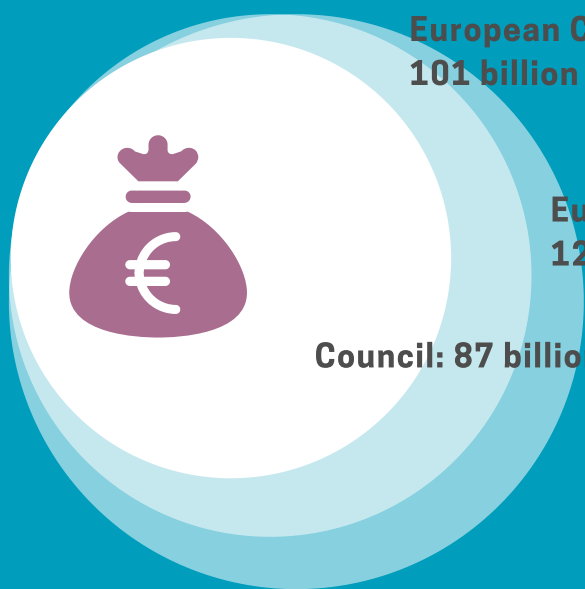


INFO NOTE

ESF AND COVID-19

ESF+ IN THE EU-BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS BUDGET 2021-2027



European Commission:
101 billion Euro

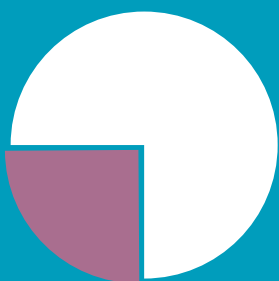
European Parliament:
120 billion Euro

Council: 87 billion Euro

The Council, European Commission and European Parliament propose different budget volumes for the future ESF+ programme.



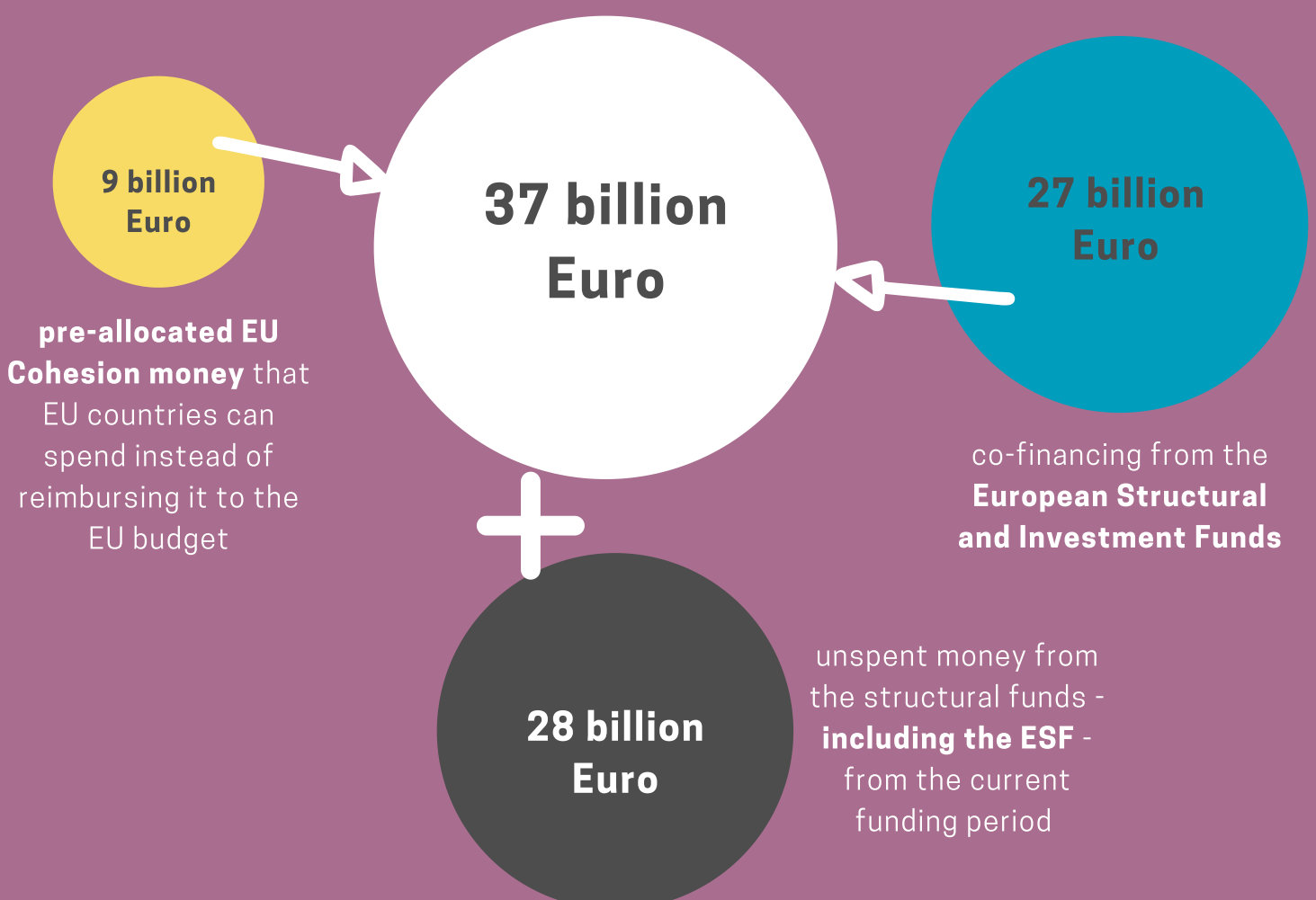
Current budget (2014 to 2020): 80 billion Euro
HOWEVER: The new ESF+ programmes integrates other programmes that were previously funded through other sources, so the proposed stagnation of the budget could be an effective cut.



