

EU Recovery Plan: Engage Now to Benefit Later

Toolkit - September 2020

Main Messages:

- The European Union is negotiating the Recovery Plan for Europe, expected to be made up of over €1.8 trillion for the period 2021-2027.
- It is expected that more EU funding than ever will be made available, thus providing - in theory- considerable funding opportunities.
- The European Funds under shared management (ESF+, ERDF) will be an important source of funding for national authorities. New programmes such as REACT-EU and the Recovery and Resilience Facility will also provide additional funding opportunities
- National Public Authorities will soon be drafting their plans outlining how they intend to spend such EU funding. The Commission have encouraged these Authorities to partner with civil society in the preparation and implementation of EU funds.
- National stakeholders should engage with their national/regional authorities at the earliest stage possible to ensure that the services they provide (or wish to provide) are included in the plans drafted by the national Public Authorities

Table 1. Recovery Plan for Europe – Main Opportunities for EASPD Members

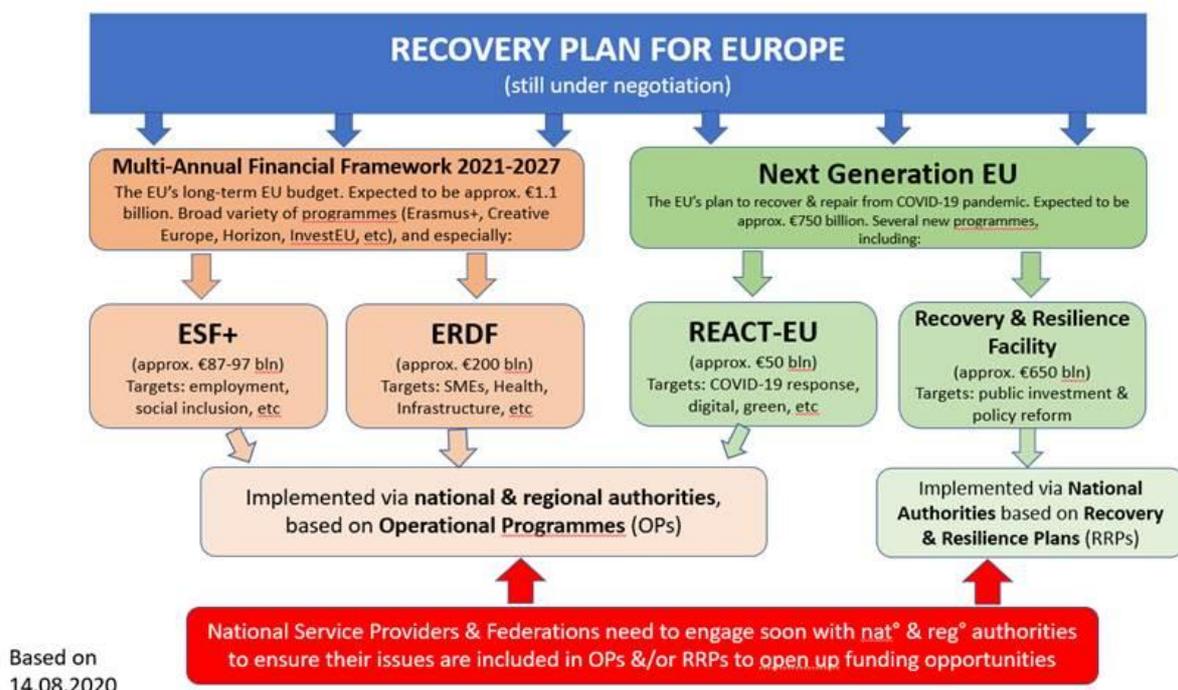


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A. What's Happening with the EU Budget?

The European Union is currently negotiating the Recovery Plan for Europe, which is expected to be made up of over €1.8 trillion. The current positions of the key stakeholders ([European Council](#), [European Parliament](#) and [European Commission](#)) show a growing consensus on the overarching picture of the Recovery Plan; which should include

- the EU's standard multi-annual financial framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, expected to be around €1.1 billion and includes important programmes such as the European Social Fund+, European Regional Development Fund, InvestEU, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, Horizon Europe and others.

And...

- Next Generation Europe, a new recovery plan made up of approximately €750 billion, focusing more specifically on the impact of the COVID19 crisis, and including new programmes such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility (to support public policies) and REACT-EU.



B. Why Engage Now?

Once agreed, the EU Recovery Plan could provide larger opportunities than ever for Disability Services; both in terms of funding innovative projects, but also to help ensure recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and in support of public policy reforms in the social field.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought and will bring significant challenges for services for persons with disabilities, be it in different forms of care and support, employment, education and training. It has also brought huge challenges for the economy as a whole; meaning that the next few years could impede on the ability of public authorities to fund, improve and innovate services for persons with disabilities with a detrimental impact on the lives of the persons with disabilities.

