

Work Programme Funding priorities for 2015

European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)



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1. Introduction

The EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation – EaSI¹ – is established to contribute to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, including its headline targets, Integrated Guidelines and flagship initiatives, by providing financial support for the Union's objectives in terms of promoting a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions.

The Programme plays a key role in terms of supporting:

- the Union policies and law, to promote evidence-based policy-making, social innovation and social progress, in partnership with the social partners, civil society organisations and public and private bodies
- voluntary geographical mobility for workers on a fair basis and contributing to a high level of quality and sustainable employment information exchanges and dissemination and other forms of cooperation, such as cross-border partnerships;
- access to, and the availability of, financing for vulnerable persons and support the development of the social investment market and facilitate access to finance for social enterprises.

2. Policy context in employment, social and working conditions fields

Despite slow improvements in the economic situation of some of the EU Member States, high unemployment and increased poverty rates remain the core challenges for the coming years. Policies decisions are needed to address the lack of economic growth to be implemented together with strong social policies addressing one of the most alarming trends of this decade, which are the growing inequalities between both EU countries and EU citizens.

The 2015 EaSI work programme will be the 1st adopted under President Juncker's Commission. The definition of the EaSI work programme 2015 takes into account the priorities announced in the "Agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change"². A focus is put upon ensuring that the jobs' creation dimension and more generally the social dimension of the EU is taken into consideration in the European Semester. One of the key strategies is to enhance convergence of labour market across the Euro zone. Social measures are also foreseen; notably to sustain the welfare systems and to make sure that the most vulnerable of the society are not left behind.

The 2015 EaSI work programme takes also into account the preparation of the initiatives foreseen in the CWP 2015 ³ (structured along the President's ten policy guidelines) aiming to address the real priorities and achieving results on the ground. Two political guidelines are particularly relevant: Guideline 1) *A New Boost for Jobs, Growth and Investment* with references to Member States facing the difficult challenge of **getting more people into work, and ensuring that workers have the skills they need to progress and adapt to the jobs of the future** and Guideline 4) *A Deeper and Fairer Internal Market with a Strengthened Industrial Base* which makes references to **job creation, employability, labour mobility,**

¹ REGULATION (EU) No 1296/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 on a European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation ("EaSI") and amending Decision No 283/2010/EU establishing a European Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion

² JC Juncker Political guideline Strasbourg 15/07/2014

³ http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/pdf/cwp_2015_en.pdf

knowledge and skills, with a particular attention being paid to the young unemployed people and the long term unemployed.

Improving people's opportunities to integrate in society and the labour market through strengthening their skills and capacities is key to the social investment approach. In this sense, social protection systems need to offer adequate benefits coupled with activating and enabling benefits and services that offer people an exit pathway from unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

The objective for the EaSI work programme will be to advance work in the areas identified as a priority in the Commission Work Program for 2015 as well as to support the implementation of the activities foreseen in European initiatives recently adopted (such as the Decision on the Public Employment Services, the EU platform on undeclared work, the EU Strategic on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020⁴) and other key initiatives adopted the last years.

The preparation of the Work Programme for EaSI takes notably into account the comments provided by the Members of the EaSI Committee in April 2014 about the main milestones and policy priorities for 2015.

3. EaSI objectives and priorities

Taking into account the context presented above, the EaSI Work Programme 2015 should:

- address the policy challenges outlined above, the consequences of the economic crisis, particularly fighting unemployment, preventing and reducing poverty within a context of budgetary constraints;
- ensure strong prioritisation and optimal alignment of EaSI-related expenditure with the goals of Europe 2020 strategy;
- focus on activities with the highest EU added-value, including new legislative initiatives;
- promote complementarities across axes and with other EU instruments, such as transnational cooperation under the European Social Fund or support for social dialogue.

It should be noted that the 2015 Work Programme is established taking into account the activities already launched in 2014 and the years before under the previous Programmes.

