



European Cohesion Policy supports the employment of millions of people, improves energy efficiency, and protects citizens from natural climate disasters

Brussels, 15 January 2024

Today, the European Commission published its [2023 Summary Report on the Implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds](#) (ESI Funds), showcasing some of the overarching achievements of the ESI funds as things stood at the end of 2022. These funds are the main financial instruments of Cohesion Policy, supporting regional development investments from the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

The Report shows the wide range of support available through the different programmes for the 2014 – 2020 period, and their **direct and positive impact on regions, businesses, and first and foremost, people, who are at the heart of the ESI funds**. It also shows the flexibility and adaptability of the framework, to provide solutions to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and the ensuing energy crisis.

While focusing on long-term convergence and competitiveness, solidarity was always at the heart of the ESI Funds. They helped Member States care for refugees and overcome the effects of unprecedented natural climate disasters, ultimately alleviating the pressure on national budgets.

The Report presents the achievements of the **ESI Funds by the end of 2022**, showing that the Commission has:

- supported **more than 5 million businesses**;
- helped **64.5 million** people **find employment, foster social inclusion, and skills through training**;
- improved **health services** for **more than 63 million people**;
- increased **energy production capacity** coming from renewable energy resources by more than 6 000 MW (the equivalent of around 2 400 wind turbines);
- improved the energy performance of more than **550 000 households**;
- protected **17 million people from floods** and **15 million people from forest fires**;
- supported over **2.8 million projects** in the **agricultural sector and rural areas**;
- maintained over **48 000 jobs** and **created over 6 500 new jobs** in the **fishing and aquaculture sector**.

The ESI Funds have been stable drivers of investment in the EU. With their long-term span and thematic focus, they have channeled resources into strengthening the territorial, economic, and social cohesion of the EU regions. They have continued to help regions and companies overcome the challenges of the green and digital transitions, all the while helping workers upskill and encouraging EU territorial cooperation. They have stood their course in the context of unprecedented crises ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic and natural climate disasters.

Background

As the EU budget's largest investment tool, the ESI Funds support the territorial, economic, and social cohesion of Europe's regions, as well as their resilience and recovery from multiple crises in recent years. ESI funds include:

- [the European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF);
- [the European Social Fund](#) (ESF);
- [the Cohesion Fund](#) (CF);
- [the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development](#) (EAFRD); and
- [the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#) (EMFF).

The purpose of these funds is to invest in job creation and a sustainable and healthy European economy and environment. The policy objectives pursued under the ESI Funds include:

- research and innovation
- digital technologies
- supporting the low-carbon economy
- sustainable management of natural resources
- small businesses
- smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth
- employment, better education, and training
- strengthening the institutional capacity of public administration
- urban development and territorial cooperation (Interreg).

The Annual Summary report of ESI Funds covering implementation in 2014-2020 is a requirement as per Article 53 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. This year's report presents the evolution in the financial implementation of the ESI Funds of the 2014-2020 period up to the end of 2022.

More information

[2023 Summary Report and Annexes on the Implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds](#)

[Cohesion Open Data Platform](#)

[Factsheet: The European Structural and Investment Funds - 5 million businesses supported](#)

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Quotes:

"With the European Structural and Investment Funds, we aim to support research and innovation, digital technologies, SMEs, and a low-carbon economy within the EU. The 2023 Annual Summary Report shows that we are succeeding in this mission. However, a lot of work is still ahead of us to strengthen Europe's economy in the context of an energy crisis and rising competition on the world stage. These Funds will play a crucial role in this endeavour."
Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President for an Economy that Works for People - 15/01/2024

"The European Structural and Investment Funds are living proof that Europe is always ready and willing to support its regions and citizens to achieve a level-playing field, via balanced territorial development and smart and inclusive growth in all countries, as well as responding to today's growing challenges with a spirit of solidarity and togetherness. These funds are supporting SMEs, improving employment opportunities, helping Member States to tackle climate disasters – the list goes on. People are at the heart of these Funds!"
Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms - 15/01/2024

"The European Social Fund has been providing crucial funding to help people access the labour market, to bring about social inclusion, and to help workers participate in training to develop their skills, especially in the context of the green and digital transitions. EU social funds directly impact people's lives, contributing to building a more fair and inclusive Europe."
Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights - 15/01/2024

"Farming is the backbone of rural communities. With €128 billion allocated for this programming period, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development has helped to support investments in sustainable farming, promote the setting up of young farmers, create rural jobs, and increase biodiversity-enriching agricultural practices. It's important to keep working with partners on the ground to ensure that funding is targeted to local issues and needs, in line with overall EU priorities. Supporting local governance to maintain vibrant rural economies is one of the key strengths of EU rural development support."
Janusz Wojciechowski, Commissioner for Agriculture - 15/01/2024

"The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) has played a key role in the sustainable development of our fisheries and aquaculture sector. It has helped us to diversify the economies of our coastal communities, promote innovation, and kick-start the green transition. We can be proud of its overall impact and the way it has improved the overall quality of life and employment opportunities for EU citizens."

Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries - 15/01/2024

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