The EU Recovery Plan could thus be an even more important instrument than usual to boost national policies and funding for services for persons with disabilities in the years to come. This is for both the more traditional European shared management funds (ESF, ERDF and the new REACT-EU) and the new Recovery and Resilience Facility which will support the implementation of key policy reforms.

However for this to be the case, national social services (both individual providers and/or federations) need to engage now with their national authorities; both to ensure that the existing programmes do not suffer from further cuts, but also to ensure that their funding needs are included in the Member States' plans for the use of these EU programmes. This includes the use of programmes such as REACT-EU which aim to be operational already in 2020 to cover immediate COVID19-related needs. It is expected that most National Authorities are already preparing their plans, despite the fact that the negotiations are still ongoing.

As such, EASPD recommends engaging at the earliest stage possible with national authorities to maximise the potential of the EU's Recovery Plan for service providers for persons with disabilities. The [European Commission has written to each national authority](#) to recommend partnerships between the authorities and civil society organisations.

C. What EU programmes are most relevant?

The EU Recovery Plan is made up a wide range of funding programmes; some managed directly by the EU Commission and others implemented primarily at national level (including -for some- under shared competence).

Although other funds are relevant, this toolkit focuses on primarily on the programmes both most relevant for social service provision and those implemented at national level.

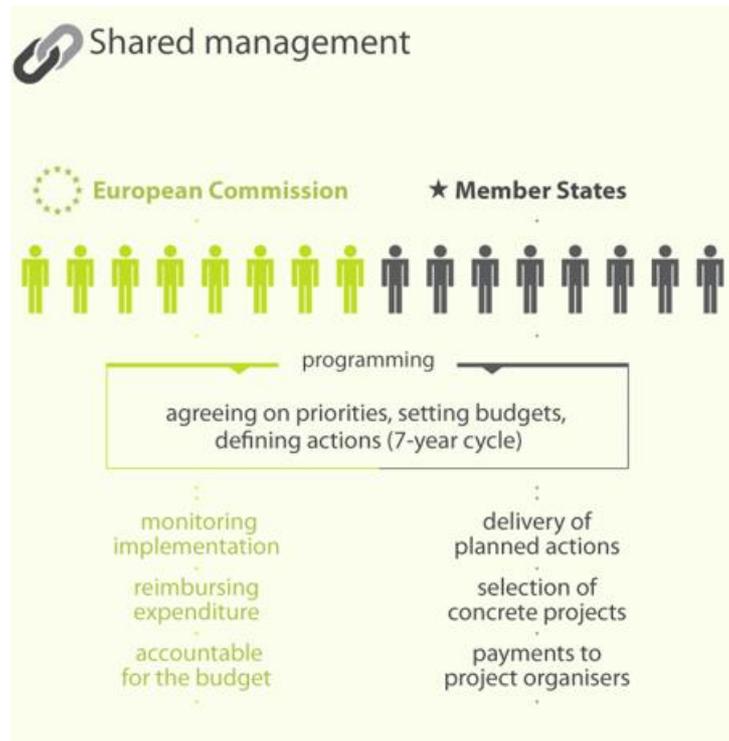
The following chapter is divided into two sections.

- A first section will cover European shared management funds, with a particular emphasis on the next European Social Fund +, European Regional Development Fund and the new REACT-EU. These Funds are under shared management and thus primarily implemented by national or regional Managing Authorities.
- A second section will cover the Recovery and Resilience Facility, a new programme which aims to support Member States in their policy reforms in response to COVID19 and in preparing for the future.

a. European shared management funds

The significant majority of the European Union budget (80% in 2014-2020 framework) is spent under what is known as [shared management](#); meaning that individual EU countries distribute the funds and manage the expenditure. This includes many elements in the upcoming Recovery Plan such as the European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund and upcoming programmes such as REACT-EU.