3.1. EASI-PROGRESS AXIS: THEMATIC SECTIONS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The EaSI-Progress axis will support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the **Union instruments and policies**. It will help the EU and the Member States to improve the policies in three thematic sections:

- a) employment, in particular to fight youth unemployment;
- b) social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty;
- c) working conditions.

The EaSI PROGRESS axis represents $60\%^5$ of the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme.

⁴ Brussels, 6.6.2014 COM(2014) 332 final

⁵ See point 7 for the explanations on the budget breakdowns

The sections below present the specific objectives and the main funding priorities for the thematic sections.

3.1.1. Develop and disseminate comparative analytical knowledge and provide evidences on Union's policies

The specific objective of the EaSI-Progress axis aiming to develop analytical knowledge helps to ensure that policy and legislation are based on sound, relevant comparative data and analysis. The Programme will contribute to gathering evidences through studies, analysis and EU statistics used to shape policy developments.

The planned expenditures amount to around €20,8 million, which represent 28% of the financial envelope of the 2015 EaSI-Progress Work Programme.

The **employment** thematic section supports and develops the Commission's capacity to analyse and assess national and EU level employment policies. The European skills, competences qualifications and occupations (ESCO), will further progress with its works in relation to the development of IT tools to support the platform and the reference groups. It also monitors the implementation of EU policies such as the "Quality Framework for Restructuring⁶". An emphasis is put on analysis regarding participation of young people in the labour market, job creation, tax wedges and tax rate on labour and skills governance are also planned.

The activities in the **working conditions** thematic section focusses on evaluating EU labour law legislations, in particular the targeted review of the Directive on posting of workers (Directive 96/71/EC) and application of labour standards in cooperation with ILO and pilot surveys on the effective application of international labour standards by selected trade partners benefitting from the EU GSP plus trade scheme and or EU Free Trade Agreements. In the field of health and safety at work, EaSI supports the development of a scoreboard, EU statistics on Occupational Diseases and analytical works in the area of Protection of workers against health and safety risks from exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (Directive 2004/37/EC). In addition, international organisations (International Agency for Research on Cancer and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) which will be supported in their research activities in order to strengthen the knowledge base in the area of occupational health and safety. EaSI will also support the G20 efforts on strengthening health and safety in G20 and in the world through a cooperation with ILO. In the field of coordination of social security a feasibility study for the creation of a European Mobility Portal is foreseen.

The **social protection/social inclusion** thematic section continues to support the implementation of the Social Investment Package⁷ and the development of appropriate policy advice, research and analysis relating to the three strands of the OMC (social protection, social inclusion and long term care). To this end actions are planned to support the modernisation of social welfare systems in the EU in particular to ensure that these contribute to investing in human capital from an early age, support people's transitions across the life course with particular attention to the gender dimension, ensure joined up delivery of benefits and services etc. Other actions envisaged are monitoring of the social situation, supporting the analysis of the (social) impact of policy measures (notably EUROMOD, including the development of dynamic micro-simulation modelling) and actions to explore market based solutions for better social outcomes and fostering the job creation potential in the social service sector. Analytical work is launched to develop an EU index to monitor progress of policy reforms towards social

⁶ COM(2013) 882 final

⁷ COM/2013/083 final

investments. The analysis of the Employment and Social Developments in Europe is also widely disseminated to ensure a common understanding of key policy challenges.

The Work Programme also includes **cross-cutting analytical activities** to respond to the challenges of insufficient competitiveness, low economic growth and promotion of the EU social model, notably by developing statistical tools and databases. The possibility to quickly launch specific targeted studies on emerging themes is also foreseen.

3.1.2. Improve information-sharing, learning and dialogue

EaSI-Progress aims to foster a shared understanding of, and consensus among stakeholders on, problem identification and policy options or solutions that respond to real needs. EU policy initiatives need broad-based support at both EU and national level. EaSI-Progress helps to create such an enabling environment by providing for high-quality, inclusive, participatory policy debates.

The planned activities under this specific objective represent around €21.6 million 29% of the financial envelope.

