to respond to the needs of the community and compensate for the deficiencies of public services, even though they are often expected to do this with extremely limited resources.

The main message communicated by the organisation is consistent, clear and evidence-based: the long-term care needs of the European population – which are expected to grow as a result of ageing demographics – can only be met through a combination of policy measures focusing on both formal and informal care. Significant investment in good-quality professional care services, including community-based and home care, should be at the core of policy initiatives aiming to achieve universal access to care across Europe but this will not suffice given the central role played by informal carers. The 10 steps of Eurocarers' proposed EU strategy on carers should therefore serve to guide the legislative and non-legislative agenda required to foster the development of care(r)-friendly societies.

From the perspective of the community of people that Eurocarers represent, striking the right balance between formal and informal raises crucial questions as regards the values that will underpin European care systems of the future. It also generates grave concerns regarding the carers and care recipients' ability to decide to what extent they want to be involved in caring (and at what cost).

Innovativeness of the project/activities: Beyond the work and contribution on "formal" care systems, the Eurocarers network also focused and contributed to the development of policies that genuinely take the best interest of carers into consideration in the areas of employment, social protection / social inclusion, human rights and anti-discrimination, ICT-based solutions for care, youth, etc. These are important to promote and implement the 10 steps of Eurocarers' EU Strategy on carers, to strike the right balance between formal and informal care (collective vs individual responsibility) and to ensure equal opportunities for both the care recipient and their carer. The first generation of LTC policies primarily focused on the situation of the dependent person. Benefits and their administrative organisation were designed with one unique objective: the well-being of the dependent person. Today, the design of care benefits should also include the objectives of employment and well-being for the carer.

Policy evidence generated by the project: the organisation's Policy Working Group and Young Carers Working Group (EPWG and EYCWG) both contributed to the development of 17 Position papers and consultation responses (some of which at the national level), including:

- Making cancer-related complications and comorbidities an EU health priority;
- Eurocarers' Contribution to the Consultation on EU Cancer Plan Roadmap;
- Eurocarers' input to 'the Cancer-Related Complications and Comorbidities Initiative' Recommendations under the Consultation on 'Europe's Beating Cancer Plan';
- Eurocarers' contribution to the consultation on Europe Beating Cancer Plan;

- Eurocarers' contribution to the EU consultation on the New Digital Education Action Plan;
- Eurocarers' response to the UK Government's Open Consultation on Carer's leave;
- Contribution to US Government Accountability Office report on Other Countries' Experiences with Caregiver Policies;
- EPF Factsheets and quick guides on vaccination and chronic diseases;
- Contribution to EXPH opinion on resilient care systems in times of COVID;
- Position paper on implementation of WLB Directive;
- Note for Italian Senate: I caregiver familiari: attori in prima linea nella lotta contro il virus;
- Eurocarers' contribution to the Consultation on the Child Guarantee;
- Eurocarers' position paper on the Child Guarantee;
- Enhancing the Rights of Informal Carers - Eurocarers' Response to the Consultation on the Social Pillar Action Plan;
- Eurocarers' feedback on EC Roadmap regarding the EU Green paper on ageing;
- Eurocarers' contribution to the Consultation on the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child;
- Eurocarers' Position Paper on the EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child.

Transnational dimension: Eurocarers is the European network representing informal carers and their organisations, irrespective of the age or health need of the person they are caring for. The ever-expanding network (73 carers' organisations and research & development organisations from 26 countries) is designed as a platform for collaboration, support, exchange, awareness-raising and evidence-based policy change in Europe.

New partnerships created: One of the organisation priorities is "Bridge-building actions between EU level and national actors". It includes building ad hoc partnerships and collaborations with other CSOs, including via a joint call for action entitled "Making cancer-related complications and comorbidities an EU health priority" (February 2020), Eurocarers contribution to the European Patients Forum's (EPF) Toolkit on vaccination confidence, a project proposal (to be submitted in the next round of Erasmus+ calls) with AGE Platform Europe and AIM, the organisation's participation in the informal coordination group of CSOs with an interest in Social Protection (initiated by REIF), the organisation's continuous contribution to the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), the submission of joint suggested amendments to the draft EP report on "New Avenues for Legal Labour Migration" in November 2020, Eurocarers' input into the work of the Osteoporosis and Fragility Fracture Policy Network, Eurocarers' coordination process with the organisation's French members 'la Compagnie des Aidants' and Pfizer / Viatrix France on the provision of Eurocarers expert views and analysis regarding the outcomes of an international survey directed at Non-Communicable Diseases patients, and Eurocarers' participation in the EU eHealth Stakeholder Group.

Dissemination strategy: Next to standard dissemination practices (such as reports and social media presence), the organisation focuses a lot on networking activities through which they increased awareness of their policy messages. The Eurocarers' belief that while long-term care is a natural entry point for Eurocarers' message around the situation, contribution and needs of informal carers, the development of a care(r)-friendly policy environment largely depends on smooth coordination between a broad set of policies and practices in the social, health and employment sectors (among others). It is therefore important for Eurocarers to attend (and organise) outreach events, policy dialogues, scientific conferences, exhibitions, etc. at the EU and national level, making it possible to build bridges, develop cross-sectoral

cooperation and spread Eurocarers' messaging on the opportunities and challenges offered by the EU Semester, EPSR and other policy instruments. Eurocarers' networking activities also serve to convey the perspective of informal carers and disseminate evidence-based policies and practices. Finally, they allow us to develop sustainable or ad hoc partnerships and synergies with relevant counterparts.

European added value: In the last few years, the momentum around care and caring has never ceased to grow. The Eurocarers' network has continued to support and inform this constructive process, based on evidence (research and practice) and so promote a consistent and multidimensional approach (based on the 10 steps of the proposed EU Strategy on Carers) to the burning challenges facing care systems and carers, across relevant policy areas and levels of governance. The policy impact made by the Eurocarers' network would not be reached without support from the EU.

Sustainability measures: Numerous positive developments of relevance to the organisation's work have taken place since Eurocarers opened its secretariat in Brussels in 2014, following the signature of a first EaSI framework partnership agreement with the EC. The challenges related to the provision of long-term care in an ageing Europe – and the crucial contribution made by informal carers to care systems, society and the economy as a whole – have indeed gained considerable momentum among stakeholders and policymakers at international, EU and national levels. An increasing number of developments targeting informal carers, or of relevance to them, are also progressively dribbling out, in and outside of the care policy arena, notably at a national and regional level. In the future, Eurocarers will therefore pursue its efforts to inform, nurture and transfer these developments and will continue to articulate its message around the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy (or its follow-up), including through the implementation of the principles defined in the EU Pillar of Social Rights as well as all other policy instruments at their disposal (EU Semester, ESIF, SPC, SDGs, EU Gender Equality Strategy, Youth and Child Guarantees, EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, Europe's Beating Cancer Plan etc.). The Green Paper on Ageing (and its future deliverables) and the work of the SPC, including its upcoming report on LTC, will also serve to guide Eurocarers' work in the months and years to come.

As mentioned above, a majority of the 20 principles of the EU Social Pillar offer a great platform to shed light on the aspects of the carer's experience that the network aims to draw attention to and nicely complements the 10 steps of the EU Strategy to support and empower carers. If fully and properly implemented, the EU Pillar of Social Rights will have a very positive impact on the daily life of millions of informal carers across Europe and will provide them with the equal opportunities they need and seek. The organisation intends to monitor and contribute to the transposition of at least 10 out of the 20 principles, including principles number 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, and 17. To that end, the EC action plan on the implementation of the EU Pillar of Social Rights will come in very handy. Naturally, principle 18 on universal access to affordable and good-quality Long-Term Care (in particular community-based and home care services) will continue to be a natural entry point for the organisation's advocacy efforts in support of policies that:

- favour sustainable, equitable, universal and good-quality care services;
- recognise and support carers as important contributors to Europe's care systems; and
- ensure informal care does not deprive carers of an active, productive and fulfilling life.

The principles that concern access to social protection (e.g., pension rights), healthy lifestyles and work-life balance for parents and carers will also remain at the core of

the organisation's activities in the months to come. The monitoring of the transposition of the work-life balance directive will be pursued in 2021, and they will remain involved in both advocacy and research activities seeking to inform the development of integrated social and healthcare services. These activities will include continued collaborations with the health sector (WHO, cancer sector, dementia, continence care, etc.). They will also pursue the organisation's efforts to bring the perspective of carers in the development of ICT-based solutions for the care and caring. Finally, they will also continue to support and call for the collection of better and more comparable data on the situation and needs of carers, as well as promising examples of measures allowing them to be addressed (along the lines of the 10 steps strategy).

The principles related to inclusive education, gender equality or equal opportunities will be equally important to make a case for carers in Europe given the demographics of that group (which is mainly composed of women, with largely invisible components among younger people). Following the change of plan imposed on us by the pandemic, the issue of 'Young Carers' will be the core focus of the second European Carers Day communication campaign on 6 October 2021. This will be informed by the conclusions of the International Young Carers Conference held online on 3-6 May 2021 and which the organisation will co-organise with the Swedish Family Care Competence Centre and Linnaeus University. Many young carers struggle to balance their daily life with caregiving responsibilities and experience mental health barriers in relation to school, further education and employment issues as a result of their caregiving. Addressing their needs is therefore in direct compliance with the objectives and principles of the EU Pillar of Social Rights.