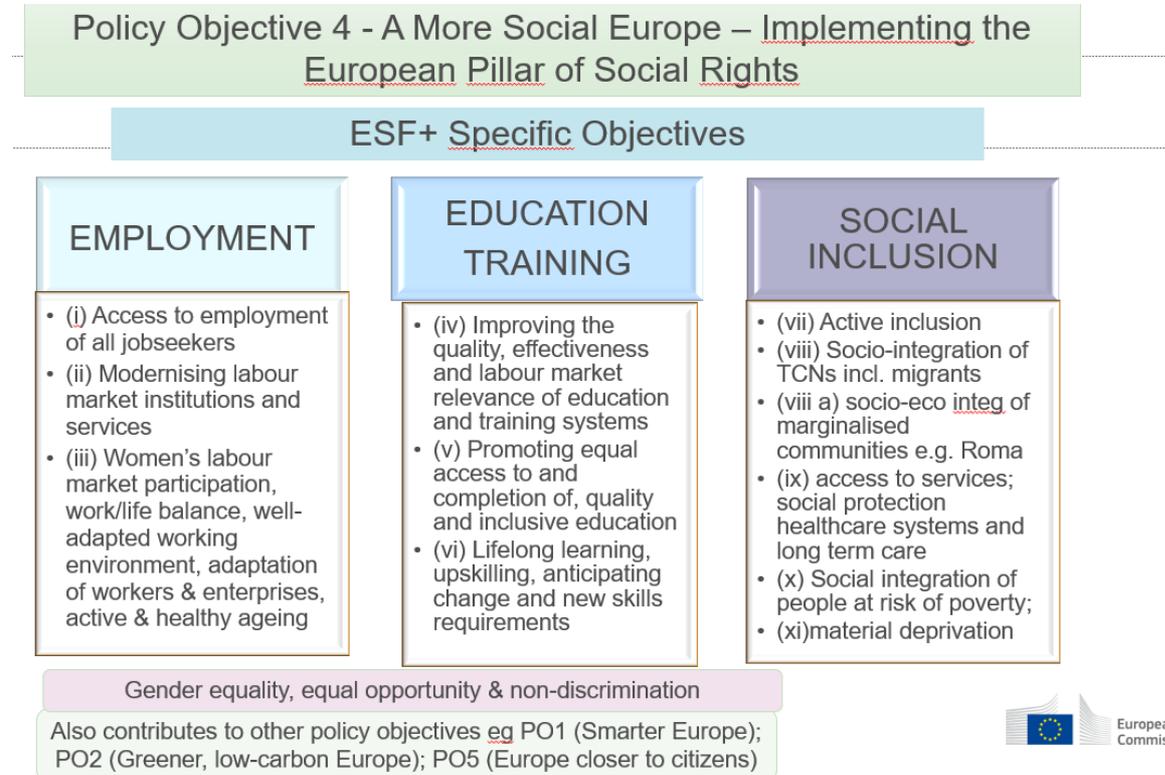
Table 2. explaining different roles in Shared Management, designed by European Commission.



i. European Social Fund + (ESF+)

The existing negotiations would situate the ESF+ budget as between [€87](#) and [€97](#) billion for 2021-2027, which is a decrease from the previous ESF 2014-2020. There is more alignment regarding general objectives of the European Social Fund + as to “support the following specific objectives in the policy areas of employment, education and social inclusion and thereby also contributing to the policy objective for “A more social Europe –[Implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights](#)” set out in Article [4] of the [future CPR]”. The full list of Specific Objectives can be found in Article 4 of the [European Commission’s 2018 proposal](#).

Table 3. on Specific Objectives of ESF+, designed by European Commission.



In addition to the above specific objectives, the European ESF+ rules will also oblige Member States to focus their use of the funds on

- The challenges identified in the European Semester (See Recommendation 3 later)
- Support to social inclusion, with min. 25% of the ESF+ budget of Member States dedicated to projects in this field (see Table 3)
- Support to youth employment, with min. 15% of the ESF+ budget of Member States with high youth unemployments go to youth employment (in view of helping to implement the Youth Guarantee)
- Tackling child poverty, with min. 5% of the ESF+ budget of Member States dedicated to projects in this field
- Generally increased emphasis on Green & Digital Transitions & Gender Equality

ii. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The existing negotiations would situate the European Regional Development Fund budget for 2021-2027 at approx. [€200 billion](#). As for ESF, [ERDF also has as objective](#) “a more social Europe, implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights”. The ERDF supports investments in

- (a) investments in infrastructure;
- (b) investments in access to services;
- (c) productive investments in SMEs;
- (d) equipment, software and intangible assets;
- (e) information, communication, studies, networking, cooperation, exchange of experience and activities involving clusters;
- (f) technical assistance.

In other words, the next ERDF could again -in theory- provide significant opportunities for funding projects in the field of disability.

iii. REACT-EU

On top of the traditional ESF+ and ERDF allocations, the Recovery Plan for Europe adds a new REACT-EU programme, which acts as a top-up of approx. €50 billion to ESF+ and ERDF with a specific focus on [“fostering crisis repair in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing a green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy”](#). REACT-EU will be used for the years 2020 to 2022, includes the flexibility ensured through the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative and is implemented through the ESF+ and ERDF managing authorities.