The proposal of the Council also considers a **reduction in the proportion of ESF funding in projects**: only up to 40% EU co-financing in developed regions and up to 75% in particularly disadvantaged regions - instead of the previous EU co-financing of between 50% and 85%.

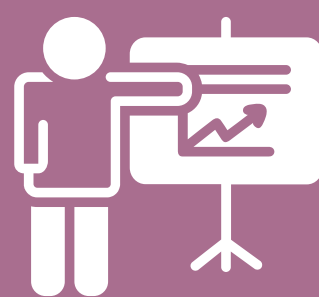
CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE PLUS (CRII+)

The European Union will use money from the ESF to mitigate the consequences of the coronavirus on labour markets and social systems in EU countries.



WHAT DOES THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS MEAN FOR ONGOING ESF PROJECTS?

At this stage, there is **no uniform EU guidance** on how problems for projects arising from the corona crisis should be handled by the ESF managing authorities. In some countries, they ensure that the necessary project adjustments - i.e. extensions and changes of programmes - do not disadvantage the beneficiaries of ESF support.



However, learning provision in ESF-funded projects remains a **challenge**, as learners from disadvantaged groups often do not have any access to online learning, relevant skills and adequate electronic devices. The insecure financial situation of many adult education providers in Europe has also led to staff reduction and, therefore, a reduction of learning offers.

EAEA'S DEMANDS

1

We want a **higher budget for ESF+** in the future programme period. The ESF is delivering exceptional results in terms of social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, employability measures and the acquisition of life skills and key competences. A higher budget will enable more adult learning and education providers to offer high-quality programmes to adult learners from key target groups, especially in and after the Coronavirus crisis.

2

We want to be sure that money from the "ESF pot" to combat the Coronavirus crisis will go to **projects that adult learning and education providers can help shape**. This is the only way to ensure that the interests of the learners are at the centre and that educational measures build on existing skills and knowledge. This contributes to greater efficiency and targeting of projects.

3

We want **maximum flexibility for ongoing ESF projects**, in all countries and regions of Europe. This also means taking into account special challenges faced by adult learning and education providers, for example in the payment of running costs and personnel costs, even if training institutions have to close. Where courses can be offered online by the educational institution, it must be borne in mind that a large proportion of learners cannot participate in these courses due to a lack of digital skills, a stable internet connection and electronic equipment. This should not lead to a financial cut of learning programmes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Is your organisation a beneficiary of ESF funding? Have you received any information from your ESF managing authority concerning the possibility to change, adapt and extent learning programmes? If you have not received any information yet, contact them as soon as possible. You can refer to other countries and regions, for instance Germany and Flanders, that have put into place measures to mitigate the consequences of the crisis for providers.



Contact your national or regional ministries for social affairs to raise awareness of the importance of ESF funding for providing high-quality learning and social inclusion offers to disadvantaged groups. Through the council, they determine the outcome of the budget negotiations for the future programme period. You can use EAEA's statement and advocacy materials for your lobbying work.