The specific objective information-sharing and learning will support EU, national and international information-sharing and dialogues in order to develop Union's policies and laws. The EaSI Work Programme 2015 will in particular assist with the implementation of the 2014 Country Specific Recommendations. This is done primarily through the Mutual Learning Program and peer reviews activities. Activities which have key EU added value for this specific objective are for instance the EU experts' networks (in the fields of Employment, Social Protection and Social inclusion and Labour Law) which allow learning and exchanges about policies and legislation developments. Events organised by the Presidencies are co-financed to support regular meetings of key stakeholders (PES, MISSOC, Thematic Days of the Senior Labour Inspector committee ...) and key policy priorities of the Council Presidencies. Specific budgets are also planned to better involving policy makers and EU citizens through information, communication and seminars.

In addition, the **employment** thematic section will provide support for Public Employment Services (PES) bench learning activities; meetings and workshops.

The thematic section on **working conditions** will also support the implementation of the European Platform to better prevent and deter undeclared work bringing together all enforcement bodies involved in tackling undeclared work, such as labour and social security inspectorates and tax and migration authorities, as well as other stakeholders, such as EU-level representatives of employers and employees.

In addition the **social protection /social inclusion** thematic section will provide particular support for the access of EU citizens to their rights through the development of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI), mutual learning in the context of the social OMC and supporting activities in the context of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion and the monitoring of the Council recommendation on investing in children.

A set of activities on a **combination of issues and policy themes** will take place at EU level. Information and communication activities will raise awareness on EU policy priorities. For instance, specific means will be dedicated to communication activities centred around growth and jobs events and conferences (including those organised by the Presidencies) to reinforce dialogue and mutual learning at regional, national, European and international level and

mobilise key policy/decision-makers and stakeholders with a view to creating the necessary support for meeting EU objectives and priorities.

3.1.3. Test social and labour market policy innovation and build capacity to design and implement social policy innovation

The EaSI-Progress axis specific objective on policy innovation and experimentation aims to provide financial support to test social and labour market policy innovations, and, where necessary, to build up the main actors' capacity to design and implement social policy experimentation, and to make the relevant knowledge and expertise accessible.

The planned activities under the heading "Social Policy Experimentation" represent around €10.8 million, about 15% of the financial envelope.

Support is foreseen through grants to public authorities, public and private sector organisations and social entrepreneurs to address issues relevant for the implementation of the priorities established at EU level; in particular those reflected in the Country Specific Recommendations, in the frame of the European Semester and test innovative social and active labour market policy reforms in line with Europe 2020.

3.1.4. Increase the capacity of Union and national organisations to develop, promote and implement Union policies and law

EaSI-Progress will support the capacity to deliver the Union's policies and laws at regional, national and European level. The expenditure planned in 2015 for those activities amount to around €20.2 million and represent about 27% of the financial envelope.

In particular, the activities under EaSI in 2015 will support the Member States in the implementation of Youth Employment capacity-building activities for institutions involved in Youth employment policy and awareness raising, dissemination and learning activities on the implementation of the Youth Guarantee⁸. A new priority is put on improving EU labour market mobility through a pilot activity on supporting mobility for professionals involving analysis for and the testing of a programme for secondments of professionals in other EU countries. Information on these activities will feed into the mobility package that the Commission has proposed in its 2015 work programme. EaSI 2015 will also develop and consolidate the key Sectoral Skills Councils foreseen in the Agenda for skills and jobs⁹ and the Employment Package¹⁰.

Cooperation will be strengthened for transnational cooperation in the area of posting of workers and the implementation of the EU legislation 11 . Grants supporting transnational cooperation are foreseen to be launched for the prevention of undeclared work 12 .

The European Commission pursues its key role in promoting the involvement of civil society, in particular under the social inclusion thematic section through **financial support for key Union level NGOs** and the implementations of priorities foreseen in the Social Investment Package. Specific support is also planned to networks of organisations promoting microfinance and social enterprises.