REACT-EU will help top-up

- ESF+ with additional resources to support (amongst several objectives) job creation for vulnerable people, education and training and to enhance access to social services of general interest, including for children.

- ERDF with additional resources to support investment in products and services for health services (potentially including social care services), to provide support in the form of working capital or investment support to SMEs, etc.

REACT-EU therefore opens up funding opportunities to help disability services to recover and build resilience from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it does not earmark specific amounts to these types of investments.

The [European Commission have written to each National Government](#) on the use of REACT-EU and, among several recommendations, state that “the partnership principle remains a cornerstone of Cohesion Policy, ensuring involvement of social partners and civil society organisations in planning and implementation. The relevant partners and regional authorities should be involved in the programming of REACT-EU”.

iv. The importance of Operational Programmes (OPs)

Although the overarching framework and rules are established at European level, it is the National Authorities who decide how these funds will be spent (as long as it is within the EU framework and rules) through [Operational Programmes](#), which are submitted alongside [Partnership Agreements](#) between each Member State and the European Commission.

In the last framework (2014-2020), each Member State (or sometimes regional authorities) developed OPs for each Programme (ESF, ERDF, etc) which specified how the [11 thematic objectives](#) will be addressed through the funding made available.

- The Operational Programmes for ESF 2014-2020 are available here:
<https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=576&langId=en>
- The Operational Programmes for ERDF 2014-2020 are available here:
- https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/

In short, if your subject matter is not included within the Operational Programmes, then the Managing Authority will not be able to fund projects supporting your subject matter in the timeframe of the programme (usually 7 years); instead focusing on other areas.



In the next programme (2021-2027), it is expected that the Policy Objectives will be simplified to [5 main objectives](#), including (d) “focusing on a more social Europe implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights”.

The Operational Programmes will also have to show how they respond to the challenges for each Member State highlighted in the European Semester process; namely the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) and Country Reports. Most if not all Country Specific Recommendations refer either directly or indirectly to challenges affecting persons with disabilities, including access to care and support as is demonstrated in [EASPD’s Summary of the 2020 CSRs](#).

Once the agreement on the Recovery Plan will be finalized, each Member State will therefore submit their Operational Programmes (& Partnership Agreements) to the European Commission. The Operational Programmes will thus have to be able to respond to how they will contribute to achieving objective (d) and the Country Specific Recommendations ; although of course the ESF+ and ERDF, for instance, will do so in different ways given the differences between the programmes.

Conclusion.

The European shared management funds can provide significant funding opportunities to services for persons with disabilities across Europe. The European Social Fund+, the European Regional Development Fund and REACT-EU are particularly relevant in this regard.

It is important to note that negotiations are still ongoing on the details of these funds. This being said, there is sufficient basis for agreement to understand the general orientation of these funds, their policy objectives and the overarching process through which they are managed.

It is clear that the Operational Programmes to be developed by the relevant Managing Authorities will be crucial to ensure that such funds are made available to the provision of support to persons with disabilities. As such, we encourage national stakeholders to engage at the earliest point possible with the relevant Authorities to work towards adding the areas of interest to them to the Operational Programmes.

b. Recovery and Resilience Facility

Introduction.

The COVID-19 is **impacting countries differently**:

- Public Health emergency (N° deaths, capacity of healthcare to respond, etc)
- Economic impact (consequences of lockdown, impact on growth, etc)
- Social impact (unemployment, social protection schemes, social services)

EU Member States were also starting from a different position, in terms of economic growth, public debt, development of health and social protection..

There is a risk of increasing divergence in Europe, as Member States will not have the same opportunities/flexibility in the measures they take to recover.

Example:

- Germany with relatively low N° deaths, limited economic impact, high levels of social protection mixed with low public debt and a reasonably ok economic context;
- Italy with high N° deaths, high economic impact, high public debt and a poor economic context

Diverging economic recovery hinders the economic recovery of the EU as a whole as the economies are interlinked.

For the first time, the European Union itself decided to borrow money on the capital markets, with its triple A ratings; meaning that the responsibility for re-paying is not on the individual Member States but equal responsibility for all. This is Next Generation EU.

The main mechanism which will re-distribute the money to Member States is called the Recovery and Resilience Facility, a huge €672.5 billion investment programme.

The Commission is working hard with the European Parliament and the Council to finalise the design of the Facility and ensure its fast entry into force to help the economic recovery. To support its implementation, the European [Commission launched Guidance in its Annual Growth Survey 2021](#)



i. What is the Recovery and Resilience Facility?