Horizontal objectives: Eurocarers' work has specifically aimed to contribute evidence-based information in the framework of policy initiatives around:

- Care and caring: the 10 fundamental elements of what constitutes a "carer friendly" policy environment (summarised in Eurocarers' proposed EU Strategy on Carers) remain at the core of research work and the organisation's advocacy message on the need for recognition, support and empowerment of informal carers across Europe. Eurocarers' Strategy includes recommendations on the definition of informal care, the identification of carers, the assessment of carers' needs, the role of carers as part of integrated care systems, access to information and advice, carers' health, respite care, carers' training and recognition of skills, carers' access to education and employment, social inclusion and poverty. Among other opportunities, the Strategy served to structure Eurocarers' monitoring activities regarding the prevalence of informal care and support measures available to carers in Europe; the development of the organisation's country profiles (28 countries covered); the organisation's communication strategy around the launch of the very first European Carers Day (on 6 October); the contributions to the EU consultations on the EU's Beating Cancer Plan, New Digital Education Action Plan, Child Guarantee, Social Pillar Action Plan, the EXPH opinion on resilient care systems in times of COVID, Eurocarers (online) in-country policy dialogue and the first Portuguese National Meeting of carers "The Role of Informal Caregivers in Society", as well as the contributions to the WHO Webinar on Engaging Eurocarers' communities in the well-being of the health and care workforce or the International Conference on Integrated Care, among others.
- Measures to support Work-Life Balance for carers: the endorsement of the WLB Directive in 2019 and the introduction of new rights for carers (i.e., access to carer's leave and flexible working arrangements), following a long and arduous battle, does not give an unconditional assurance of adequate implementation across Member States. They have therefore continued to work

with the organisation's members and partners to support and monitor the transposition of the Directive. This is reflected in Eurocarers' Position paper on the implementation of the Work-Life Balance Directive, which emphasises that, while the legislation in place in a huge majority of EU Member States already complies with the requirements of the Directive, existing benefits and entitlements are very often provided at a minimal level and on the basis of a too narrow-focused definition and strict eligibility criteria – thereby excluding numerous carers.

- ICT-based solutions for care, including through an updated version of Eurocarers' policy briefing on Information & Communication Technology (ICT) for informal carers, the organisation's contribution to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovation Training Network ENTWINE, Eurocarers' participation in the recently relaunched eHealth stakeholder group (DG CONNECT), the organisation's continuous commitments as part of the EIPAH, as well as the organisation's ongoing Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 projects on ICT-based solutions for care.
- Youth and young carers, through the work and meeting of the Eurocarers' Young Carers Working Group (19 February), the organisation's position papers and contributions to the EU consultations on the Child Guarantee and EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child, the preparation of the International Young Carers Conference (to be held online in May 2021) as well as Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 projects.
- Integrated care and age-friendly societies through Eurocarers research projects (Horizon 2020, EaSI and Erasmus+).
- Carers' social exclusion and poverty, through Eurocarers' online survey on the impact of COVID-19 on carers, the organisation's contribution to the EU consultation on the Action Plan for the implementation of the EU Pillar of Social Rights, continuous collaboration with EAPN as well as Eurocarers' work on access to employment and recognition of skills for carers (including through structural funds).
- Informal care in a health context and health promotion / disease prevention targeted at carers via Eurocarers' collaboration with the cancer sector and the World Health Organisation (among others). and
- The gender dimension of informal care, through Eurocarers' continuous work with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and the organisation's contributions to the work around the new EU Gender Strategy and the EP report on the gender perspective in the COVID-19 crisis and post-crisis period.

4.7. European Microfinance Network – Microfinance for social and financial inclusion in Europe



'Microfinance in Europe is a clear and relevant tool to reduce social & financial exclusion and the dynamism of the sector supports a growing number of individuals and microenterprises thanks to the combined offer of both financial (microcredit, micro insurance, etc.) and non-financial services (training, mentoring, etc.).'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0130
Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Microcredit
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Media; • Others (Microfinance Providers: non-banking financial institutions and banks).
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with European institutions to provide input on the implementation of current & future EU tools supporting the sector through policy notes, meetings with policymakers, and participation in several committees & expert groups (e.g., GECES, Code SG). This advocacy was complemented by participating in forums like the Social Economy Intergroup & Social Economy Europe. • EMN enabled members' national advocacy, notably by updating & maintaining a top-level regulatory mapping report, factsheets & toolkits. • Collaboration with MFC. • Development of capacity building & peer learning activities to reinforce members' skills & opportunities. • EMN research focused on the evolution & impact of the sector.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	25 countries
Coordinator	European Microfinance Network aisbl
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 411 937.82
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	www.european-microfinance.org

Socioeconomic context: Microfinance remains a key instrument to address current socio-economic challenges. However, it is diverse in Europe and not universally supported, despite aligning strongly with policymaker objectives. EMN focuses its activities on providing common ground, coordination, and push for national-level

favourable regulation as well as for enhanced funding for microfinance institutions. Through its actions, EMN strengthens the whole sector to give a growing number of people (especially women, youth & seniors, rural populations, migrants & ethnic minorities) an inclusive road to entrepreneurship.

Aims of the project/organisation: The aim of this action was based on four main goals:

1. Support and ensure sound implementation of EU policies in the relevant areas;
2. Reinforce the capacity of EMN's members through a platform for the exchange of good practices and raising awareness on relevant EU policies;
3. Voice the concerns and expectations of organisations facilitating access to finance to entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups;
4. Provide research on developments in the sector.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The EMN claims that the social and economic crisis in Europe and the long-term objectives for inclusive entrepreneurship, microenterprise development and reducing poverty make microfinance a key tool for the future. The microfinance sector in Europe is still very heterogeneous, with a few national champions emerging. The sector still faces legal and political obstacles (many identified in EMN's legislative mapping reports and analysis) but has become a growing sector of activity in Europe. EMN has proven that the sector plays a fundamental role in providing an inclusive response to the emerging socio-economic situation and that microfinance is very needed to create opportunities for a growing number of people not yet being adequately served by the financial sector in Europe and, more recently, in particular vulnerable groups and micro-entrepreneurs impacted by the current pandemic.

Microfinance in Europe is a clear and relevant tool to reduce social & financial exclusion, and the dynamism of the sector supports a growing number of individuals and microenterprises thanks to the combined offer of both financial (microcredit, micro insurance, etc.) and non-financial services (training, mentoring, etc.). The microfinance sector has been steadily growing over recent years (gross microloan portfolio outstanding over EUR 3.7bn in 2019 [+15% from 2018] with 1.2m active borrowers [+14%]), showing that demand is still high throughout Europe. There are both external factors (rising unemployment, deindustrialisation, the growing interest in self-employment, the withdrawal of banks, digital disruption, and automation) and internal factors (better-structured offers, institutional recognition, professionalism) in the sector. Nevertheless, the coverage of microfinance in Europe is still patchy, and the sector still has substantial growth opportunities before it fully serves the market.

In order to further enhance the development of the sector and its impact, several questions need to be considered by stakeholders all over Europe:

- Are there ways to build systems that can mitigate the estimated EUR 12.9bn financing gap for microfinance?
- Will microfinance providers remain supported in the future of EU policy, with a specific focus on the social economy? Will InvestEU contain the right tools? Will ESF+?
- Could microfinance be a more effective policy tool in some areas where there is currently little link between the policymakers and microcredit (e.g., in neighbouring countries, developing countries, via DG NEAR & DG DEVCO)?
- Will EU programmes be equally effective when the EU diversifies its implementing partners? The EIF built up a lot of institutional experience on microfinance, is there a risk that other implementing partners miss an opportunity to work with microfinance due to a lack of familiarity?

- Are EU de-centralised programmes (ESF, ERDF, etc.) using the potential of microfinance to achieve their policy objectives?
- How could the different regulatory frameworks at the national level be better adapted to the development of the sector? Can EMN's mapping report help catalyse upward convergence?
- How can the sector provide better and more adapted services to underserved populations?

The key achievements of the action are the following:

- EMN's advocacy activities focused on feedback on EU policymaking, on ongoing and upcoming initiatives and policies in the future multiannual financial framework (with special attention to InvestEU & ESF+). Specific attention went to responding to stakeholders' needs in response to COVID-19 & supporting EMN members' national advocacy efforts.
- Ongoing collaboration with peer network MFC results in a clear voice on microfinance vis-à-vis EU institutions. Both networks are committed to such continued and close collaboration.
- "Microfinance in Europe: Survey Report" compiled thanks to the participation of 143 institutions from 19 countries. This is a fundamental tool to assess the developments of the sector and inform policymakers and captures data for 2018-2019 with a chapter on early 2020 at the start of the COVID-19 crisis. The report reflects a steady growth of the microfinance sector over the past few years and highlights the dynamism of the sector that supports a growing number of individuals & microenterprises. It also shows that opportunity remains for substantial growth before fully serving the market.
- EMN has diversified its funding for sustainability through additional partnerships. Of note, a privately obtained investor's grant to support the resilience of MFIs and clients during the pandemic: 6 MFIs received technical assistance in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Further, EMN via EaSI TA implemented 13 events (574 participants), facilitated tailored training for 3 MFIs, & 20 questions were answered through a dedicated Helpdesk.