⁸ Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013

⁹ COM/2010/0682 final

¹⁰ COM/2012/0173 final

¹¹ Directives 96/71/EC and 2014/67/EU

¹² Decision on establishing a European Platform on undeclared work COM(2014)221

The support to the specific issue of **Roma integration** will also be addressed under the social inclusion thematic section. The capacity to deliver measures for Roma inclusion at local level will be subject of cooperation with the Council of Europe.

3.2. EASI-EURES AXIS: THEMATIC SECTIONS AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

In the field of professional and geographical mobility, EaSI-EURES axis will continue to play a pivotal role and help the EU and the Member States to promote voluntary geographical mobility for workers line with the reform foreseen.

The EaSI EURES axis represents about €23 million 19% of the financial envelope.

The sections below present the main funding priorities foreseen in 2015 under three thematic sections:

3.2.1. Ensure transparency of job vacancies for the potential applicants and the employers

The transparency of job vacancies is supported through the **European job mobility portal** witch contribute to achieve the transparency of job vacancies, applications and any related information for applicants and employers. **Trainings on EURES services** are carried out for staff from Public Employment Services and for EURES advisers.

3.2.2. Development of EURES services for the recruitment and placing of workers in quality and sustainable employment

The EaSI-EURES supports targeted mobility schemes, following the preparatory action "Your First EURES Job", which aim to help young people aged between 18 and 35 years to find a job, a traineeship or apprenticeship in another EU country.

EaSI-EURES provides also **horizontal support to the member organisations of the EURES network** to implement intra-EU labour mobility actions and thereby to improve the quality and quantity of EURES services on the ground. This includes support to a) the communication activities organised by the different member organisations of the network to reach out to job seekers and employers interested in intra-EU labour mobility and b) the annual programming cycle between national coordination offices and mutual learning activities, in particular to enhance the capacity to measure and report on progress made by the network.

3.2.3. Cross-border partnerships

The **cross border partnerships** are supporting mobility for frontier workers in the cross-border regions. These partnerships should bring together public employment and vocational training services, employers and trades union organisations and other organisations dealing with employment and mobility in those regions. They are a key element in the development of a genuine European labour market.

The EaSI-EURES Work Programme also includes activities of communication and promotional activities.

3.3. EASI-MF/SE AXIS: THEMATIC SECTIONS

The EaSI-Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship promotes employment and social inclusion by increasing the availability and accessibility of microfinance for vulnerable people who wish to start up a micro-enterprise as well as for existing micro-enterprises, and by increasing access to finance for social enterprises. It will help kick-start new business and assist with Job Creation.

This axis represents about 26.5 million 21.51% of the financial envelope. The main funding priorities for the thematic sections are the following:

3.3.1. Increase access to, and the availability of, microfinance

Increase access to microfinance by extending funding to microcredit providers with the objective of improving access to, and availability of microfinance, particularly to persons facing difficulties to access the credit market such as vulnerable persons who have lost or are at risk of losing their job, or have difficulty in entering or re-entering the labour market, or are at risk of social exclusion, or are socially excluded, and are in a disadvantaged position with regard to access to the conventional credit market and who wish to start up or develop their own microenterprises.

3.3.2. Build up the institutional capacity of microcredit providers

The EaSI-MF/SE Work Programme includes activities to **support capacity-building activities for microfinance and social entrepreneurship.** Such funding could take multiple forms and can be used, for example, by a microcredit provider to buy an IT system.

3.3.3. Support the development of the social investment market and facilitate access to finance for social enterprises

Develop the new financial instrument for social entrepreneurship to promote social entrepreneurship by making available hybrid financing for social enterprises in the form of a combination of equity, quasi-equity, loan instruments and grants. Complementarity will be ensured between these actions and those undertaken in the framework of cohesion policy and national policies.

The EaSI-MF/SE Work Programme includes **activities which combine issues** to support the implementation of this axis such as information and communication activities.