The Recovery & Resilience Facility (depending on the outcome of the negotiations)

- Is the major part of Next Generation EU, which is the Union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- supports Member States in their public investments and reforms, notably in green and digital field
- has a budget of €672.5 billion (€360 billion in loans, 312.5 billion in grants)

The [general objective of the RRF](#) is “the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion. For that purpose, it should contribute to improving the **resilience and adjustment capacity** of the Member States, **mitigating the social and economic impact** of the crisis, and supporting the **green** and **digital** transitions aimed at achieving a climate neutral Europe by 2050, thereby restoring the growth potential of the economies of the Union in the aftermath of the crisis, **fostering employment creation** and to promoting **sustainable growth**”

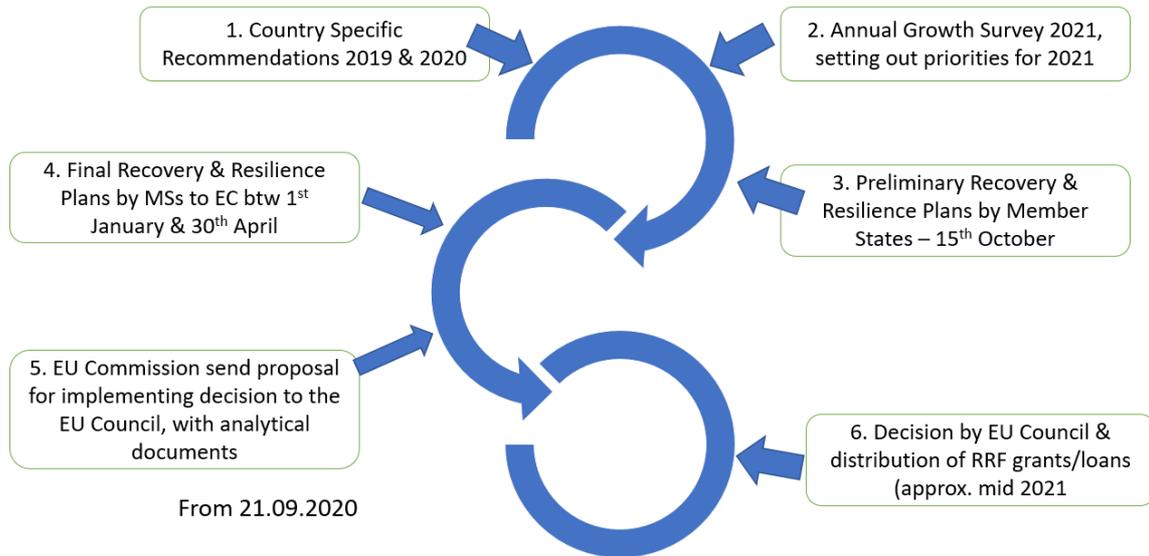
ii. How will the Recovery and Resilience Facility work?

The RRF will be implemented through a [process](#) where each Member State will submit Recovery and Resilience Plans to the European Commission. Under the current discussions, [the RRFs will have](#) to be submitted to the European Commission each year until 2022 and at the latest by 30 April of each year. They can already submit their first draft as early as mid-October 2020.

The ongoing discussions seem to point towards a process where the European Commission will assess the plans (with analytical documents) and submit a proposal for implementing decision to the European Council (representing the Member States) for approval, by [qualified majority vote](#). In the existing proposals, the European Parliament has a weak role; although this may change as the European Parliament enters the negotiations.



Table 4. explaining the new European Semester & Recovery and Resilience Facility process in 2021 by EASPD



Technical support can also be requested to the European Commission in the preparation and implementation of the RRP through a dedicated instrument.

iii. What must be included in the RRP?

The European Commission have written [Guidance to EU Member States on the Recovery & Resilience Plans](#). The following section highlights the main points of the Guidance.

The national RRP must be aligned to [Country Specific Recommendations 2019 & 2020](#)

Examples:

- The overarching Communication on Country Specific Recommendations referred to “access to social services(...) should be ensured to all” & highlights they key role of social economy to create employment opportunities.
- AT CSRs 2020: “A recovery strategy that improves access to inclusive, good-quality early childhood education and care”
- BG CSRs 2020: “the reform of social services would help stabilizing the system, while a stronger cooperation between health and social services would allow reaching out further to those unable to take care of themselves and people with disabilities

- PT CSRs 2020: “the outbreak of COVID-19 requires measures to mitigate social impacts and protect people in vulnerable situations (...). These include (...) access to services and measures fostering reintegration in the labour market”

The national RRP's must have a strong emphasis on:

- **Green/ecological investments**, earmarked at min. 37% of the total amount requested
- **Digital investments**, earmarked at min. 20% of the total amount requested
- **“Fair investments”**, linked to EU Pillar of Social Rights, no earmarking; but refers to
 - Emphasis on youth, persons with disabilities, women & others
 - Fighting entrenchment of unemployment & social exclusion
 - Equal opportunities measures
 - Inclusive Education
 - Strengthening long-term care & childcare.
- The RRP's should be aligned to 7 Flagship investment areas:
 - Power up : clean technology and renewables
 - **Renovate: energy efficiency in buildings**
 - Recharge and Refuel: clean tech & **smart transport & public transport**
 - Connect: rollout of broadband services
 - **Modernise: digitalization of public admin and services, including healthcare (& social care?)**
 - Scale-up: industrial data cloud capacities & processors
 - **Reskill and upskill: adapt education to digital & education and vocation training for all**

iv. How can you benefit from the RRF?