Identification of potential good practices: EMN builds up its own expertise in capacity building and, while it does not deploy its own teams in training implementation, consultancy, or research, it leads and coordinates opportunities with members. EMN considers that the main role in increasing the institutional capacity of their members is to facilitate the knowledge exchange among the MFIs from different countries (mainly from the EU Members States). Knowledge "from the ground" is abundant within the sector, but it is important that those experiences are shared around the sector.

Policy evidence generated by the project: EMN prioritises its role as an advocate for the sector, identifying concerns amongst its membership and relaying those in a constructive way to the relevant policymakers.

- At the EU level, the most prominent counterpart for this is the European Commission, with DG EMPL in particular. Additionally, EMN meets with the EIB, and the EIF as their implementation of the EU budget also benefits from such feedback and discussions. In 2020, EMN had nine dedicated, in-depth meetings with such EU institutions.
- EMN is also represented in the GECES Expert Group on Social Economy and Social Enterprises and became an active member of Social Economy Europe in 2020, endorsing the work it does to promote the Social Economy policy agenda. EMN is also an active contributor to the ongoing Microfinance Code of Good Conduct steering group.

- EMN attends the more general forums that EU bodies organise to enable stakeholder dialogue in order to represent the microfinance sector. EMN participated in 10 events organised by EU institutions on topics of social and inclusive entrepreneurship, microfinance, social economy and COVID-19, and EU policy in these areas.
- EMN also participated in and / or implemented 13 joint actions and awareness-raising events with peer networks and organisations.
- EMN sent out five policy briefings to members to keep them informed on ongoing advocacy matters

Aside from in-person representation, EMN also formally develops supporting documentation (policy notes) that set out the policy proposals from the sector in a convenient format to interface with the policymaking process. In 2020, EMN completed the following support documents:

1. Joint EMN-MFC response to the Consultation on the renewed sustainable finance strategy in July 2020;
2. Joint EMN-MFC response to the Consultation on consumer credit in October 2020;
3. Joint EMN-MFC response to the Consultation on Pact for Skills in October 2020;
4. Joint EMN-MFC response to the Consultation on migrant inclusion in October 2020;
5. Joint EMN-MFC response to the Consultation on EU SDGs indicators set review in November 2020;
6. Joint EMN-MFC response to the Consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights in November 2020;
7. Ongoing feedback to DG EMPL about the actions implemented by MFIs to face the COVID-19 economic and social effects;
8. Ongoing feedback to DG EMPL about the measures taken by National Governments of MS to support MFIs and their clients during the COVID-19 crisis.

Transnational dimension: EMN's competitive advantage is its pan-European perspective on the sector, direct access to MFIs and its constructive partnership with the European Commission. Through the action, EMN builds closer and stronger relations with EU institutions, addressing policymakers, regulators, and funders in order to lobby for favourable policies for the development of the sector. EMN works towards improving the European regulatory framework for microfinance by influencing policy. EMN supports members by advocating for change and improvements in the national microfinance context based on the comparison with the frameworks in other countries and acts as a conduit of information on national and international policy and advocacy.

New partnerships created: EMN continues to be an active and developing network. The involvement of the members in EMN activities remains satisfactory, with 45 % of attendance during the online annual General Assembly. Likewise, despite difficulties posed by the pandemic, members are active and involved in working groups (4 groups involving 16 member organisations over 8 direct and multiple indirect meetings), and events (23 local EMD actions) etc. Members continue to contribute to knowledge-sharing activities through webinars, good practice notes and national reports for EMN publications. By the end of 2020, EMN counted 4 new members from 4 different countries and had overall 98 members in 25 countries.

Dissemination strategy: Next to numerous policy documents (indicated in the policy evidence section), the EMN had an active outreach programme, including:

- The online 17th EMN Annual Conference was a significant event for the exchange of information and peer learning. The agenda included many EU relevant topics with a strong COVID-19 slant in order to highlight „working together in the new normal". Nine sessions took place with interventions from EU policymakers, stakeholders and sector experts.
- Three good practice webinars and 2 notes published; one synthesis overview of measures implemented due to COVID-19.
- EMN working groups continued to be spaces for member exchanges despite the challenges to meet up.
- They also organised the 6th European Microfinance Day, including an online central event. The EMD went virtual in 2020 due to the pandemic. Despite the difficulties this raised, 14 EMN and MFC members from 12 European countries joined this 6th edition, organising 23 different local activities, including video clips promoting microfinance, webinars on aspects of entrepreneurship, and showcasing client successes. Additionally, a central event was organised online and brought together 63 attendees during a webinar. The event was opened by a European Commission representative and featured a high-level panel discussion on ensuring access to finance for entrepreneurs during COVID-19. The event was rounded off with a pre-recorded video ceremony for microfinance practitioners to celebrate their certification on the European Code of Good Conduct.

European added value: EMN is well-positioned to represent the interests of its members and the wider sector at the EU level and has 98 member organisations. More than 50 % of members are in direct contact with vulnerable segments of the population and actively contribute to and benefit from the network's actions fostering networking and exchange of good practices among organisations from different EU countries. Such pan-European scope would not be possible with the EU support.

Sustainability measures: In 2021, EMN will further build on its advocacy initiatives in the following key areas:

- EMN will continue to develop the strength of its Advocacy Committee to ensure frequent high-quality exchanges between members on their policy agendas.
- EMN will deepen its exchange with other actors representing social finance within the broader context of the social economy to constructively contribute to the rising EU policy initiatives focused on the social economy. It will leverage its relationships within Social Economy Europe and participate in the SE Intergroup when possible.
- EMN will continue to respond to the evolving needs of the sector, seeking diverse ways to represent them. For example, responding to market needs in the pandemic, responding to increased digitalisation, and topics such as increased demographic challenges. Whether this requires the development of new relationships with different policymakers will be explored.
- EMN will continue to grow the wealth of advocacy, research, and communication tools that its members can leverage in their initiatives, reducing the need for duplication.
- EMN will maintain its strong partnership with DG EMPL, EIB, EIF, and other partners, paying specific attention to future implementing partners during the next MFF & the development of the SE Action Plan.
- EMN will continue to collect and improve data and research on developments in the sector, maximising efficiencies, and synergies with other data initiatives such as ATLAS. EMN will continue to monitor emerging policy issues of specific interest to members.

Horizontal objectives: EMN envisions a society in which all those who are financially and socially excluded have access to the full range of financial and complementary support services, empowering them to start new ventures, consolidate existing businesses and finance personal needs that improve their lives. EMN organises its activities in an efficient and cost-effective manner. In order to do this and to develop and maintain a sustainable and diversified funding base, EMN also gets involved in the elaboration, coordination and / or implementation of other projects and services, thus ensuring that the total costs of delivering its core activities are covered.

EMN's capacity building action focuses on key topics to reinforce the institutional integrity of its members, such as growth, sustainability, good governance, quality, research and also the transparency of MFIs to increase the impact of microfinance in Europe. EMN decentralises the organisation and the execution of its activities as much as possible through its membership by encouraging and facilitating local and regional collaboration and by forming working groups in which members can actively participate and can offer their input into EMN's activities.

4.8. EUROCITIES – EaSI Programme – ‘Inclusive cities for All: Social rights in my city’



‘Eurocities fostered sharing of know-how and good practices among city experts by engaging them in peer learning, which has proven to be key to building the capacity of cities to respond quickly to this crisis.’

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0023
Policy area	Social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	Active inclusion; Housing exclusion and homelessness;
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Employment services; • Social partners; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Media.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions and recommendations to feed EU policy making; • Bridge-building actions between EU level and national actors; • Awareness-raising and dissemination; • Network organisation and management.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	EUROCITIES asbl

Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 521 851.62
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://inclusivecities4all.eu/

Socioeconomic context: EUROCITIES' action aims at reducing poverty and achieving social inclusion for all people in Europe by building capacity and empowering cities to respond to social challenges and rising inequalities. The work programme helps to connect local and EU policies and support multi-level governance by empowering cities to continue working in partnership with regional, national authorities and EU institutions for effective implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU 2020 Strategy and the European Disability Strategy. The SDGs are a horizontal theme in the work programme, with the view to support cities to create synergies with the EPSR.

The political commitment of city policymakers in the form of pledges to the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights boosts the uptake of EU social policies at a local level. By engaging in the political initiative 'Inclusive cities for all: Social Rights in my city', cities can take the lead in EPSR implementation. The organisation will also build cities' capacity to engage in EU policy making and to contribute with evidence on emerging social trends, feeding EU policy developments for an inclusive Europe.

Aims of the project/organisation: Eurocities' strategic objective for 2020 was to continue engaging the local level in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights by further building on the political initiative "Inclusive Cities for all: Social Rights in my city" and on their mutual learning programme for cities.