3.4. TRANSVERSAL PRIORITIES AND ISSUES

In pursuing those objectives, the EaSI Work Programme will, in all its axes and actions, pay particular attention to:

- promote a high-level of quality and sustainable employment, guarantee adequate and decent social protection,
- combat long-term unemployment, fight against poverty and social exclusion and target people in vulnerable situation, such as the young "NEET"
- promote equality between women and men including through gender mainstreaming and, where appropriate, gender budgeting;
- combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation

4. Complementarity with other Programmes

The Programme will complement other Union programmes, synergies will be developed between EaSI, other Union programmes (for instance Rights, Equality and Citizenship or Horizon 2020) and the Structural Funds, especially the ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative.

Member States will be encouraged to consider the practical implementation of successful ideas tested notably through employment and social policy experimentation to be pursued with financial support from the ESF (as well as from other sources) so as to increase the efficiency of their labour markets and to further improve their social protection and inclusion policies.

5. Participation

- The Programme is open to the EU 28 Member States.
- In 2014, the participation of EEA/EFTA countries was defined and the EEA Agreement revised. Iceland participates in all EaSI axes; Norway is participating in PROGRESS and EURES; Liechtenstein is not participating in EaSI.
- The participation in the Progress and Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship axes is open to the candidate countries and potential candidates' countries (not the EaSI-EURES axis), unless justified otherwise in relevant cases. New International Agreement should be signed between the European Commission and the countries to fix the scope of the participation and the related financial contribution. Albania, Montenegro, FYROM, Turkey and Serbia are finalising the international agreement to participate in the Programme from 2015.

6. Monitoring and evaluating the performance of EaSI and improving dissemination

As part of the activities foreseen for launching the Programme, efforts will also be made to provide visibility to the programme through the website regularly up-dated.

The monitoring of performance of EaSI has started. This contract foresees also improving the dissemination of examples of good practices funded through calls for proposals. The first qualitative and quantitative monitoring report covering the first year of implementation of the Programme is foreseen to be published in June 2015. The next report is due two years after, in 2017.

The EaSI mid-term evaluation is foreseen by the 1 July 2017.

7. Financial appropriations

Forecast of operational expenditure by axis and thematic sections for the seven years $^{\!\!13}$

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
PROGRESS	61%	70,307,298	72,480,130	74,421,813	76,784,734	79,004,538	81,522,886	86,098,505	540,619,903
Employm. Min.	20%	14,061,460	14,496,026	14,884,363	15,356,947	15,800,908	16,304,577	17,219,701	108,123,981
Social protect. Min.	50%	35,153,649	36,240,065	37,210,907	38,392,367	39,502,269	40,761,443	43,049,253	270,309,952
Working condit. Min	10%	7,030,730	7,248,013	7,442,181	7,678,473	7,900,454	8,152,289	8,609,851	54,061,990
Cross-cutting max 20%		14,061,460	14,496,026	14,884,363	15,356,947	15,800,908	16,304,577	17,219,701	108,123,981
EURES	18%	20,746,416	21,387,579	21,960,535	22,657,790	23,312,814	24,055,934	25,406,116	159,527,185
transparency min.	32%	6,638,853	6,844,025	7,027,371	7,250,493	7,460,101	7,697,899	8,129,957	51,048,699
development min	30%	6,223,925	6,416,274	6,588,161	6,797,337	6,993,844	7,216,780	7,621,835	47,858,155
cross-border min	18%	3,734,355	3,849,764	3,952,896	4,078,402	4,196,307	4,330,068	4,573,101	28,714,893
Cross-cutting max 20%		4,149,283	4,277,516	4,392,107	4,531,558	4,662,563	4,811,187	5,081,223	31,905,437
MF/SE	21%	24,204,152	24,952,176	25,620,624	26,434,089	27,198,284	28,065,256	29,640,469	186,115,049
microfinance min	45%	10,891,868	11,228,479	11,529,281	11,895,340	12,239,228	12,629,365	13,338,211	83,751,772
social entrepren min	45%	10,891,868	11,228,479	11,529,281	11,895,340	12,239,228	12,629,365	13,338,211	83,751,772
Cross-cutting max 10%		2,420,415	2,495,218	2,562,062	2,643,409	2,719,828	2,806,526	2,964,047	18,611,505
TOTAL EaSI operational expend.		115,257,865	118,819,885	122,002,972	125,876,612	129,515,636	133,644,076	141,145,091	886,262,137