The RRF will be the basis for significant reforms and public investments across Europe in the months and years to come. This includes policy measures in areas linked to the provision of support for persons with disabilities. In fact, building the resilience and recovery of the social structures are directly referred to as an objective of the RRF facility; an element further backed by the alignment of the RRF to the European Semester.



The RRF is therefore an opportunity for Member States to initiate new policies in the field of social services and back them with additional public investment on top of their own means. This is particularly relevant given that the limited financial means have often hindered the development of new policies to improve the eco-system for social services in the past few years. The RRF could change this.

Unlike the shared management funds, the RRF will not directly lead to funding opportunities for services for persons with disabilities. This being said, the RRF can directly support National Governments in their public investment and policy reforms in such a field.

For this to happen, it is essential that support for social services (or another relevant activity) is included in the Recovery and Resilience Plans submitted by each national government to the European Commission. Engagement with your national authorities could therefore help to ensure that such elements are included as part of the RRP submitted to the European Commission as early as October 2020.

D. Our Recommendations

Although still under negotiations, it is clear that the EU Recovery Plan can -in theory- provide significant funding to the provision of support services for persons with disabilities across Europe.

Much of the EU Recovery Plan -especially in areas affecting disability services- will be implemented at national level; either through the

- Shared Management Funds:
 - ESF+; for instance through employment, training or social inclusion projects
 - ERDF; for instance through SME support and infrastructure development
 - REACT-EU; for instance for COVID-19 related expenditure
- or
- the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF); for instance through national public investment and policy reforms

The “in theory” is very relevant here as it means that support for disability services is not set in stone through the European rules for these programmes but -instead- depends on the

choices made by national (or regional) authorities. The European rules simply open up the possibility -or perhaps even encourage- using the programmes for such objectives.

It is therefore very important that the national Public Authorities refer to the sector's needs in both their Operational Programmes (for shared management funds) or their Recovery and Resilience Plans (for RRF).

As such, we recommend

Recommendation 1. Engage Public Authorities at the earliest stage possible

In short, national service providers and their federations must therefore engage at the earliest stage possible with their public authorities at national level to ensure that the Operational Programmes and Recovery and Resilience Plans open up opportunities for services for persons with disabilities in the use of these EU funds.

The Public Authorities whom to contact depends on the national context. It could include one or more of the following:

- [ESF Managing Authorities](#)
- [ERDF Managing Authorities](#)
- [Ministries in charge of EU Funds](#), often linked to Economic or Budgetary Ministries
- Relevant Ministries in charge of your services (e.g. social affairs, employment, education, etc)
- Highest level of authority (head of state and team in charge of European affairs)

One other step could be to contact your region's representation to the EU as most regions in Europe are represented at such a level. Simply type your region's name with office in Brussels in a search engine is usually enough to identify the contact details. A list is available <http://www.aalep.eu/regional-offices-brussels>. The staff in these regional representatives are usually uniquely placed to understand both the European funds and the specificities within your region. They should be able – and willing – to provide information and help you get in touch with relevant decision-makers at national level.

On 30th July, the [European Commission has written to each Member State](#) to make use of the Partnership Principle to facilitate the use of, in this case, REACT-EU resources. In these letters, the Commission refers to the partnership principle as a cornerstone to the correct

use of EU funds, by ensuring the involvement of social partners and civil society organisations in the planning and implementation of these funds. The letters continue by arguing that the relevant partners and regional authorities should be involved in the programming of REACT-EU. This ([and the letters](#)) are worth referencing in your opening dialogue with the Authorities.

Table 5 on the Partnership Principle, designed by European Commission



It can also be helpful that you engage with the ministries/agencies together with other important partners of yours; for instance, other networks of social service providers and/or organisations representing persons with disabilities and/or relevant local/regional authorities you work with. You will have less chances to convince authorities as a single provider than as a coalition representing the sector more broadly. In other words, representativity matters for many Authorities so team up for more success.

Another important advice is to ensure that you make tangible, evidence-based suggestions to the Authorities rather than broad general ideas of projects. The quality of your proposals matter.