Eurocities stepped up during the spring lockdown to respond to the crisis and continued to do so until the end of the year, focusing on the following priorities:

- Boosting Eurocities' political campaign "Inclusive Cities for all: Social Rights in my city" for cities to take concrete actions to implement the EPSR.
- Continuing Eurocities' mutual learning programme for cities' implementation of EPSR principles, resulting in concrete policy changes at a local level.
- Raising awareness on the European Semester to help cities to engage in the process.
- Supporting cities to fight discrimination and facilitate the inclusion of Roma people.
- Supporting cities to develop an integrated socio-economic inclusion of migrants and refugees.
- Supporting cities to develop inclusive labour markets for vulnerable people.
- Supporting cities to create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities.
- Supporting cities to implement integrated services for the well-being of older people.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Eurocities implemented under the EaSI work programme various online city dialogues with the aim to strengthen cities' capacity to address the emerging social challenges posed by the crisis, in addition to the originally planned mutual learning and high-level events. They also tailored some of the activities to provide extra policy inputs to DG EMPL on the Child Guarantee and the Homelessness initiative as agreed during the year.

The key messages of this action are provided below:

1. Cities are seeing a dramatic increase in demand for social support from new groups severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Poverty is rising rapidly in cities, with new

groups of people at risk of poverty – the ‘new urban poor’. More people are having financial difficulties due to job loss and drops in income and are at risk of losing their home. Undocumented migrants, who had been active in the informal economy, are now coming forward to ask cities for help. Cities are seeing a significant rise in the number of people seeking food aid and basic material assistance. Increased demand for social support from new groups experiencing vulnerability comes especially from families with children and older people. There is a visible impact of the crisis on high unemployment, precarious housing, loneliness and mental health impact, risk of ‘losing touch’ with youth, especially those in transition from pre-school to primary to secondary and from school to work. The crisis has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. Vulnerable people such as the homeless, older people, Roma, people with disabilities, victims of gender-based violence, migrants and refugees, have become even more vulnerable. Moving many essential services online, including education and training, has widened the digital divide, especially affecting children in poverty. Cities are seeing that, even after lockdowns are lifted, many children in need do not return to school, especially those from the most vulnerable groups, and they risk missing a school year or possibly dropping out of school completely. Territorial inequalities are also deepening, with families living in the most deprived urban areas being the most severely affected and at the highest risk of social exclusion and isolation.

2. Cities have quickly put in place urgent support measures at a local level that have proven critical to complement national measures and cover gaps in national welfare policies. Cities have quickly readjusted local priorities in light of the pandemic to help people in need, save jobs and meet the urgent social needs at a local level. As presented in the Eurocities’ mappings of city policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis, many cities have set up new and extra services to provide tailored support to the most vulnerable people, such as: extending healthcare services, food aid delivery to families in need, extending shelter capacities for homeless and setting up new emergency housing by repurposing public (or even private) buildings, support for home-schooling, online counselling and support, and more. At the same time, cities ensured the continuity of essential services and have quickly digitalised most social, healthcare and employment services (boosting online skills training) while innovating with new solutions for e-inclusion. Furthermore, cities have reallocated municipal budgets to take proactive measures to mitigate the negative consequences of the crisis by offering financial aid to families in needs, SMEs, self-employed, tax breaks and loan guarantees, banning evictions and freezing rent payments for tenants in municipal public housing, creating new jobs through municipal works and setting up online skills training courses, among others.

3. Cities play a key role in ensuring a fair, inclusive and sustainable recovery in Europe but need more support for local-level social investment. Cities are the engines of Europe's regions in terms of economic development and social progress. As the level of government closest to people, cities are best placed to connect citizens to the EU and ensure their urgent needs get a European response. The pandemic has shown how essential healthcare, social infrastructure and public social services at a local level are for our society. However, the recovery will require an unprecedented level of social investment in local services and infrastructure that cannot be done by cities alone. Cities have been able to respond promptly to the pandemic crisis thanks to their investment in public social services and infrastructure. However, this level of investment is at risk given the strained municipal budgets due to increasing demand for social services and emergency support coupled with dramatically falling revenue from taxation and tourism. It is thus essential to ensure that the EU recovery places social investments at the core and channels resources where most needed, at a local level.

Identification of potential good practices: Eurocities fostered sharing of know-how and good practices among city experts and engaging them in peer learning, which has proven to be key to building the capacity of cities to respond quickly to this crisis. Right at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the city of Milan was one of the most affected cities; thanks to Eurocities SAF activities, the city shared how they adapted their social services in the new context. This example helped other cities to be better prepared to contain the virus and adapt their own services. Showing of solidarity among cities continued throughout the 2020 city dialogues Eurocities held as cities shared know-how and recent experiences on which policy responses they put in place to mitigate social consequences of the crisis and how they plan for a social recovery, inspiring other cities to follow the good practice examples. The number of cities attending the EUROCITIES EaSI activities has doubled, and the number of participants nearly tripled, reaching out to many more cities in the Eastern part of Europe. Moving the organisation's mutual learning and policy transfers online has brought an added value to developing innovative approaches to mitigate the social impacts of the crisis in a timely manner to many cities. This in turn has brought local policymakers in direct contact with EU policymakers and facilitated a constructive dialogue around recovery solutions for different local contexts.

Policy evidence generated by the project: Eurocities produced multiple reports, briefs and mappings supported by the EaSI grant:

- EPSR Principle 17 [report](#) – Inclusion of people with disabilities;
- EPSR Principle 19 [report](#) – Housing and assistance for the homeless (2019 work programme);
- IV Integrating Cities [report](#);
- Child Poverty [report](#);
- [Statement](#) on Social Europe;
- Contribution to Reinforcing Youth Guarantee;
- Policy [brief](#) on the social dimension of NGEU and MFF;
- Policy [brief](#) on EU financial support to fight COVID-19;
- Policy [brief](#) on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD);
- [Overview](#) city measures to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID-19;
- [Overview](#) city social measures to respond to COVID-19;
- Cities' policy [responses](#) to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the integration of migrants and refugees;
- Policy [brief](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on women;
- A [video](#): Eurocities – Lyon puts Housing First.

Transnational dimension: Eurocities involve 150 European cities in their work programme activities in a participative and co-creative manner, to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders at local, national and European levels and to test innovative solutions tackling rising inequalities.

New partnerships created: Eurocities collected 30 new city pledges in 2020, reaching a total of 63 city pledges from 45 cities representing over 51 million citizens and totalling an investment of over EUR 14.5 billion from municipal budgets.

Dissemination strategy: All their consultations, publications and reports are published on the Eurocities [website](#), including the updated and the migration-specific [website](#). These websites are available for both Eurocities' members (city policymakers) and the public (EU-level policymakers, relevant stakeholders, national, regional and other policymakers and the media). Eurocities members and selected stakeholders receive targeted communications via email when a specific report or publication is available. In many cases (e.g., EPSR reports, contributions to EU consultations), Eurocities members are an active part of the process of the production

of these publications / reports via online surveys, consultations, etc.; therefore, they also actively engage in their dissemination.

In 2020, Eurocities have continued to distribute their publications digitally. Hardcopies of 2020 publications will be sent to Eurocities' members by post during 2021. Eurocities' videos are hosted in the Eurocities YouTube channel and extensively disseminated via news articles on Eurocities' website, email communications and other means (e.g., sent as preparatory documents for their mutual learning activities and broadcasted during their online events).

European added value: The number of cities attending the EUROCITIES EaSI activities has doubled, and the number of participants nearly tripled, reaching out to many more cities in the Eastern part of Europe. Moving Eurocities' mutual learning and policy transfers online has brought an added value to developing innovative approaches to mitigate the social impacts of the crisis in a timely manner to many cities. This in turn has brought local policy makers in direct contact with EU policymakers and facilitated a constructive dialogue around recovery solutions for different local contexts.

Sustainability measures: In 2021, Eurocities will build on the work done in 2020 and will step up actions with cities around three key priorities of the Social Affairs Forum in 2021:

1. Building Back Fairer Together: Eurocities will focus on building the capacity of cities for inclusive recovery post-COVID-19 to reduce poverty and inequalities in the cities and promote equal opportunities for all people in cities, especially for the most vulnerable groups such as children, young people, older people, migrants and refugees, Roma, etc. Eurocities will continue and step up their contribution to the European Pillar of Social Rights action plan through Eurocities' campaign 'InclusiveCities4All' to bring a strong political message from cities at the EU Social Summit in Porto. Eurocities will organise a Cities' Social Summit, the day before the Porto Summit, to bring mayors and deputy mayors in direct dialogue with EU leaders on how to strengthen the social dimension in the EU recovery and the EU Green Deal while pushing forward with the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Eurocities will also work closely with the Roundtable of city directors of social services on building resilience and adapting social services for recovery post-COVID and putting in place concrete local measures to contribute to social policy objectives of the EPSR action plan. Eurocities will continue and strengthen their work to support inclusive labour markets in cities while mitigating the impact of the crisis and tapping into the new opportunities for green and digital jobs and skills. Eurocities will focus on tackling rising unemployment, especially youth unemployment, facilitating Local Pacts for Employment with a focus on quality jobs, decent working conditions for all, including on platform work.