The total budget for EaSI 2015 operating expenditure is €123.14 million: €74.63 for PROGRESS, €22.02 for EURES and €26.48 for Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship. Regarding Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship an amendment to the draft budget was decided to reflect the priority of contributing to enhancing access to finance through the EU budget, especially for the small and middle-sized enterprises (SMEs) from €24.96 to €26.46 (a difference of €1.5 million). This voted budget includes also the contributions of Iceland and Norway of 2.94% of PROGRESS and EURES budgets (for the participation of Norway and Iceland - €2.13 million and €0.69 million respectively) and 0.08% of the MF/SE budget for the participation of Iceland (21.166 €).

The allocation between the EaSI axes is around 60% for Progress, EURES 19% and Microfinance 22%. This allocation is slightly different from what is foreseen for the indicative percentages at Article 5 of the EaSI Regulation (Progress 61%, EURES 18% and Micro-finance 21%). This was made feasible by using the clause foreseen at Article 33 of the EaSI Regulation regarding reallocation of funds between the axes and individual thematic sections.

Regarding the allocation to the thematic sections of the 3 axes, the indicative breakdowns for 2015 are also slightly different than the minimum percentages for the PROGRESS thematic on section social protection, social inclusion and the reduction and prevention of poverty, which is at 49% (minimum is 50%). For EURES the breakdown are fully in line with the Regulation. For MF/SE, the cross-cutting issues are used for capacity building of microfinance providers, which are necessary at the beginning of the programming period. The breakdown between the thematic sections is 43% for Microfinance and Social Entrepreneurship and 14% for cross-cutting issues.

¹³The figures correspond to initial allocations approved for 2014-2020 as at January 2014. Following the Budget Authority decisions on final amounts available for 2014 and 2015, the overall EaSI allocation in current prices without EFTA contribution has been increased to €926 385 000.

¹⁴ COM(2014) 723 final

Allocation of operating expenditure by axis and specific objectives for 2015

EaSI Axis and thematic sections	Max. amounts	Min. amounts	Value	%
EaSI-Progress Total	74,625,324		73,554,887	59.74%
EaSI-Progress Thematic sections				
a) PROGRESS Employment		14,925,065	20,576,097	28%
b) PROGRESS Social protection		37,312,662	35,740,106	49%
c) PROGRESS Working conditions		7,462,532	8,763,548	12%
d) PROGRESS Cross-cutting issues	14,925,065		8,475,136	12%
EaSI-Progress Specific objectives				
a) Develop and disseminate comparative analytical knowledge and provide evidences on Union's policies			20,889,860	28%
b) Improve information-sharing, learning and dialogue			21,665,027	29%
c) Increase the capacity of Union and national organisations to develop, promote and implement Union policies and law			20,200,000	27%
d) Test social and labour market policy innovation and build capacity to design and implement social policy innovation	14,925,065	11,193,799	10,800,000	15%
EaSI-EURES Total	22,020,925		23,090,525	18.75%
EaSI-EURES Thematic sections				
a) EURES Transparency of job vacancies		7,046,696	7,048,000	31%
b) EURES Development of services		6,606,278	11,712,385	51%
c) EURES Cross-border partnership		3,963,767	4,048,140	18%
d) EURES Cross-cutting issues	4,404,185		282,000	1%
EaSI-EURES Specific objectives				
a) Transparency information on job vacancies and applications			6,648,000	29%
b) Services for the recruitment and placing of workers			16,442,525	71%
EaSI-Micro-finance and Social Entrepreneurship Total	26,478,166		26,479,000	21.51%
a) MF/SE Microfinance		11,915,175	11,428,500	43%
b) MF/SE Social Entrepreneurship		11,915,175	11,428,500	43%
c) MF/SE Cross-cutting issues	2,647,817		3,622,000	14%
TOTAL EASI	123,124,415		123,124,412	

Annexes:

- Description of the calls for proposals
 List of activities to be launched in 2015