Recommendation 2. Understand the basic objectives of each Programme

Whilst engaging with public authorities, be clear about your specific needs (both due to COVID-19 and broader initiatives) and how each EU programme can help different aspects of your services; e.g.:

- ESF+ to fund new forms of support models or staff training;
- ERDF to fund new community-based infrastructure or new digital equipment;

- REACT-EU to cover additional costs due to COVID19 (new protective equipment, additional staff costs, etc).
- RRF in support of public investment into disability services (or other) or for policy reforms.

Put simply, all four programmes can – in theory – fund a broad variety of different projects or policies in the social field. In fact, the Common Provisions Regulation, which provides joint rules for several EU funds, specifically refers to investments which support persons with disabilities. It is important to note that EU rules imply that the programmes should only be used to support projects which help the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD); for instance, a de-institutionalisation project instead of a large segregating institution.

For example: MSs have to make sure the different aspects of their Recovery & Resilience Plans align to following criteria:

- ✓ The national RRP's must be aligned to Country Specific Recommendations 2019 & 2020. (see next point)
- ✓ Green/ecological investments, earmarked at min. 37% of the total amount requested
- ✓ Digital investments, earmarked at min. 20% of the total amount requested
- ✓ “Fair investments”, linked to EU Pillar of Social Rights, no earmarking; but refers to
- ✓ European Flagships:
 - ✓ Power up : clean technology and renewables
 - ✓ Renovate: energy efficiency in buildings
 - ✓ Recharge and Refuel: clean tech & smart transport & public transport
 - ✓ Connect: rollout of broadband services
 - ✓ Modernise: digitalization of public admin and services, including healthcare (& social care?)
 - ✓ Scale-up: industrial data cloud capacities & processors
 - ✓ Reskill and upskill: adapt education to digital & education and vocation training for all

Recommendation 3. Align your ideas with the European Commission’s Recommendations

The Operational Programmes and Recovery and Resilience Plans will have to respond to the Country Specific Recommendations and Country Reports the European Commission produces each year for each EU Member State; as part of the European Semester process.



As such, it will be beneficial to align your ideas/proposals as solutions to the challenges highlighted in the CSRs and Country Reports; as ultimately each Member State will have to do that too.

EASPD has produced a [Summary of the latest Country Specific Recommendations](#) which can help you identify the key areas National Authorities will have to respond to with the use of the EU funds.

For instance, one of the CSRs for Belgium refers to the need to ““Mitigate the employment and social impact of the crisis, notably by promoting effective active labour market measures and fostering skills development.”. The EU shared management funds will therefore have to respond to this challenge and clearly the employment of persons with disabilities is part of this challenge. Supporting social economy enterprises which aim to boost the employment of persons with disabilities and other excluded persons could be one of the solutions to this.

Another example is Finland, which has been recommended to “address shortages of health workers to strengthen the resilience of the health system and improve access to social and health services”. A recommendation to Greece includes “Comprehensive access to social services is necessary for the most deprived and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, long-term care services are not sufficiently developed”. The Finnish and Greek Authorities will therefore have to use their shared management funds to address such issues; therefore leaving many opportunities for social service providers to bring in their ideas on how this could be done.

Another EU initiative worth mentioning in your “negotiations” with the national authorities is the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#); including for instance its principle 17 on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Other principles are also often very relevant.

A. Example for shared-management funds:

If you are for instance a Greek organization involved in early childhood intervention (ECI) and are pushing for more funding across the country to improve access to ECI for children with disabilities. A clear and holistic proposal is needed. Once developed, you could engage with relevant Greek authorities and identify ECI as an objective for their country’s Operational Programmes

For ESF+ as investment into ECI projects helps to

- ECI services are social services, thus responding to the [European Semester's Country Specific Recommendation](#) (CSRs) to Greece to ensure 'comprehensive access to social services'. Remember that each Member State's Operational Programme has to help respond to the challenges highlighted in their CSRs
- Ensure that children with disabilities have access to early childhood intervention services, in line with principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights; thus helping the Member State fulfil its 25% earmarked for social inclusion
- fulfil the 15% earmarked to boost youth employment by including specific measures to help the parents of young children with disabilities onto the labour market; both directly through targeted employment measures and indirectly by as ECI services can help parents doing the informal caring to work.
- Tackle child poverty, thus helping to fulfilling the 5% earmarked for tackling such an issue
- Tackle gender inequalities as lack of access to formal ECI services means that the parents (usually) the mothers have to provide the care (informally) themselves; hindering their access to the labour market and economic independence.
- Ensure the digital transition, as part of the plan is to help the digitalization of ECI services, especially important in times of COVID-19 pandemic.