2. A Home for Everyone: Eurocities plan to focus on affordable housing and tackling homelessness. With the aim to ensure affordable housing for all, Eurocities will exchange among cities and with EU policymakers on strategies to facilitate and build a long-term investment for affordable housing. Eurocities will continue working with the European Parliament to better reflect the reality of affordability of housing in the European Semester and in other EU policies. Eurocities will also focus on the opportunities within the Renovation Wave and energy poverty. Eurocities will also step up their work on reducing homelessness in the cities. Will build the capacity of cities through mutual learning and policy transfer to develop an integrated approach combining housing support (e.g., Housing First) with social care and health services and active inclusion (access to work or training). As such, Eurocities contribute to the

new EU initiative on fighting homelessness with policy inputs from cities to the EU recommendations and toolkit.

3. Welcoming Everyone in the Cities: Eurocities will focus on improving local services for managing diversity and social cohesion in cities through integration and social inclusion of migrants and people with migrant or ethnic minority backgrounds, Roma inclusion, fighting discrimination and racism through positive narratives, fighting child poverty, shaping age-friendly services, integrating health and social care services, better accessibility, and developing territorial approaches to improve the quality of life in the most deprived urban neighbourhoods. Eurocities will build on the good work they started in 2020 on child poverty to strengthen mutual learning among cities on child poverty strategies and support to children in need, with a focus on children in migration. Eurocities will contribute with policy inputs from cities to the shaping and delivery of the EU Child Guarantee and the EU strategy on children's rights. To do so, Eurocities will organise a high-level event to launch a political dialogue between city and EU leaders on how to fight child poverty and how to prioritise investing in children. Eurocities will also continue their work with cities towards Roma inclusion. In 2021, Eurocities aim to build the capacity of cities to become engaged in the national policy processes for shaping the new National Strategies for Roma inclusion under the new EU Roma Framework 2021-2030, to ensure that the local needs of Roma communities are well addressed in national strategies. Eurocities will also organise mutual learning on cities' measures to tackle school dropout among Roma children and another mutual learning focusing on policy solutions to tackle homelessness among EU-mobile citizens, many of whom are Roma. Eurocities will also continue to work on supporting vulnerable groups focusing on older people and people with disabilities. Eurocities will do so through their mutual learning activities for cities to transfer policies and replicate good practices and innovative approaches to support the inclusion of older people in society and their well-being through better service integration of healthcare, long-term and social care services in cities. Eurocities will engage cities in formulating policy inputs to the EU Green Paper on Ageing. At the same time, Eurocities will continue to improve accessibility in cities by working in a cross-cutting way between social services and mobility and other services, and contributing to the dissemination, raising awareness of and then implementation of the new EU Disability Strategy. Eurocities will design all the mutual learning activities focusing on transfer and upscale of innovative policies implementing the EPSR principles at a local level. Eurocities will continue to build the capacity of city practitioners to transfer elements from different local contexts to improve the access and quality of social services to all people.

Horizontal objectives: Eurocities, in all of their actions, has also focused on horizontal issues such as youth employment, long-term unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, equality between women and men, sustainable employment, adequate and decent social protection and discrimination. Such horizontal objectives were addressed through:

- Political commitments to address the issues at a local level through a political campaign (InclusiveCities4All), high-level events, political debates and active engagement of politicians at the online events (participation of politicians during the digital mutual learning activities).
- Capacity building of cities through city dialogues, webinars, digital mutual learning activities and information sessions during Working Group meetings.

4.9. Fundacja Microfinance Centre – Financial inclusion for inclusive growth in Europe II



MICROFINANCE CENTRE

'The COVID-19 crisis confirmed that MFC, thanks to its culture and structure is able to respond quickly to members and broadly the sector needs, re-adjust its plans and activities.'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0194
Policy area	Social economy
Policy sub-area	Microcredit
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Non-governmental organisations; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Others (microfinance institutions, microfinance associations).
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with international organisations; • The organisation of a digitalisation academy webinars; • Developing research / case studies / reports papers; • Supporting national working groups related to inclusive finance agenda; • Co-organised the 6th Microfinance Day; • Organised Borrow Wisely Campaign; • Conducted three webinars to present good practice solutions introduced by various institutions during COVID-19 lockdowns; • Promoting the European Code of Good Conduct.
Implementation country (-ies)	Poland
Participating countries	-
Coordinator	Fundacja Microfinance Centre
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 205 130.14
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://mfc.org.pl/

Socioeconomic context: MFC's programme "Financial inclusion for inclusive growth in Europe II" is designed to galvanise EU practitioners and policymakers into action to ensure wider and deeper financial inclusion of all EU citizens. In particular, the idea is to increase awareness on current policies and programmes existing in the EU that support improvements in providing finance to various excluded groups as well as encourage necessary modifications in legal and regulatory frameworks for inclusive finance. Another important aspect of the "Financial inclusion for inclusive growth in Europe II" programme is to develop the capacity of the MFC members and non-members active in overcoming access to financial barriers and providing finance to micro-entrepreneurs and social enterprises.

Aims of the project/organisation: The overall objective of the organisation is to raise awareness of the broader aspect of access to finance (such as the role of the financial sector in providing services to excluded groups, financial literacy, policy and adequate infrastructure etc.). The project was structured around four pillars with additional strategic objectives augmenting each of the strategic pillars:

1. Support the Commission in its outreach objectives at the EU, national and local level with the aim of ensuring the implementation of European policies in the relevant area.
2. Reinforce the capacity of the MFC members.
3. Voice the concerns and expectations of organisations facilitating access to finance to entrepreneurs from disadvantaged groups.
4. Provide data on developments and trends in the sector.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: The MFC continued to engage in a very constructive dialogue with the European Commission to provide feedback on the EU microfinance support instruments and discuss the current obstacles to sector development, standards-setting (EU Code), as well as the sector's future. Despite numerous challenges caused by COVID-19, MFC was able to respond to sector needs which, among others, resulted in a research paper on the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the microfinance sector in Europe, which included several recommendations for different stakeholders, three webinars on the topic.

The project team indicates that these were the main takeaways from the action:

1. 2020 confirmed that digitalisation is one of the key issues among MFC members in the region. Although the COVID-19 crisis did not cause any specific increase in digitalisation in the sector, it clearly proves that those institutions which digitalised or are in the process of digitalisation were better prepared to face the crisis. Even institutions which only planned certain digital solutions in 2020 speed up their work and, sometimes even without proper testing, implemented them in full scale. To better assist MFIs, MFC increased its efforts in supporting the sector through conducting 23 online meetings / webinars on basic aspects related to digitalisation (4 planned initially). The challenge related to securing funding for innovative solutions still remains and may well be even bigger in 2021.
2. Advocacy efforts on the national level seem to be one of the key needs recognised by MFIs, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the need to advocate / communicate with national policymakers and regulators on a national level became a must. MFC supports those efforts not only by supporting existing national working groups but by facilitating the experience sharing across the countries.
3. COVID-19 lockdown impact – despite numerous support programmes developed and implemented by national governments to support business, the most vulnerable – micro-entrepreneurs, self-employed, usually received little support or were not able to access the support at all.

Identification of potential good practices: The project team noticed that the national working groups seem to be a good way to boost and / or initiate discussions on the country level among microfinance practitioners. This became obvious during the lockdowns when governments started introducing various measures, and dialogue with local regulators was essential.

The successful effort of the MFC in promoting active involvement with migrant entrepreneurship projects was noted by DG HOME. The project team was asked to provide recommendations for designing new access to finance programmes for

migrant entrepreneurs. They drafted and submitted MFC recommendations to DG HOME in September 2020.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: With regard to the COVID-19 crisis, the MFC continued to respond to sector needs related to digitalisation to build the capacities of microfinance institution staff. These were very well received; MFC plans to continue this with some adjustments made based on the evaluation results (e.g., more participants, better promotion in terms of the calendar so people can book time in advance). In addition, there is a need to support microbusiness in their digitalisation journey – MFIs are well placed to support those efforts. However, the resources to do that have to be secured for microfinance institutions as do facilitation of experience and know-how.

The COVID-19 crisis confirmed that MFC, thanks to its culture and structure, is able to respond quickly to members and broadly the sector needs, and to re-adjust its plans and activities. The crisis showed that MFC capacity building efforts around digitalisation are very relevant, needed and should be continued.

Policy evidence generated by the project: The MFC developed the following research / case studies / reports papers:

- MFI digitalisation pathways. Monitoring progress in microfinance digital journeys;
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the microfinance sector in Europe.

Transnational dimension: The MFC works in cooperation with international organisations and networks, shares information with EC representatives through its mobile Brussels office (moved online due to lockdown). The management of MFC and EMN and staff regularly met (face-to-face and online meetings) to discuss plans and joint activities, including the MFC-EMN merger. The networks actively cooperated on two issues: advocacy (through Advocacy Think Tank) and research (through Research Think Tank), as well as joint promotion / communication of various activities, including European Microfinance Day.

In addition, the MFC continues to support four national working groups: Albania, Poland, Romania and Serbia to allow local members and other stakeholders to discuss important topics related to inclusive finance agenda and helped to establish the working group in North Macedonia.

New partnerships created: The MFC continuously supports and expands its network of national working groups. The initiative to establish and support national working groups is crucial and very much needed in many countries. In some countries, the groups have already functioned for three years and it is clear that they are very capable of communicating with regulators.

Dissemination strategy: The dissemination activities of the project were the following:

- The digitalisation webinars targeted practitioners primarily from EU and pre-accession countries. Information was available on the MFC website, communicated through mailing, social media as well as MFC partners.
- The country meeting in Romania targeted MFC members – microfinance practitioners primarily.
- The Borrow Wisely Campaign has been implemented by MFC members: microfinance institutions as well as country associations. The main target group was clients of microfinance institutions (microbusiness and farmers). Information about the Borrow Wisely Campaign has been communicated

mainly through social media (MFC and partners). There was also information on the MFC website.

- The 6th Microfinance Day targeted the EU policy and decision-makers and practitioners from the microfinance sector primarily. Information about the events was distributed through MFC and EMN contact lists and was available on websites and social media.
- The CEO library and talks that targeted mainly MFC members – CEOs and other leaders of microfinance institutions through mailing.
- During 2020, MFC had 196 communication activities related to various EU issues and news. This information reached microfinance practitioners, NGO representatives working in the field of microfinance, financial education, EU policy and decision-makers, experts and academics through mailings, posts on Facebook and Twitter and the MFC website.

European added value: The project aimed to make a difference at the EU level. It would not have been possible to carry out the project on such a large scale without the support provided by EaSI.

Sustainability measures: In the future, the MFC is committed to working on:

1. Strengthening national advocacy efforts through support of national working groups.
2. Monitoring the situation related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and if needed developing further recommendations.
3. Promoting green microfinance through mapping best practice, including MFI practices, investors' programmes.

Horizontal objectives: The project activities covered the horizontal topic of fighting against poverty and social exclusion. This was done through building capacities of microfinance institutions through, e.g., workshops, webinars, guidelines and tools developed. The microfinance institutions can more effectively serve often excluded groups from the traditional banking sector like microbusiness, migrants. Furthermore, the organisation promotes wise borrowing, the microfinance institutions educate its clients to avoid over-indebtedness.

4.10. European Social Network – 2020 European Social Network Annual Work Programme



'Social services across Europe are faced with the impact of serious current challenges such as ageing, migration, market pressure on housing costs, in parallel to the long-lasting consequences of the past socio-economic crisis. It is paramount to ensure that social services are adequately funded and sufficiently staffed to enable them to rise to these challenges.'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0057
Policy area	Social protection and social inclusion
Policy sub-area	Social Services of General Interest (SSGI) and social OMC
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC officials and MEPS; • National, regional and local authorities / policymakers; • Employment services; • Specialist bodies provided for under Union law; • Directors of social services and practitioners; • Non-governmental organisations and service user representatives; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • People using social services / representatives of care user groups; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions and recommendations to feed EU policy; • Bridge-building action between EU and national actors; • Awareness raising and dissemination; • Network development.
Implementation country (-ies)	EU Member States
Participating countries	Belgium
Coordinator	European Social Network (ESN)
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 918 374.91
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://www.esn-eu.org/

Socioeconomic context: The European Social Network (ESN) represents the perspective of public social services at European level. ESN foster both their members' understanding of European policy and ensures that European policy is informed by knowledge and evidence from the local level. To facilitate this, ESN creates platforms for exchange and mutual learning between members and the EU. Social services across Europe are faced with the impact of serious current challenges such as ageing, migration, market pressure on housing costs, in parallel to the long-lasting consequences of the past socio-economic crisis. It is vital to ensure that social services

are adequately funded and sufficiently staffed to enable them to rise to these challenges, which are likely to put further pressure on them in the future.

Aims of the project/organisation: In 2020, the ESN Annual Work Programme focused on four key areas:

- 1) Upholding people's social rights throughout the life-course
 - Implementing social rights through the EPSR
 - Procurement of long-term care (LTC) services for older people
 - Integrated care and support
 - Digitalisation and access to technology
- 2) Sustainability and adequacy of social services and welfare
 - Capacity building
 - Exchange of expertise
- 3) Engaging in European and international policy processes and funding
 - Building inclusive communities and societies
 - Sustainable social planning and inclusive housing
- 4) Network Development
 - Membership development and organisation
 - Membership engagement

Results, impacts and lessons learned: ESNs strategic actions and their results and impact for the 2020 Annual Work Programme were:

- Actions and recommendations to feed EU policymaking
 - ESN promoted the perspective of local social services and their actions in implementing both EU and international strategies and frameworks through the development of four policy-oriented reports. Specific to these were the crucial recommendations on the essential role of social services in the implementation of EU and international frameworks (SDG's and the EPSR), and the central role of social services in supporting vulnerable groups (digitalisation, children, adults' mental health and older people).
- Bridge-building action between EU and national actors
 - ESN ensured the ongoing capacity of its members to engage at EU level and to demonstrate how their work is directly linked to EU social policy priorities, such as EU2020, SIP, EPSR and the SDGs. ESN highlighted key policy principles in current EU policy frameworks and strategies of interest to our members linking them to EU funding programmes. ESN facilitated transfer of good practices and lessons learned between members by aiding multilateral exchanges through expert webinars.
- Awareness-raising and dissemination
 - Through 15 online events, ESN facilitated exchanges between local and European stakeholders and fostered the impact of ESN policy and practice outputs and promoted evidence-based practice from our members. The outputs of these events were disseminated through targeted communications and messaging with stakeholders in the European and international institutions as well as national stakeholders.
- Network organisation and management
 - ESN ensured that the Secretariat has the necessary support and capacity to facilitate engagement in EU level policy processes with members, meeting their needs, concerns and expectations. ESN membership continues to grow, while retaining current members. Further to this, members were consulted on a regular basis to ascertain their needs, concerns and expectations in terms of EU policy knowledge, mutual learning and capacity building. The ESN website has also been updated

further, making it more accessible and implemented work programmes through online meetings.

Identification of potential good practices: Recommendations of good practices from ESN activities include:

- **Social Services Quality:** promote a review of quality assurance principles based on a new definition of quality that focuses not only on access to services but also on outcomes, and the capacity of people to live an independent life in their communities.
- **Long-term care:** Ensure that quality services and quality of life for people using services is at the centre of the procurement process for long-term care services.
- **Integrated Care and Support for adults with mental health problems:** Though there is a commitment to ensure greater integration of health and social services to support adults with mental health issues in their communities, there are significant variations (within and between countries) in the nature and extent this is achieved in practice, hence it is key to promote good practice and advance this further.
- **EU Semester:** Advance towards common qualifications in social services to help address the recruitment gap in Europe, promote a care guarantee across all vulnerable populations, and a review the European quality framework in social services.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: Through events with members of the network and the European institutions, good practice examples were presented that could be implemented in other national contexts. This was to support the implementation of EU social policy principles at national level. ESN events on quality procurement of long-term care services, integrated support for adults with mental health problems, and digitalisation of social services exemplify this notion of transferability. Through these events, stakeholders gained valuable practical information to inform their practices in each specific context. Also, ESN collected and disseminated to members 16 innovative practices in the areas of long-term care, sustainable development, integrated care and support and digitalisation. These practices are accessible to all members in the [e-library](#)⁷¹.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: Technological innovation has become increasingly important in social service delivery in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and ESN continue to work to support the dissemination of good practices in this field, such as the use of data applications to make decisions to shift resources between services, updating systems for the provision of information or digital service applications, as well as remote assessment, consultation, and monitoring.

Policy evidence generated by the project: Despite the drawbacks of 2020, ESN delivered a series of actions to feed EU policymaking, including the following publications:

- [Investing in Social Services, Investing in Europe](#)⁷² – with 17 country profiles and recommendations for the EC and national governments;
- [Sustainable Development Agenda – The Role of Social Services](#)⁷³ – Policy briefing on the role of social services in the implementation of the SDG 11;

⁷¹ <https://www.esn-eu.org/practices>

⁷² [https://www.esn-eu.org/sites/default/files/2020-](https://www.esn-eu.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/ESN_European%20Semester%202021_Interactive_spread_compressed.pdf)

[11/ESN_European%20Semester%202021_Interactive_spread_compressed.pdf](https://www.esn-eu.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/PolicyBrief_SDG11_0.pdf)

⁷³ https://www.esn-eu.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/PolicyBrief_SDG11_0.pdf

- [Putting Quality First – Contracting for Long-term Care](#)⁷⁴ – assesses the quality of public procurement and contracting for long-term care;
- [Annual Review 2020](#)⁷⁵ – annual review of ESN activities, including the impact of COVID-19 on social service delivery and provision.

In addition, ESN acted as a bridge between the EU and local stakeholders through building knowledge on: the European Semester, the EPSR, and their links to the local-level social service delivery; integrated care and support of adults with mental health issues, linking to the EPSR and EU health strategy; procurement of quality long-term care for older people and the voluntary European Quality Framework.

New partnerships created: During this period, ESN has worked extensively with the impact of COVID-19 on social services together with the European Commission, in engagement with other EU networks. Also, as a follow-up to ESN proposals on social services quality frameworks launched at the end of 2019, and its work on long-term quality in 2020, ESN will conduct a round table with partners in the European Parliament on this same theme. The aim is to ensure progress in quality frameworks on national and European levels.