In short, by aligning your investment need to the specific objectives and earmarking of ESF+, you are helping the National Authority who need to fulfil such requires. This is of course just an example of the logic we recommend, but it is also important to take into account the national context, as well as to align yourself to other networks.

B. Example for Recovery and Resilience Plans:

MSs have to make sure the different aspects of their Recovery & Resilience Plans align to following criteria:

- ✓ The national RRP's must be aligned to Country Specific Recommendations 2019 & 2020.
- ✓ Green/ecological investments, earmarked at min. 37% of the total amount requested

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The following is an example of how this could be applied.

Bulgarian members could speak to their Authorities and present the following initiative as an option for their Recovery and Resilience Plan: dedicating €X amount of Bulgaria’s RRP to supporting the reform of social services, including the integration of health & social care, digital transformation of social services (digital hub, etc), the development of homecare & community services (incl. transport), development of work integration social enterprises, etc.

Table 6. showing how a policy reform can be aligned to the needs of Authorities in the development of their Recovery and Resilience Plans. By EASPD

Factsheet	How does policy reform align	Checklist
Align to CSRs	CSRs 2020 for Bulgaria recommended “intergration of primary, long-term and community care is crucial”, “reform of social services”, “stronger cooperation between health & social services”.	✓
Green &/or Digital	Policy supports energy efficiency measures, buying of more energy efficient transport models, setting-up of digital hub and strategy, etc	✓

Fair / EPSR	Policy supports access to social services for pwd & others (principles 11, 17, 18 EPSR) and active employment measures (principle 2, 3, 4 EPSR)	✓
Flagships	Renovate, Modernise, Skills & Reskills	✓
Other? COVID?	Policy aims to build up resilience of social services, including integration of health & social care, which helps tackle consequences of COVID-19.	✓

Recommendation 4. If no feedback, speak to the European Commission.

The European Commission strongly encourages the [partnership principle](#), meaning that national authorities should engage in partnership with social partners and civil society organisations in the implementation of EU Funds.

If you are struggling to get feedback from your national authorities, you could speak to the Commission’s desk officers who engage on a day-to-day basis with the national authorities and could be willing to put in a word for you.

EASPD’s secretariat could help put you in touch with the relevant desk officers within the European Commission.

E. Conclusion

The EU is still currently negotiating the details of the Recovery Plan for Europe, which includes both the standard 7 year multi annual financial framework and an additional Next Generation EU to support the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. All together, this Recovery Plan is expected to amount to €1.8 trillion to support EU action in member states.

Although the details are yet to be finalized, and cuts to key programmes are a strong possibility, it is expected that the EU Recovery Plan will include several (potentially) important funding opportunities for services for persons with disabilities. This is particularly the case for four main programmes:



- European Social Fund + (Approx. €87-97 billion)
- European Regional Development Fund (Approx. €200 billion)
- REACT-EU (Approx. €50 billion)
- Recovery and Resilience Facility (Approx. €650 billion)

Other programmes of course exist and are relevant such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe, InvestEU, Horizon Europe and others. We did not include them here, given that national action on the programmes is less relevant at this stage; at least in comparison to the four above.

This Toolkit aims to explain both why these programmes present such significant opportunities, but also the steps needed to ensure that they actually lead to funding opportunities in areas of interest to EASPD members.

Of particular importance is the need to engage with National or Regional Authorities to ensure that their plans for the use of the Recovery Plan for Europe – especially through the Operational Programmes and the Recovery and Resilience Plan- opens up opportunities for supporting the provision of care and support services in the years to come. Most National Authorities are expected to be considering their Plans already at this early stage in time; especially because they will want to use the benefits of the EU Recovery plan at the earliest stage possible. The [European Commission has also called](#) v on each Member State to ensure the partnership principle is in place; meaning that they should engage with civil society organisations in the planning of the use of EU funds. It is also important to not engage too late, as there is little willingness and opportunities to change these plans at a later stage.

Background Documents:

- Video of [EASPD Webinar on “Need EU Money? Engage Now to Benefit Later” \(9th September 2020\)](#).
- Webinar [Presentation by Thomas Bignal, EASPD, on the EU Recovery Plan and Engage Now to Benefit Later \(September 2020\)](#)
- Webinar Presentation by [Andrea Leruste, European Commission, on the EU Recovery Package and ESF+ \(September 2020\)](#)
- [General Information on the European Recovery Plan](#) & [Guidance to Member States on RRP](#)s by European Commission
- [General information on the European Semester](#), by European Commission

- General Information on the [European Social Fund +](#), by European Commission
- General Information on the [European Regional Development Fund](#), by European Commission
- General Information on the [REACT-EU](#), by European Commission
- General Information on the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), by European Commission

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