Dissemination strategy: ESN publications and activities were disseminated to the following target audiences:

- ESN Members;
- Public social services authorities and local, regional, and national policymakers;
- The European Commission and MEPs;
- NGO's and CSO's;
- Media.

The means used for dissemination were:

- [Website](#)⁷⁶ – all activities and publications are available on the ESN website;
- Members' area – members' only content, such as news regarding funding and EU policy monitoring, the members communications, resources from our events and practices;
- Twitter and LinkedIn – used to disseminate activities and promote publications;
- CRM – used to disseminate newsletters, members communications, targeted communications and press releases.
- Traditional mailings – for each publication, key messages are emailed to ESNs entire database through the publication of a newsletter article. Target audiences were emailed through 37 communications and recipients were segmented based on the following criteria: behaviour (ways of engagement), geographic (area), demographic (occupation / education) and psychographic (interests).

European added value: EU funding was instrumental in facilitating ESN platforms for exchange and peer learning between the local level, development of reports and organisation of events. These actions led to direct contact between representatives from national, regional and local levels. They have also allowed for exchange between European institutions and our members on EU policy frameworks and strategies. For example, through ESN's work on the European Semester they could benchmark national activities in implementing the EPSR for principles 11, 18 and 19. ESN also

⁷⁴ https://www.esn-eu.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Long%20Term%20Care_2021_Interactive.pdf

⁷⁵ https://www.esn-eu.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/ESN_Annual%20Review%202020_Interactive_compressed_0.pdf

⁷⁶ <https://www.esn-eu.org/>

raised awareness amongst members on EU policy objectives, highlighting means to implement these at local level. Furthermore, ESN has also promoted innovative approaches based on an assessment of the role digitisation can play to improve social services management and provision.

Horizontal objectives: ESN follows a structured process to address social issues of importance to our members and European institutions. Person-centred care is at the core of ESN's work and all outputs of this Annual Work Programme put the needs of vulnerable groups first. Inclusion of public social services are responsible for the provision of support for vulnerable people to improve their well-being and help them to become as autonomous as possible. This includes supporting families, homeless people, and adults with disabilities, children at risk of harm, migrants, and older people. ESN's approach to disseminating good practice and facilitating exchange with professionals ensures that this focus is adhered to, and that practitioners and people using services and carers are involved in the design and evaluation of services.

4.11. European Venture Philanthropy Association – Strengthening and supporting a European ecosystem for social enterprise finance



'A key result is an increased attention all over Europe to social investments - which is confirmed by the strong increase in speaking opportunities, the number of visits to our website, the high number of signatures of the new Charter of Investors for Impact.'

Call identification number	VP/2019/013
Grant identification number	VS/2020/0094
Policy area	Social Protection & Social Inclusion
Policy sub-area	Legal and regulatory framework for social economy
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National, regional and local authorities; • Non-governmental organisations; • Higher education institutions and research institutes; • Experts in evaluation and in impact assessment; • Media.
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchanges with relevant EU and multilateral authorities and EVPA members; • Policy webinars; • Policy briefs; • Policy reports; • Participation in the conferences; • EVPA membership survey; • Training academy courses; • An industry survey and results dissemination; • The database of the success stories; • Mapping of the Principles of the Charter of investors for impact and the steps of the EVPA frameworks.
Implementation country (-ies)	Belgium

Participating countries	-
Coordinator	European Venture Philanthropy Association
Partners	-
EU contribution in euro	(initial) 599 669.00
Project duration	1 January 2020-31 December 2020
Project/organisation website	https://evpa.eu.com/

Socioeconomic context: The EVPA believes that European societies need new and innovative models to tackle societal issues, social enterprises and social purpose organisations lack stable funding, capacity and partnerships to take up their own, ever-increasing challenges. One of the ways to address such issues is Venture Philanthropy and social investments.

Aims of the project/organisation: With this project, the EVPA aimed at:

1. supporting the Commission in its outreach activities at the EU, national and local level with the aim of ensuring the implementation of European policies in the area of social entrepreneurship;
2. reinforcing the capacity of EVPA members, including through offering a platform for the exchange of good practices and raising awareness on relevant EU policies;
3. voicing the concerns and expectations of organisations facilitating access to finance to (potential) entrepreneurs from disadvantaged and under-represented groups / social enterprises;
4. providing data / research on developments in the field and on priority topics.

Results, impacts and lessons learned: EVPA has executed its Annual Work Programme for 2020 in accordance with the four priorities identified by the European Commission in the quadrennial strategic plan linked to the FPA, in the area of European level networks active in the promotion of access to finance. In order to reach the objectives above, EVPA targeted a broad community – both geographically and in terms of specific target groups. Concretely, this focus translates into targeting our actions to social funding practitioners and policymakers while reaching out to other stakeholders such as academic institutions, social entrepreneurs, consultants, grant-making foundations, venture capitalists and financial institutions.

EVPA focused on the four defined objectives – with a strong level of activity and deliverables on all of them. A key result is increased attention all over Europe to social investments – which is confirmed by the strong increase in speaking opportunities, the number of visits to our website, the high number of signatures of the new Charter of Investors *for* Impact (i.e., 380 since its launch in November 2019), and the interest of new actors, such as the public sector and corporates.

Identification of potential good practices: EVPA observed an increase in the interest of EVPA members in public–private collaboration and receiving more technical and financial support from experts, mainly in translating EU procedures and funding opportunities and building their capacity to attract external funding for investments. EVPA invested considerable time in analysing the evolving needs of our community and how we can answer them, as well as connecting members with core EU policy developments. They published a series of best practices in public–private collaboration within different national impact investment ecosystems. These five case studies enhanced the knowledge of other practitioners on public–private initiatives as well as policymakers on the initiatives which need attention for scaling-up.

Transferability element(s) of the project/activities: The EVPA enlarged their focus of interest by looking at new initiatives undertaken by the European

Commission. They raised awareness on Just Transition, Climate Neutrality, and Social Inclusion, plus the Green Recovery and the European Pillar of Social Rights. Additionally, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, they closely followed the updates linked to the Next Generation EU and incorporated them into their activities.

Innovativeness of the project/activities: The EVPA addressed the gap between the demand and the supply of capital by focusing on the role of incubators and accelerators but also by continuing to collect data to show where the investments go and how they are done. In addition, they explored the way in which the private sector engages with the public sector at a municipal, regional and national level.

Policy evidence generated by the project: In 2020, EVPA launched the 7th edition of the EVPA Industry Survey. The report shows a wide range of aggregated statistics, covering key aspects of the strategies and practices of investing for impact. The EVPA published three industry survey infographics on their website:

1. "A Deep-Dive into Foundations and Engaged Grant-making Organisations";
2. "A Snapshot of European Investors *for* Impact";
3. "A Deep-Dive into Impact Funds".

Transnational dimension: EVPA worked closely with EU institutions to better represent the interest of its members by strengthening the links between EU policymakers and practitioners. Additionally, this partnership still represents fundamental support to all the research work carried out by the Knowledge Centre, including data collection to describe in-depth the sector in which we operate.

New partnerships created: In 2020, EVPA gained 35 new members, primarily in North-Western Europe but also in Southern Europe. The EVPA conducted a membership survey that helped to better understand members' needs and interests and therefore improve the effectiveness of venture philanthropy / social investment practitioners within EVPA's membership.

Dissemination strategy: The EVPA engaged its members and a wider community in various types of dissemination activities, such as training, events, publications, etc. The most notable are the following:

- **EU webinars.** Through 3 EU policy webinars, the EVPA raised awareness of 311 members and practitioners in the impact space about ESF+, the EU response to COVID-19 and the Just Transition.
- **EU news.** The EVPA produced three policy briefs on relevant EU policy initiatives related to social innovation. In addition, the EVPA continued to update their EU funding webpage to inform our members and social finance providers of EU funding opportunities.
- **Learning opportunities for members.** Through 31 exchanges with EVPA members, the EVPA informed them about EU funding opportunities for social finance providers. The EVPA also organised a workshop on "Leveraging EU Funding for Social Finance Providers" at EVPA's online annual conference in September 2020.
- **Training Academy.** The EVPA organised two online courses aiming to increase the skills and capacities of investors *for* and *with* impact: The Social Impact Management and Measurement course and the Crash Course on Venture Philanthropy and Social Investment.
- **Bridging the gap between supply and demand.** In partnership with the EBN and ART-ER (regional partner in Italy), EVPA organised an online reverse pitching session for the Italian market, bringing a European perspective to 38 participants.

- **Annual Report.** The EVPA launched their annual public report, highlighting EVPA's main activities and achievements in 2019, and therefore raising awareness of investing *for* impact space and attracting new actors to this space.
- **Awareness-raising.** EVPA staff represented the experiences and concerns of social investors at 10 different events. They also disseminated relevant policy practices and reports through online channels.
- **Investing for Impact Industry Survey.** This survey, based on data collected from 112 investors for impact, is a unique source of data to understand the sector's trends and is used to inform data-driven policymaking in Europe. The EVPA disseminated three infographics highlighting key insights, as well as an overview of two main types of investors *for* impact: foundations and engaged grant-makers and impact funds.
- **Investing for Impact Toolkit.** The EVPA published this toolkit as a guide for newcomers to the impact space and early-stage investors *for* impact. It includes a compilation of research materials developed by EVPA over the years.
- **Success stories.** The EVPA showcased new stories of successful social purpose organisations with innovative business models supported by investors *for* impact. The EVPA also released the documentary "Investing *for* Impact: Ordinary Work for Extraordinary People". In addition, they created the website Unitus Europe, sharing best practices on how investors *for* impact are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Research webinars.** Through two webinars, The EVPA shared findings and insights from our latest research projects (i.e., the report on incubators and accelerators; and the Investing *for* Impact toolkit) with 337 members, practitioners, academics and people interested in the ecosystem, also inviting six external experts to contribute to the discussion.
- **External publications.** In order to gather and disseminate knowledge, 63 research reports of relevance to the sector were uploaded to their External Library.

European added value: The added value of the EU support to EVPA is crucial in different ways. A first aspect is the increased credibility that EVPA and the social investment market receive because of the support and interest of the European Commission. A second aspect is how the support of the European Commission allows EVPA to increase its services to the sector and how it also incentivises EVPA to invest in better planning and reporting. A third aspect is the increased visibility of the work of investors *for* impact thanks to the involvement of EVPA in the initiatives led directly by the European Commission – such as the GECES.

Sustainability measures: The EVPA sees the need to support the growth of the sector in the future through investing in it on two fronts. First, they foresee the need to continue playing a crucial advisory role for the EC on the social impact investing ecosystem, providing more data and practical evidence for each policy area directly linked to the EU investing space and beyond, as many EU EVPA members are deploying their investments in developing countries. As such, it is important to invest in broadening our communication strategy, as well as reinforcing our advocacy work in order to bring the investors *for* impact narrative closer to the mainstream. Also, their activities will include more targeted activities, more networking and sharing opportunities through a stronger local presence and a stronger digital presence. The EVPA claims to further diversify their approach in policy work – as there is now a group of more experienced and well-informed practitioners, in a more mature stage of the market, whose policy needs and interests are different to those of newcomers.

The EVPA also sees an increased demand for better communication on public–private collaboration and co-investment opportunities at the EU level, which should be explained to practitioners in an even more concrete and clear language. It will therefore continue to showcase how practitioners have successfully implemented the venture philanthropy approach and how social enterprises have benefited from the financial and non-financial support provided by investors *for* impact. They will expand these interactions in live round tables and dialogues, enhancing direct collaboration among all the actors.

Horizontal objectives: In all the activities that EVPA showcases best practices and impact strategies (e.g., online gatherings, webinars, research projects, training, policy work, etc.), there is always a common denominator, which is to make the social finance sector more effective in addressing diverse societal challenges. The issues discussed include employment and youth unemployment, sustainability, migration, diversity, fighting against poverty and social exclusion.

Through EVPA activities, the members and other practitioners interested in learning and sharing were brought together to discuss, take the first steps towards cooperating to eventually come up with solutions for these issues. The variety of actors pulled together helped to draw attention to the importance of collaborating towards the same goal, across disciplines and across sectors.

5. Afterword

This report has provided a review of projects and organisations funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) that were completed in the period **1 May 2020 - 28 February 2021**. A total of 30 project and organisation fiches, which can be read as stand-alone documents, were produced by the research team and presented in the report.

Analysing and disseminating information about the results of supported projects and organisations form part of EaSI performance monitoring for 2014-2020. The programme's monitoring approach foresees biannual reports presenting projects and organisations supported by EaSI and its predecessor programme PROGRESS. This is the thirteenth such report. It follows the **first 12 issued between 2014 and 2020**.

It is expected that this report will be beneficial to public authorities of the Member States, civil society organisations and private actors in at least two ways. First, it will serve as guidance for public, private and civil society actors wishing to apply for EU funding in the future. Second, it will provide policymakers with ideas that can inform the design and implementation of new policy interventions in the policy areas covered.

In addition to these key aims, the results are expected to contribute to further EaSI monitoring and evaluation activities. The project and organisation fiches which have been developed will feed into preparing the EaSI Performance Monitoring Report for 2019-2020. Finally, the report team believes that the results will be useful for the evaluators of the programme.

6. Annex I – List of projects and organisations in this report

No. in the report	Title of the project/organisation	Funding source	EU contribution in euros (initial)	Website
Error! Reference source not found .	Action 'Promoting fair treatment of posted workers via increasing transnational cooperation'	EaSI-PROGRESS	122 166.87	https://promotingfairtreatment.eu
Error! Reference source not found .	ECMIN 3.0 – Workers' information and portal website on applicable working conditions	EaSI-PROGRESS	293 043.00	https://www.constructionworkers.eu/en
Error! Reference source not found .	CAREurope – Enhancing transnational administrative cooperation among social partners from EU and candidate countries and securing better information prospects for all posted workers in the care sector	EaSI-PROGRESS	165 424.90	www.careuropeworkers.com
Error! Reference source not found .	FAIR WORKING CONDITIONS – Access to fair working conditions for posted workers through sector-specific information and cooperation	EaSI-PROGRESS	433 789.93	
3.1.5	Con3Post -Posting of third country nationals: Mapping the trend in the construction sector	EaSI-PROGRESS	419 018.55	https://www.zrc-sazu.si/en
3.1.6	Tackling undeclared work in the construction sector (TUWIC)	EaSI-PROGRESS	243 296.67	https://www.cfdt-construction-bois.fr/
Error! Reference source not found .	RIAC - Regional Integration Accelerators	EaSI-PROGRESS	2 027 203.14	http://riac-project.eu
Error! Reference source not found .	ALMIT project - Acceleration of labour market integration of immigrants through mapping of skills and training	EaSI-PROGRESS	979 177.50	https://almit-project.eu
Error! Reference source not found .	The development of an adaptive, web-based assessment tool for evaluating the literacy, numeracy and digital skills levels of low-skilled/low-qualified adults in Turkey	EaSI-PROGRESS	260 665.00	https://onlinebeceri.com
Error! Reference source not found .	BASIC - Building Alternative Skills Innovative sChemes	EaSI-PROGRESS	353 567.10	https://www.easibasic.gr/en/home/

found				
3.2.5	Support for upskilling pathways in the Netherlands	EaSI-PROGRESS	271 363.50	
Error! Reference source not found	A Data-driven bridge towards ESCO using AI algorithms – AI4ESCO	EaSI-EURES	64 613.39	
3.3.2.	EURES: ESCO under Regulation (EU) 2016/568, Article 19	EaSI-EURES	100 000.00	
3.4.1.	SEFEA IMPACT	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	500 000.00	https://sefeaimpact.it/
3.4.2.	Building an open, pan-European pipeline of early-stage, investment-ready social enterprises with customised deal-by-deal support	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	700 000.00	www.fa-se.de/en/
3.4.3	SEED CAPITAL – FEIS	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	109 699.54	www.seedcapitalbizkaia.com
3.4.4	Increasing the number of quality impact investments into investment-ready early-stage social enterprises in Spain and Portugal	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	351 439.79	https://www.bolsasocial.com/
3.4.5	FSSE - Financing Small Social Enterprises	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	327 361.80	https://inco-group.co/
3.4.6	EaSI Transaction Cost Support Project	EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship	535 250.05	https://www.ship2b.org/en/
4.1.	The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) – 2019 Work Plan: Leaving no-one behind	EaSI-PROGRESS	976 160.16	https://www.feantsa.org/en
Error! Reference source not found	EUCLID Network – Empowering Social Enterprises for a vibrant social enterprise finance market 2021	EaSI-PROGRESS	256 025.00	https://euclidnetwork.eu/
Error! Reference source not found	CARITAS – Cares II Actions Reinforce the European Social Dimension	EaSI-PROGRESS	744 229.66	https://www.caritas.eu/
4.4.	COFACE – Families online and offline – protection of human rights in the digital age	EaSI-PROGRESS	490 435.40	http://www.coface-eu.org/
4.5.	PICUM Network – Strategic advocacy, collaboration and activation to address the social	EaSI-PROGRESS	480 605.94	https://picum.org/

	exclusion of undocumented migrants			
4.6	EUROCARERS – Towards care(r)-friendly societies in Europe	EaSI-PROGRESS	244 873.77	https://eurocarers.org/
Error! Reference source not found .	European Microfinance Network – Microfinance for social and financial inclusion in Europe	EaSI-PROGRESS	411 937.82	www.european-microfinance.org
Error! Reference source not found .	EUROCITIES – EaSI Programme – ‘Inclusive cities for All: Social rights in my city’	EaSI-PROGRESS	521 851.62	https://inclusivecities4all.eu/
Error! Reference source not found .	Fundacja Microfinance Centre – Financial inclusion for inclusive growth in Europe II	EaSI-PROGRESS	205 130.14	https://mfc.org.pl/
Error! Reference source not found .	European Social Network – 2020 European Social Network Annual Work Programme	EaSI-PROGRESS	918 374.91	https://www.esn-eu.org/
Error! Reference source not found .	European Venture Philanthropy Association – Strengthening and supporting a European ecosystem for social enterprise finance	EaSI-PROGRESS	599 669.00	https://evpa.eu.com/

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